Rebuilding the Catholic Brand in America: An Isocratean Perspective

Dominic Mamimilian Ofori

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REBUILDING THE CATHOLIC BRAND IN AMERICA:
AN ISOCRATEAN PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation
Submitted to the McAnulty College
and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Dominic Maximilian Ofori

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REBUILDING THE CATHOLIC BRAND IN AMERICA:
AN ISOCRATEAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

REBUILDING THE CATHOLIC BRAND IN AMERICA:
AN ISOCRATEAN PERSPECTIVE

By
Dominic Maximilian Ofori
May 2016

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Janie M. Harden Fritz

This dissertation attempts to rebuild the American Catholic brand fractured by the priests' sexual abuse scandals, using Isocrates' theory of self-defense and self-representation as found in his Antidosis. The work conceptualizes the Catholic Church as a brand because it is a religious organization with an army of followers, is well-known, and is an indisputable leader in the provision of education, healthcare, and social welfare, thereby playing an important role in the socio-cultural consciousness of many Americans. Built over centuries of service to its members and the country, the Catholic brand from the 1960s to the dawn of the twenty-first century had enjoyed high moral authority as a religious organization that promoted the dignity of the human person and acted as an ethically responsible corporate citizen in American society. However, such moral authority crumbled following the 2002 Boston Globe revelations that for decades the Church's hierarchy in the Archdiocese of Boston had sexually preyed on innocent children and
vulnerable members. The result has been a crisis of faith and trust, lasting over a decade in spite of the Church's efforts to create a safe environment for its children and vulnerable members and to hold predator priests accountable.

This dissertation holds the view that, for the Church in America to rebuild its brand and thereby restore its fractured image and reputation, it must adopt a rebranding model based on Isocrates’ theory of self-defense and self-representation/characterization. Consistent with the Isocratean rebranding model, the American Catholic Church must embrace its core identity as a model institutional citizen that promotes the dignity of the human person, differentiate and dissociate itself from predator priests and their episcopal supporters, establish goodwill toward stakeholders by setting up monuments to memorialize abuse victims, organizing annual events for victims to tell their stories, holding abusive clergy and irresponsible bishops accountable, allowing the lay faithful to play an active role in priestly formation, being more transparent in its handling of sexual abuse cases, and requiring seminarians and priests to undergo routine sexual assault and sexual harassment training. Moreover, the ecclesial community must reconcile with victims by honestly confessing its complicity in the tragedy of the abuse and seeking forgiveness.
DEDICATION

To the Most Rev. David R. Choby, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Nashville, Tennessee,

To Very Rev. Fr. Dexter Brewer, Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Nashville and pastor of Christ the King Church, Nashville, Tennessee,

To Rev. Fr. Patrick Joseph Breen, former pastor of St. Edward Parish, Nashville, Tennessee,

And to Alex Kwame Nreda of blessed memory, my beloved uncle
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Chapter 1

The Crisis of the American Catholic Brand

1.1. Introduction

The January 2002 *Boston Globe* investigative reports on the systematic and prolonged sexual abuse of minors by priests of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States shook the very foundation of an institution that, from the 1960s till then, had assumed a moral voice in the American imagination (Investigative Staff of *The Boston Globe* (ISTBG), 2002; Carey, 2004; National Review Board (NRB), 2004; Plante, 2004; Gary & Perl, 2006; John Jay College of Criminal Justice (JJCCJ), 2011; Plante & McChesney, 2011). As details of the abuse and coordinated efforts by bishops and Church leaders to cover it up became clear, both Catholics and non-Catholics alike in the country were outraged (Carey, 2004; Plante, 2004; Allen, 2004). Following *The Globe* reports, other major newspapers and media outlets also reported on priests’ sexual abuse across the length and breadth of the country for months on end (Carey, 2004; NRB, 2004; Plante, 2004; Plante & McChesney, 2011), a phenomenon that created a crisis of epic proportions for the Church. Suddenly, a church that occupied a high moral ground in American society was exposed as an institution that had allowed its hierarchy to destroy vulnerable and innocent members.

The seriousness of the clergy abuse becomes clear when measured against its destructive effect on victims. According to Doyle (2011), “Sexual abuse has been described as soul murder,” and victims “fall into despair,” as they feel “betrayed by the clergy, isolated from the Church community, and cut off from meaningful support” (p. 177; see also Rossetti, 1995). Such despair destroys the bond one has with God, ultimately resulting in further “anxiety, depression, and
hopelessness” (Doyle, 2011, 177). In the view of Doyle (2011), victims of clerical sexual abuse become disillusioned with the institutional church: “Sexual assault by a Catholic cleric and the betrayal by the Church seriously damage or completely destroy the victim’s relationship with Catholicism. They can also severely damage the possibility of finding spiritual refuge anywhere” (p. 177). These views expressed by Doyle (2011) nine years after The Globe revelations were already known by the Church’s hierarchy. In fact, a pastoral letter titled “Walk in the Light: A Pastoral Response to Child Abuse,” issued by the USCCB in 1995 had acknowledged the physical and psychological harm that sexual abuse causes victims:

Sexual abuse may result in physical harm such as cuts, disfigurement, and deformity.

Mental harm includes a poor self-image; pervasive feelings of guilt; feelings of isolation that lead to social withdrawal; inability to trust or maintain friendships; inappropriate sexual behavior; inability to relate sexually with spouse; and symptoms of posttraumatic stress syndrome, such as flashbacks, addiction to alcohol, and depression. (p. 745)

Without a doubt, the effects of the 2002 sexual abuse scandals were immediate, rocking the very foundation of the Catholic Church in the United States, fracturing its image and reputation, as well as raising doubts about its identity as an institution that promotes the dignity of the human person and functions as a model corporate citizen.

Two decades prior to The Globe revelations, there had been at least two high-profile cases of priests’ abusing several minors for a number of years (ISTBG, 2002; Carey, 2004; NRB, 2004; JJCCJ, 2011; McChesney, 2011). And although the two priests involved were jailed, the issue had not attracted as huge a media attention as it did in 2002. Nevertheless, according to scholars, the issue of priests’ abusing minors had begun to be considered a major problem by the Church’s hierarchy between the mid-1980s and 1990s as more bishops began to realize that some
of their priests had been abusing children (Carey, 2004; Plante, 2004; JJCCJ, 2011; see also NRB, 2004). At this point in time, the approach most bishops adopted was to send accused priests to institutions that offered psychotherapy. And following the recommendations of psychotherapists, most of these priests were returned to ministry (NRB, 2004; JJCCJ, 2011).

Apart from trying to deal with the situation by treating accused priests as people with psychological problems, bishops also paid victims compensations after getting them to sign an undertaking to keep the issue secret (NRB, 2004; JJCCJ, 2011; Pennsylvania Grand Jury I (PGJ I), 2003). Later, as more and more cases of sexual abuse emerged and following presentations by Thomas Doyle and colleagues, the National Catholic Bishops of the United States (now the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB for short) formed an ad hoc committee that eventually came out with what became known as the “Five Principles” which gave directions as to how to deal with the problem (NRB; 2004; JJCCJ, 2011).

The 1992 Five Principles for dealing with clerical sexual abuse were as follows:

1. Respond promptly to all allegations of abuse where there is reasonable belief that abuse has occurred.
2. If such an allegation is supported by sufficient evidence, relieve the alleged offender promptly of his ministerial duties and refer him to appropriate evaluation and intervention.
3. Comply with the obligations of civil law as regards reporting the incident and cooperating with the investigation.
4. Reach out to the victims and their families and communicate our sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being.
5. Within the confines of respect for privacy of the individuals involved, deal as openly as possible with members of the community. (USCCB, 1992, p. 484; see also NRB, 2004; Plante, 2004; JJCCJ, 2011; Chopko, Kiley, & Maniscalco, 2011, p. 36; Terry, Schutt, & Smith, 2011, p. 23).

These principles meant to address the initial problem of clerical sexual abuse of minors in order to restore the trust such an evil had destroyed had the following distinguishing characteristics: (1) concern for victims; (2) cooperation with civil authorities; (3) concern for accused priests; and (4) protection of the image of the Church. Unfortunately, as the research conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice found out, most bishops and Church leaders did not implement the principles in a consistent, comprehensive manner on the excuse that the guidelines were not binding (NRB, 2004; JJCCJ, 2011). Such episcopal apathy, however, was to change following *The Globe* exposé.

Crushed and monstrously embarrassed by the persistent media focus on what undoubtedly had quickly become a crisis, the USCCB in its annual plenary session in 2002 held in Dallas, Texas, adopted what has become known as the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (henceforth *Charter*), and later another document titled *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacon* (henceforth *Norms*). The approach adopted by the bishops following the Dallas *Charter* was one of “zero tolerance” with regard to dealing with the sexual abuse of minors and young people by the clergy, an approach that they hoped would help win the trust of Catholics across the country whose confidence in the Church had been shattered by the revelations of the clergy sexual abuses. While the *Norms* provides the canonical procedure for dealing with abuse cases, the *Charter* is largely a policy document which expresses the bishops’ commitment to doing
everything in their power to stop the evil of clergy sexual abuse of minors, as well as their admission of leadership failures and responsibility for the shame brought on the Church (USCCB, 2006; 2011; McChesney, 2004). In the view of McChesney (2004), “The Charter”s core concepts deal with healing and reconciliation with victim-survivors, effective response to allegations of abuse, and prevention of future acts of abuse” (p. 39). Additionally, “there is emphasis on consistency in implementation, compliance, and public accountability” required of all the dioceses and eparchies within the United States to forestall a repeat of the lackluster episcopal attitude toward the Five Principles (McChesney, 2004, p. 39). The bishops also set up a National Review Board (NRB) of lay Catholics to do an annual review of every diocese and eparchy within the United Sates and evaluate the implementation of a safe environment for children and young people as required by the Charter (NRB, 2004). Since the implementation of the Charter, the incidents of child abuse have almost disappeared, although the recent cases of cover-ups in the Archdioceses of Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and St. Paul and Minneapolis, as well as the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, indicate that the Catholic Church in the United States is not out of the woods yet (Hurdle & Eckholm, July 24, 2012; Goodstein, Sept. 7, 2012; Kim, Powers, & Ryan, Jan. 21, 2013; Smith & Goodstein, Jun. 15, 2015).

While the Church has done a great job of addressing the problem of child sexual abuse in a comprehensive and effective manner since 2002 (e.g., all workers of the Church are required to undergo a background check; every diocese or eparchy has a board entrusted with the responsibility of advising its bishop on sexual abuse cases; hotlines are provided on diocesan websites for anyone to call to report an actual or perceived abuse case; and human formation has been made an integral part of priestly training), it has yet to recover from the damage done to its image, reputation, and identity in the wake of the crisis, a crisis of faith and trust in the Church’s
hierarchy (NRB, 2004; Plante, 2004; also see Carey, 2004; Lytton, 2008; Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2011). According to McChesney (2011), although the Charter promises transparency in the handling of clergy sexual abuse cases, there is “no comprehensive list of abusers” or any record of the measures taken against such abusers (p. 77). For Dixon (2004), the Church’s main response to the crisis caused by the clergy abuse was not really about salvaging its fractured image or bringing healing and comfort to victims but about “silencing the voices of dissent that had emerged, threatening to undermine its teaching” (p. 66). Besides, in the judgment of Blaine (2011),

The new policy was weak and watered down. A significant problem was the lack of a mechanism to ensure compliance and no consequence for bishops who did not follow it. Over the past decade, this deficiency in policy has been borne out; bishops failed to follow the policy, and none has suffered any consequence. (p. 163)

Blaine’s (2011) views are supported by the 2015 NRB report that not every diocese or eparchy in the country participated in the last safe-environment auditing, a finding that raises concern about the commitment of some Church officials to ensuring that the Church once again becomes a safe place for children and vulnerable people.

For many Catholic and non-Catholic Americans alike, the current leaders of the Church have no credibility considering the fact that they have refused to hold themselves accountable for their failures, thereby putting themselves above the law in a country that believes in the rule of law and the equality of all persons before the law (Allen, 2004; NRB, 2004; SNAP, 2013). In fact, critics of the Church and its hierarchy point to the fact that, while abusive priests have been removed from ministry and/or sentenced to prison, very few bishops have been punished for negligence of their episcopal duties. Cardinals like Bernard Law and Roger Mahoney are still
treated as princes of the Catholic Church\(^1\) (see NBR, 2004; Gray & Perl, 2006; SNAP, 2013; Boston NPR, 2013; National Catholic Reporter). This apparent inconsistency between the Church’s rhetoric and perceived actions has resulted in lack of trust in the leadership of a hierarchical institution like the Catholic Church with implications for its identity, image, and reputation (see Gray & Perl, 2006).

1.2. Statement of Purpose

The present dissertation sees the problem the Catholic Church in America faces now as a brand problem, one engendered by a lack of trust in the Church as a religious institution because of the actions of its priests and leaders. This work treats the Catholic Church in America as a brand, not because it is a corporation or a product, but in the sense that it is an institution with an army of loyal followers, an institution that is well-known, and an indisputable leader in the provision of education, healthcare, and social welfare, thereby playing an important role in the socio-cultural consciousness of many Americans (Carey, 2004; see also Keller, 1998; Martin, 2007). In other words, as Martin (2007) clearly points out, “…brands need not be products at all. The Roman Catholic Church is a brand. So is Tom Cruise, and so are many cities and countries” (p. 101; Greyser, 2009; Smith & French, 2009). A brand, for Martin (2007), derives its existential reality from “the broad range of feelings and associations that give the name meaning, salience, and relevance” (p. 101). Agreeing with Martin’s (2007) view, this dissertation believes that the solid American Catholic brand image, which took centuries to build, has been fractured

\(^{1}\) According Martin (2015) of the Huffpost, Cardinal Law is now living in Rome after he retired as a Vatican official in 2011. Cardinal Mahony, however, lives in California after retiring as the archbishop of Los Angeles. In 2013, he was barred from presiding over public liturgical services (Medina & Goodstein, 2013).
by the clergy sexual abuse and official cover-ups to protect the ecclesial community from public embarrassment.

That the Catholic Church in America is suffering a credibility crisis in this historical moment due to the clergy scandals means that it is now a brand missing the following three elements of credibility: “expertise (e.g., being competent and innovative in being a market leader), trustworthiness (e.g., being dependable and keeping customer interests in mind), and likability (e.g., being fun, interesting, and worth spending time with)” (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002, p. 80). Admittedly, while it is true that Hoeffler and Keller (2002) had corporations and products in mind when they talked about the three elements of credibility, it is not difficult to see how these corporate brand elements can be easily applied to a non-profit organization like the Catholic Church. Thus, as a brand in crisis, the Church can be said to lack expertise because it does not attract as many people to itself as before; it has lost its trustworthiness because it is not seen as a church that looks out for the interest of its members, particularly the most vulnerable among them; and, it has lost its likability because it no longer excites as many of its faithful as before, with many of them feeling betrayed and embarrassed by the clergy scandals (Carey, 2004; NRB, 2004; Gray & Perl, 2006).

For the Church to rebuild its brand and thereby restore its fractured image and reputation, it needs to embrace its core identity as a model institutional citizen and an institution that cares about the dignity of the human person, a core identity that emerges out of the Church’s own ecclesiology. In other words, this project is of the view that the Catholic Church in the United States can only rebuild its brand by “reinvent[ing] itself as the charitable, inclusive, caring institution that it claims to be” (McChesney, 2011, p. 66). This endeavor, in the view of the present work, can be achieved through the prism of Isocratean rhetoric, particularly through
Isocrates’s (353 B.C. /2000) rhetoric of self-defense and self-representation as articulated in his *Antidosis*. A text on self-defense against an imaginary opponent who accuses him of corrupting Athenian youth and teaching them to argue unfairly, the *Antidosis* presents Isocrates as a faithful Greek and a patriot, one whose educational enterprise prepared students to be responsible citizens of the Athenian *polis* in particular, and the Hellespont in general (Isocrates, 353 B.C. /2000). While he defends rhetoric as an effective tool for the construction of human society, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) differentiates himself from false sophists whose ultimate aim was to make money immorally by making promises they never were able to keep. In the process of constructing his defense, Isocrates reimagines himself as a promoter of what is quintessentially Greek, a lover of Athens in particular and Greece in general, and a different teacher from all the other teachers of rhetoric.

Like Isocrates, the Catholic Church in America faces the accusation of being a bad citizen, albeit a metaphorical one. While the Catholic Church never teaches its priests and bishops to abuse children, the reality is that by virtue of the moral choices of some of these men, the Church’s image has been compromised, resulting in her losing her moral voice and credibility in the country (Carey, 2004; NRB, 2004; Cullen, 2002). As pointed out by brand scholars, successful brands thrive when the people delivering them act in a manner that reflects the promised values of the brands (McDivitt, 2003; Urde, 2009; Zachary *et al.* 2011; Singh, Tripathi, & Yadav, 2012; Malone & Fiske, 2013). This view is certainly true in the case of the American Catholic brand. Faced with the present image crisis, the Catholic Church can rebuild its endangered brand, using the framework provided by Isocrates in the *Antidosis*. To this end, this dissertation will argue that the Catholic Church must articulate its identity as an institution that promotes the dignity of the human person and act as a true citizen that espouses the
American principle of equality of all persons. Accordingly, it must differentiate itself from the individual priest predators and bishops whose failed leadership resulted in the tragedy of the abuses. As a model citizen of the United States, the Church must also ensure that justice is served by holding bishops accountable for their failed leadership in covering up abuse cases and not being sensitive to the sufferings of the victims of the clergy sexual abuse.

1.3. Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Since the outbreak of the clergy scandals, the Catholic Church has taken steps to create a safe environment for its children and vulnerable members as required by the Charter and Norms, documents whose directives every diocese and eparchy in the United States must follow (see USCCB, 2006; 2011). While these documents and the actions of dioceses and eparchies across the country demonstrate the Church’s determination to deal effectively with the abuse scandals, they have not been able to change people’s perception of the Catholic Church as an organization that sexually abuses its most vulnerable and innocent members (see Kauffman, 2008; see also Battistella, 2014). This discrepancy between institutional communicative intentionality and audience perception is well articulated in Shupe’s (2011) evaluation of both the Charter and Norms:

The Conference created the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, calling for better screening of candidates for the priesthood, more ready prosecution of alleged deviants, more timely redress of victims’ complaints, establishment of investigative boards and so forth. A zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse was trumpeted. Former law enforcement professionals were put in charge of an Office for Child and Youth Protection. At the same time, there were charges from victims’ groups of these measures really being only half-hearted attempts at window-dressing solutions.
A National Review Board to oversee Church policies was set up, but its independence was questioned, particularly since it was organized through the Bishops Conference headquarters in Washington, DC, and the Board was not able to investigate directly individual allegations. (p. 111)

For as long as interest groups continue to judge the Church’s response to the scandals as window dressing and half-hearted, it cannot rebuild its brand as a charitable, caring, inclusive institution, and a model citizen at that. Thus, the problem this dissertation seeks to address is the persistent brand crisis of the Catholic Church in the United States in spite of the efforts it has been making to deal effectively with its clergy sexual abuse scandals. I have the strong belief that there is the need for the Catholic Church in the United States to adopt a different strategy of image redemption as has been suggested by scholars (for example, Twitchell, 2004; see also Piderit & Morey, 2008; Greyser, 2009). None of these scholars, however, has provided an effective model for rebranding the Catholic Church in the United States. Such a claim, though, does not mean that no communication scholar has yet offered any suggestion as to how bishops should have approached the abuse crisis. Maier (2005), for instance, has proposed three communicative responses for how the Church’s hierarchy should have handled its multiple publics, namely, “openness,” “attentiveness,” and “responsiveness” (pp. 224-226). Maier (2005), however, was interested, not in how the clergy sexual abuse scandal fractured the brand image of the Catholic Church, but rather the poor public relations approach the bishops adopted in an effort to weather the storm of the abuse and official cover-ups. While the present project acknowledges the important role of public relations in restoring the fractured image of the American Catholic Church in light of the clergy sexual abuse, it strongly believes that public relations alone is not enough. People will believe the Church more if they see a synchrony between its rhetoric and
concrete actions. The goal of this dissertation, therefore, is to propose an approach that requires the Church to align its public communication with concrete moral choices. In making such a proposal, this project takes the Roman Catholic Church in the United States as its primary audience.

Ultimately, the present dissertation will attempt to answer following questions:

1. What aspects of the history of the global Catholic Church show that the constructs of brand and rebrand are not antithetical to its doctrines?
2. How did the Catholic brand in America evolve?
3. How did the clergy sexual abuse scandals of 2002 affect the solid brand the Catholic Church in the United States had built over the years?
4. How might Isocrates’ theory of self-defense and self-representation be appropriated by the Catholic Church in the United States to rebuild its fractured brand so as to find resonance with practicing American Catholics and the majority of non-Catholic Americans?

By addressing the problem of the Catholic priests’ sexual abuse scandals as a brand problem and answering the above-stated questions, this dissertation will be contributing to scholarship on brand, brand building, rebranding, and crisis communication. Specifically, this dissertation will add to scholarship on how non-profit organizations when faced with brand crisis can re-imagine themselves, using models that address their specific situations. This dissertation will argue that effective rebranding of the Catholic Church in America can be located at the nexus of genuine communication and responsible citizenship.
1.4. Organization of Study

This dissertation is made up of seven chapters. Chapter 1 examines the problem of the Catholic brand in America, articulates the research questions, and shows the significance of the work to scholarship on brand rebuilding. In Chapter 2, the work examines relevant literature on brand, branding, and rebranding, defining such constructs and looking at brand and rebranding models, the rationale for branding and rebranding, as well as their effects. The next chapter, Chapter 3, examines the Isocratean theory of self-defense and self-representation as a rebranding model. Specifically, this chapter looks at the biography of Isocrates, the tax and legal systems of Athens during his lifetime, and how Isocrates both defends and represents himself before an imaginary court. Then, from Isocrates’ theory of self-defense and self-representation, an Isocratean rebranding model is then constructed. In Chapter 4, the work looks at the historiography of the American Catholic brand from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first century. Dividing the history of the evolution of the American Catholic brand into four major periods, the work chronicles how the Catholic Church evolved from a nondescript, pariah religious community into a dominant and powerful brand through concrete actions such as attending to the spiritual and material needs of its faithful and contributing significantly to education, healthcare, and social services in the United States. Chapter 5 argues that the idea of rebranding the American Catholic Church draws its inspiration from the global Catholic Church’s twenty-one ecumenical councils, which were arguably attempts to brand and rebrand in the face of existential problems that threatened the very survival of the Church. Chapter 6 then employs the Isocratean model of rebranding to rebuild the American Catholic brand fractured by the priests’ sexual abuse scandals. In pursuit of this rebranding effort, the dissertation argues that the Catholic Church must clearly articulate its specific goal, define the problem at hand, and
construct an image that resonates with its stakeholders. Finally, in Chapter 7, the work articulates the implications of rebranding the American Catholic Church from an Isocratean perspective for marketing communication, brands, brand crisis, branding and rebranding, communication crisis, as well as corporate and organizational communication.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it attempts to provide a fitting response to an organizational brand-crisis situation by employing a rebranding model that pays attention to the phenomenologico-ontological reality of the organization. It demonstrates that rebuilding an organizational brand is a complex activity that requires a multi-faceted approach. Furthermore, this study shows that classical rhetorical theory has a lot to contribute to twenty-first century persuasive communication. Finally, the present work offers to scholars and managers of brands a new rebranding model, one that involves the clear articulation of objective, definition of existential problem, design and implementation of effective rebranding strategy, and evaluation of both the rebranding process and the new brand, noting that brand revitalization is a never-ending exercise. The present study, thus, adds to communication scholarship by demonstrating that (1) rhetoric or persuasive communication is constitutive of religious organizations, (2) that persuasion is located at the nexus of rhetoric and concrete actions, (3) that all social realities can be branded and rebranded, and (4) that rebranding is not necessarily synonymous with a change in organizational identity or name, but instead, is sometimes a return to original core values.
1.6. Limitation of the Study

The major drawback to this work is that it merely suggests a conceptual approach to brand rebuilding without empirically testing it in an actual Catholic diocese within the United States or anywhere else for that matter. This drawback certainly raises legitimate questions as to how the model can be actualized in a real-life situation. Moreover, this project takes it as a given that the only challenge the American Catholic Church faces is the clergy sexual abuse and that, once it is dealt with, the Church can reclaim its moral voice and once again become a brand leader in the American religious market. Such an assumption ignores the reality of dissenting voices both within and outside the Church regarding women ordination, same-sex marriage, and the readmission of civilly-divorced Catholics to the sacramental life of the Church. This dissertation accordingly suggests further research into the brand problem of the American Catholic Church, one that examines the ways in which addressing the outstanding problematic issues here identified can help bolster the image of the Catholic Church as an inclusive, compassionate, and caring organization, without compromising its core values.
Chapter 2

Understanding the Constructs of Brand, Branding, and Rebranding

2.1. Introduction

This chapter examines scholarship on the constructs of brand, branding, and rebranding, as well as brand and rebranding models. It posits that the idea of brand as known today evolved from being just a mark made by a hot metal to being a name that evokes powerful feelings in brand loyalists. As a marketing communication construct, the notion of brand can be applied to any entity. According to available scholarship, the construct of brand is constituted by identity, reputation, and image, and that as an intangible value, brand plays a very important role for both sellers and customers (Restall & Gordon, 1993; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Kapferer, 2008; Verma, 2008; Patel, 2010; Malone & Fiske, 2013).

The present chapter begins by looking at the meaning of brand and its functions, goes on to define branding, and then examines brand identity, brand image, and brand reputation. Next, it looks at branding models, the meaning of and rationale for rebranding, and rebranding models. The chapter concludes by noting that, while available scholarship on the construct of brand offers a healthy dose of information and insights into brand and rebranding, it does not provide an effectively compelling model for rebuilding the brand of an organization like the American Catholic Church currently dealing with a crisis of faith and trust.

2.2. Meaning of Brand

Before one can make any attempt to rebuild the Catholic brand in America, it is important to understand the constructs of brand and branding. According to the literature on marketing
communication, the word “brand” comes from the Old English word *biernan*, which functioned both as a verb and a noun (Twitchell, 2004, p. 17; Pierre et al., 2011, p. 182; see Keller, 1998a; Martin, 2007; Berthon et al., 2011). When used as a verb, brand referred to “the process of tampering by heat”, but as a noun, it conceptualized the result of the process of touching something with heat (Twitchell, 2004, p. 17). Thus, “to brand,” earlier on meant to touch with a hot metal, and a “brand” referred to the mark left by a hot metal (Berthon et al., 2011, p. 182). In Roman times, slaves were branded as a sign of ownership. The idea of brand at that time connoted stigma and, thus, was a sign of shame (Twitchell, 2004). Brand as a social construct took on a new meaning in the nineteenth century when it referred to “a return address or trademark burned on such products as liquor and wine casks, timber, metals, and the like” (Twitchell, 2004, p. 18; see also Martin, 2007). Thus, from initially being just a mark to later on being a sign of shame, the notion of brand had evolved into a socially acceptable construct by the nineteenth century (Martin, 2007).

In the United States, the word brand gained a legal definition when Congress passed the trademark law of 1905. The law defined brand as “a name, term, or design—or a combination of these elements—that is intended to clearly identify and differentiate a seller’s products from a competitor’s products” (as cited in Twitchell, 2004, p. 18; see also Keller, 1998; Kotler 2000, p. 404). This definition continues to enjoy the official endorsement of the American Marketing Association (AMA), thereby influencing how brand has been defined by several scholars. Kotler (2000), for example, defines brand as “the name associated with one or more items in the product line that is used to identify the source of character of the item(s)” (p. 396). Such a definition implies that “technically speaking…whenever a marketer creates a new name, logo, or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand” (Keller, 2003a, p. 3). As identifiers, brands
served as an integral part of the marketer’s products. As Urde (1999) puts it, “For a long time, the brand has been treated in an off-hand fashion as a part of the product” (p. 119). This view is shared by Kotler (2000) who referred to earlier branding processes as “a major issue in product strategy” (404). Put differently, “the brand is a sign—therefore external—whose function is to disclose the hidden qualities of the product which are inaccessible to contact” (Kapferer, 1997, p. 28). Brand was also defined prior to the 1980s as “the intangible sum of a product’s attributes: its, name, packaging, and price, its history, its reputation and the way it is advertised” (Ogilvy, as cited in Einstein, 2008). Accordingly, Kapferer (2008) is right when he asserts that before the 1990s brand was understood to be “a name that influenc[ed] buyers, becoming a purchase criterion” (p. 11; emphasis in original).

Clearly, the earlier definitions of brand foregrounded differentiation and identification as important coordinates in the conceptualization of the notion of brand (Verma, 2010, p. 24). Such definitions made the product and the seller, not the consumer, the important elements in the branding process. This claim is warranted because all that sellers had to do in the brand-building process was to distinguish their products “by attaching certain attributes, images and ideals to them” (Fuller, 2010, p. 287; see also Berthon et al., 2011, p. 182). In other words, as Massey (2010) rightly points out, “Brands provide[d] information to consumers, and communicate[d] and establish[ed] expectations with stakeholders” (p. 7). The implications of this kind of branding process for communication are clear: brand communication is linear; it is one-way traffic; meaning is both created and sold by seller, and then bought by consumer. Obviously, this original definition of brand is inadequate in this historical moment, a moment when the consumer has become more sophisticated and assertive. Hence, a new conceptualization of the
word brand is needed. As Keller (2003a) and Martin (2007) rightly point out, brands function more than just simply being identifiers.

In the view of Pierre et al. (2011), there is the need to move from “What the brand is?” to “Where the brand is?” (p. 182). For these scholars, the first question positioned “the brand creator or communicator as the focus of meaning” (p. 182). The idea of brand, as far as this perspective went, was conceived as a form of expression or “the creation of an entity (typically a firm) designed to articulate or conjure a specific intention, feeling, or vision” (p. 182). The second question, on the other hand, foregrounds a perspective that positions the consumer or public as “the locus of meaning” (p. 183). Here, what is important in the brand-building process is the interpretation given by the audience to the meaning of the brand.

Working with the second perspective of brand, Keller (1998) holds that “a brand is a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service” (as cited by Kapferer, 2008, p. 10). Put differently, “A brand is a perceptual entity, rooted in reality, but also reflecting the perceptions and perhaps even the idiosyncrasies of consumers” (Keller, 1998, p. 10). Kapferer (2008) comments that the mental associations consumers make with products or services “should be unique (exclusivity), strong (saliency) and positive (desirability)” (p. 10). Focusing on the consumer and not on the product or seller means paying attention to the associations the consumer makes or the interpretive meaning the consumer assigns the product. Commenting on how emphasis shifted in the branding process from product to an idea, Kapferer (1997) writes: “[Before the 1980s], companies wished to buy a producer of chocolate or pasta; after 1980, they wanted to buy KitKat or Buitoni” (p. 23). Thus, while earlier understandings of brand emphasized “production capacity,” later perspectives focused on mental associations consumers make with brands (Kapferer, 1997, p. 23). After the
1980s, brand was treated no longer as just a tactic but as both a tactic and a strategy. Thus, consistent with the new approach to brand, scholars began to conceptualize brand as “the totality of the thoughts, feelings, associations and expectations that come to mind when a prospect or consumer is exposed to an entity’s name, logo, products, services, events, or any design or symbol representing them” (Lindsay, 2000).

Patel (2010) observes that, “A brand is not a physical entity but something which resides in the mind of the customer. It means it is a perceptual entity that may reflect the perceptions of the customer towards the object” (p. 12). Similarly, Restall and Gordon (1993), posit that the notion of brand goes beyond the tangible elements of a product to encapsulate the pictures that the name of a product or organization brand evokes in the mind of the customer or stakeholder. Along the same lines, Azizi, Ghytasvand, and Fakharmanesh (2012) claim that “Brand is the incorporation of all impressions received by consumers which will lead to a distinctive position in their mind based on perceived emotional and functional benefits” (p. 123; also see Raj and Jyothi, 2011). In other words, as Singh, Tripathi, and Yadav (2012) put it, “A brand is the symbolic embodiment of all the information, the set of expectations associated with a product or service, which typically arise in the minds of ‘people’ (consumers, buyers, or target audiences)” (p. 91).

While not dismissing Keller’s (1998) classic definition and others like it, Kapferer (2008) has argued that looking at brand solely from the perspective of cognition is not adequate enough, as it makes brand management “a communication task” and focuses on “mental associations” (p. 10). Brand management, in the view of Kapferer (2008), “starts with the product and service as the prime vector of perceived value, while communication is there to structure, to orient tangible perceptions and to add intangible one.” (p. 10). Moreover, apart from the mental associations,
brands also have emotional connections with their publics (Kapferer, 2008, p. 10). Ultimately, “What makes a name acquire the power of a brand is the product or service, together with the people at points of contact with the market, the price, the places, the communication—all the sources of cumulative brand experience” (Kapferer, 2008, p. 12). A brand becomes a market leader when it is “able to conjure up a big idea” and is attractive; when it is “experienced by people at contact points”; when it is “activated by deeds and behaviours”; when it is “communicated”; and when it is “distributed” (Kapferer, 2008, p. 12). This view means that to manage a brand is to “gain[] power, by making the brand concept more known, more bought, more shared” (Kapferer, 2008, p. 13). Hence, as Kapferer (2008) sees it, “a brand is a shared desirable and exclusive idea embodied in products, services, places and/or experiences” (p. 13).

These experiences over time lead to the emergence of brand loyalty on the part of consumers or publics (Venkateswaran, Muthukrishnan, & Ananthi, 2011). Venkateswaran et al (2011) define brand loyalty as “a consumer’s commitment to repurchase or otherwise continue using the brand and can be demonstrated by repeated buying of a product or service” (p. 23; also see Duffy 2003).

According to Kapferer (2008), in order to influence buyers, a brand “relies on representations and relationships” (p. 11). Defining “representation” as a system of mental associations,” Kapferer (2008) notes that these associations are interconnected, and hence, any action on one affects the others in the system (p. 11). Brand associations include the following: “territory (perceived competence, typical products or services, specific know-how),” “level of quality (low, middle, premium, luxury),” “qualities,” “most discriminating quality or benefit (also called perceived positioning),” “typical buyer,” and “brand personality and brand image” (p. 11). As far as relationship goes, brands knit “an attitude of non-indifference …into
consumers’ hearts” (p. 12). Such an attitude, Kapferer (2008) tells us “goes from emotional resonance to liking, belonging to the evoked set or consideration set, preference, attachment, advocacy, to fanaticism” (p. 12). Over time through designs, patents, and rights, a brand is able to build up a competitive advantage that endows it with the power to influence buyers.

Considering the various definitions cited above, brand may be conceptualized as “a name that influences buyers” or target audiences or publics (Kapferer, 2008, p. 10) and as a tool employed by marketers in communicating with target audiences (Verma, 2010, p. 27). Ultimately, the present work’s position is that a brand is “a promise delivered” that creates an emotional connection between a brand name and its publics (Andersson, Slitander, & Ekman, 2012, p. 30). In other words, for this dissertation, “a brand makes promises to consumers, customers and other stakeholders, in everything it does” (Andersson et al., 2012, 30), thereby becoming an important part of their lives.

For Kotler (2000), a brand conveys six levels of meaning. These levels of meaning are: “attributes,” “benefits,” “values,” “culture,” “personality”, and “user” (p. 188). Regarding the attributive level of meaning of a brand, Kotler (2000) explains that every product or organizational brand possesses certain attributes which are mentally filed by the consumer or prospect. These attributes are then “translated into functional and emotional benefits” for the consumer or prospect” (p. 188). Further, the product brand or organizational brand communicates the value or essence of the product or organization to target audiences. In terms of its cultural meaning too, Kotler (2000) points out that every brand emerges out of a particular cultural context. Finally, apart from the fact that the brand conveys a certain kind of personality to its publics, it also “suggests the kind of customer who buys or uses the product” (p. 188).
Ultimately, brand scholars tell us that anything can be branded. Keller (1998), for example, writes that “a branded product may be a physical good…a service…a store…a person…place…organization…or an idea” (p. 5; see Martin, 2007; Smith & French, 2009). In other words, as Keller (2002) puts it, “branding principles have been applied in virtually every setting where consumer choice of some kind is involved, e.g., with physical goods, services, retails stores, people, organizations, places, or ideas” (p. 151; see Martin, 2007; French, 2009). In the view of Twitchell (2004), entities such as libraries, schools, churches, and museums can be branded by being invested with stories whose meanings resonate with their publics. Similarly, Smith and French (2009), write that both politics and churches, “non-traditional, social markets” can be branded (p. 210).

While scholars agree that almost anything can be branded, they clearly distinguish between product brand and corporate brand. According to Abratt and Kleyn (2012), corporate brand has two aspects, namely, “corporate expression and stakeholder images of the organization’s identity” (p. 1050). Moreover, while product brand involves “the conceptualization and communication of the visual identity, the brand promise and the brand personality,” corporate brand has to do with stakeholder perception of an organizational brand (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012, p. 1050). Such a perspective is consistent with that of Fan (2005) who asserts that, while products are branded “to aid sales and profitability,” corporations are branded in order to ensure that they embody the core values communicated, thereby enhancing their corporate reputation (p. 345). Corporate branding, therefore, is an attempt to align organizational values with organizational culture (Fan, 2005, p. 345).
2.3. Functions of Brands

Kapferer (1997; see also Keller, 1998; Kotler, 2000) tells us that, as a strategy, brands serve eight important functions: (1) identification, (2) practicality, (3) guarantee, (4) optimization, (5) characterization, (6) continuity, (7) hedonistic role, and (8) ethical role (p. 29). Each of these functions has a corresponding benefit for the consumer. Thus, where the identification function is concerned, the consumer is able to see the product, service, or organization that is offered and identify with it. Brands, therefore, establish a covenant relationship between consumers and sellers. The benefit that the practicality function offers the consumer is that it facilitates time-saving through the consumer’s loyalty and repurchasing. Therefore, brands can serve as stress reducers by making it easy for consumers to choose from an overabundance of parity goods or services. Further, by guaranteeing product or service quality, brands ensure that the offerings made by the seller to the consumer are consistent with the promises made to publics. Also, brands’ insistence on optimization makes it possible for the consumer to get the best of a product or service offering. Brands also confirm the self-image of the consumer. Moreover, by their continuity function, brands bring satisfaction to the consumer through familiarity and intimacy. In addition, by their hedonistic function, brands, through their attractiveness, satisfy the consumer. Finally, the consumer benefits from the ethical function of brands by obtaining satisfaction from the brand’s responsible behavior. Commenting on Kapferer’s (1997) functions, Guzman (2004) points out that, while the first two functions of Kapferer (1997) are mechanical and concern the essence of brands, the next three focus on “reducing the perceived risk,” with the last three concerning “the pleasure side of the brand” (p. 2). For Kapferer (1997), the value of a brand can be located in the mind of the consumer: “the
value of the brand comes from its ability to gain an exclusive, positive prominent meaning in the minds of a large number of consumers” (p. 25).

Clearly, what Kapferer’s (1997) eight functions suggest to us is that brand is not synonymous with product. Contrasting product from brand, Verma (2010) emphasizes that, while product is physical or tangible, brand is intangible; and while the former is “the sum of physical parts, brand is more than the sum of the parts” (87). Besides, whereas product focuses on function, brand is oriented toward meaning; and unlike product, which foregrounds number, brand focuses on emotions and expression. Then too, while product is manufactured in the factory, brand is processed in the mind of the consumer (Verma 2008; Keller, 1998). Accordingly, Verma (2008) makes the following strong assertion:

A brand is about spirit, soul and vision…. A brand is about values, meaning and human existence…. Brand is about transforming consumer life from its present inferior state to a better superior state. Brand is a marketer’s vision about how life of customers can be made better so that they are able to make the most out of their existence. (p. 88)

In other words, brands are important to consumers because they make life better and less burdensome. In the view of Kapferer (2008), for any name to qualify as a brand, it must have three key elements, namely, “saliency, differentiability, intensity and trust,” all of which should be connected with whatever associations clients or publics make with the brand (p. 11). In other words, living in an economy in which there are so many offerings without corresponding clarity to facilitate choices, clients are likely to ask the following questions: “Are the benefits the [brand] name evokes (a) salient, (b) exclusive and (c) trusted?” (Kapferer, 2008, p. 11). Brands, for Kapferer (2008), then, “must convey certitude, trust. They are a time reducer and risk reducer” (p. 11).
2.4. Meaning of Branding

What then is branding? Simply put, branding is the process of establishing a relationship “between buyers and sellers through the exchange of value for products and services over time” (Schultz & Schultz, 2004, p. 129; see also Keller, 1998). It involves promising publics a better life by “dazzl[ing] their senses, touch[ing] their hearts, and stimulat[ing] their minds” with products or services, communications, and marketing campaigns (Schmitt, 1999, p. 22). As Schmitt (1999) puts it, customers or target audience “want products, communications, and campaigns that they can relate to and that they can incorporate into their lifestyles. They want products, communications, and marketing campaigns to deliver an experience” (p. 22). For Verma (2010), however, branding or brand building is a continuous process of constructing and positioning a vision in the marketplace. As he puts it, “Brand building is not a one shot process. It is a continuous exercise in visioning and doing” (p. 34). Over time the positive experiences consumers have with “the organisation, its products, its channels, its stores, its communication and its people” combine to create goodwill toward the brand (Kapferer, 2008, p. 2).

In the view of Massey (2010), “Branding refers to the strategic creation, development, implementation and maintenance of the brand” (p. 7; also see de Chernatonny, 2001). Such a perspective is consistent with that of Osman (2008), who writes that “Branding is a fundamental strategic process of effectively marketing a product or service which includes creating a brand name and identity, designing the packaging and promoting the product or service” (pp. 57-58; also see Randall, 1997). In other words, brand-building can be defined as “the process of creating a brand” (Massey, 2010, p. 7). Hence, one can argue that, for the above-referenced scholars, branding consists in the planning and purposeful communication of an idea.
In a move to effectively articulate the role of ethics in branding or brand-building, Urde (2009) states that branding is a process of aligning an organization or product’s behavior with its shared values and commitments. Singh, Tripathi, and Yadav (2012), who agree with Urde (2009), also assert that to brand is “to develop or align the expectations comprising the target audience’s brand experience through branding activities” (p. 91). What this definition means is that branding is a conscious effort made by an organization to ensure that the experiences target audiences have with its products or services meet their expectations. As Singh, Tripathi, and Yadav (2012) clarify, “Branding carries the ‘promise’ to the marketplace that a product or service has a certain quality or characteristic which makes it special or unique (i.e., differentiated)” (p. 91).

Like Urde (2009) as well as Singh, Tripathi, and Yadav (2012), McDivitt (2003) sees branding as the process of building a relationship between an organization, product, or service with its stakeholders, and requires authenticity and consistency in words and actions. In other words, branding is the process whereby an organization, product, or service builds a relationship with target audiences or publics through authentic actions and communication. Therefore, for McDivitt (2003), to brand is to build a relationship (p. 11). Similarly, Zachary et al. (2011) assert that “Corporate branding takes place when a company creates organizational associations with the company’s identity, reinforcing in a broad range of stakeholder’s minds that the company will stand behind its products and services” (p. 630; see also Aaker 2004). Clearly, in their conceptualization of branding, Zachary et al (2011) de-emphasize product or service and instead emphasize organization. By so doing, they signal that both tangible and intangible entities can be branded (see also Smith & French, 2009). For the authors, to brand an organization or church is to first delineate its identity and to have it act in ways that are consistent with this identity to
enable stakeholders make mental associations between the organization’s core essence and its offerings (Zachary et al., 2011; see also Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Hatch & Schultz, 2001; Blamer & Gray, 2003). Brand building, therefore, “facilitate[es] an interaction via symbols between the organization and its customers” (M’zungu, Merrilees, & Miller, 2010, p. 608).

In the view of Dacin (2006), branding or corporate branding in particular seeks to answer four important questions. These questions include the following:

(1) What are we as an organization?

(2) What does the organization want others to think about the organization?

(3) What does the organization believe others think of the organization?

(4) What do stakeholders actually think of the organization? (p. 96)

An organization answers these questions by articulating its brand identity to employees and influencing stakeholders’ perception of its image and reputation through purposive communication and intentional acts. Branding is thus closely connected with the shaping of an organization’s identity, image, and reputation.

2.5. Brand Identity, Brand Image, and Brand Reputation

According to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) “identity” in the phrase “brand identity,” refers to “a vision of how that brand should be perceived by its target audience” (p. 27). Specifically, they define brand identity as “a set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations imply a promise to customers from the organization members” (p. 43). Similarly, Kapferer (2008) defines brand identity as “the vision that drives the creation of products and services under that name. That vision, the key belief of the brand and its core values, is called identity” (p. 171; see also Ihlen, 2013, p. 2). A solid
identity “drives vibrant brands to be able to create advocates, a real cult and loyalty” (Kapferer, 2008, p. 171). Hence, brand identity is what gives expression to “the tangible and intangible characteristics” of the brand (Kapferer, 2008, p. 178); in other words, it is “everything that makes the brand what it is, and without which it would be something different” (Kapferer, 2008, p. 178). Brand identity, therefore, has to do with the distinctive character and core values of a brand, which must be clearly articulated in any communication about the brand (see Aust, 2004, p. 523; Ihlen, 2013, p. 2). Importantly, Kapferer (2008) is of the view that while brand image is on the receiver’s side, brand identity originates from the owner of the brand or the sender, and is intended “to specify the brand’s image, aim and self-image” (p. 174).

The views of Massey’s (2010) and other scholars on organizational identity also add to our understanding of brand identity. Massey (2010) writes that “An organization’s identity is based upon the core values of the organization, and is a shared construction expressed through internal stakeholder perceptions of ‘who we are’” (Massey, 2010, p. 5). This view re-echoes that of Aust (2004) who claims that “Organization’s identity (OI) refers to those core, distinctive, and enduring features unique to an institution” (p. 515). Put differently, organizational identity refers to those distinguishing qualities conveyed to publics through the organization’s communicative choices (Aust, 523). Likewise, van Riel and Balmer (1997) state that “identity refers to an organization’s unique characteristics which are rooted in the behavior of the members of organization” (p. 340). For Singh, Tripathi, and Yadav (2012), identity can be one of two things: it is either “the degree to which the firm has achieved a distinct and coherent image” by way of its name, color, logo, or design among others, or how an organization communicates its “philosophy and strategy” (p. 92; see also Schmitt et al., 1995). For these authors, then, brand
identity must be conceptualized as the “is” or “innate character” of an organizational or product brand (Singh, Tripathi, & Yadav, 2012, p. 92).

According to Kapferer (2008), there are six facets of brand identity, namely, physicality (p. 182), personality (p. 183), culture (p. 184), relationship (p. 185), customer reflection (p. 186), and reflection of self-image (p. 186). By physicality, Kapferer (2008) means that every brand has identifiable physical features “made up of a combination of either salient objective features…or emerging ones” (p. 182). This fact is true whether the brand is a product, service, organization, church, place, or idea. Besides, a brand identity has a distinctive personality, borne out of the communication of the brand to its publics. Also, customers or publics develop a relationship with a brand over time, one that ultimately results in the creation of customer loyalty. Moreover, Kapferer (2008) explains that the brand identity is manifested in the way customers speak about it, noting “Because its communication and its most striking products build up over time, a brand will always tend to build a reflection or an image of the buyer or user which it seems to be addressing” (p. 186). Finally, brand identity resonates with the self-image of the target audience. As Kapferer (2008) explains, “Through our attitude towards certain brands, we indeed develop a certain type of inner relationship with ourselves” (p. 186).

At the core of any successful communication of a product or corporate brand is the effective articulation of that product or corporate brand’s identity. Hence, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) stress, “If the brand identity is confused or ambiguous, there is little chance that effective brand building will occur” (p. 27). As the driving force behind every brand-building effort, brand identity should “have depth and richness” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 43).
Brand identity, according to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) has a three-component structure, namely, “core identity,” “extended identity,” and “brand essence” (p. 43; emphasis in original). A brand’s core identity, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) explain, must “reflect the strategy and values of the organization, and at least one association should differentiate the brand and resonate with customers” (p. 43). As the brand is being communicated to the target audience, it is important for its core identity to stay consistent, for “if customers perceive the brand according to the core identity, the battle is won” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 43). Regarding the extended identity of the brand, the authors note that it “includes all of the brand identity elements that are not in the core, organized into meaningful groupings” (p. 45). As for brand essence, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) define it as “a single thought that captures the soul of the brand” (p. 45). In other words, brand essence has to do with what makes the brand what it is as captured in its communication to target audience. Brand essence is therefore “the glue that holds the core identity elements together,” or it is “the hub of a wheel linked to all of the core identity elements” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 45). Brand essence can thus be characterized as follows:

It should resonate with customers and drive the value proposition. It should be ownable, providing differentiation from competitors that will persist through time. And it should be compelling enough to energize and inspire the employees and partners of the organization. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 45)

Constituting the “functional and experiential attributes of the brand” (Hanna, 2011, p. 468), all three components need to work effectively together to ensure the success of the brand in the marketplace.
Brand image, on the other hand, “is the consumer’s perceptions of and preferences for a brand, measured by the various types of brand associations held in memory” (Keller, 2013, 549). Such a view is not inconsistent with Argenti and Druckenmiller’s (2004) notion of corporate image. According to the authors, corporate image mirrors the identity and brand of a corporate organization (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004). In other words, brand image is the impression publics get of a particular brand as they come into contact with it (see Massey, 2010). Therefore, brand image is the co-creation of organizations and their publics (see Massey, 2010). Explaining organizational image, Massey (2010) writes, “Specifically, an organizational image is developed dialectically through communication between organizations and stakeholders. Organizations create identities, what they wish to convey to others, and at the time stakeholders form images, impressions based upon their experiences with organizations” (p. 5). Likewise, Alvesson (1990) defines corporate image as “a holistic and vivid impression held by a particular group towards a corporation, partly as a result of information processing (sense-making) carried out by the group’s members…and partly by the aggregated communication” of the group (p. 376). Image, for Alvesson (1990), is a “fabricated and projected picture” of something (p. 376). This view of organizational image has been applied to brand image, whether the brand is a product, corporate organization, church, hospital, school, or even an idea. Like organizational image, brand image can be conceptualized as “the product of communications between organizations and stakeholders, not simply the result of one-way monologue that ipso facto produces a desired image in the minds of the target audience” (Massey, 2010, p. 6).

Abratt and Kleyn (2012) specifically define brand image by stating that

The brand image of an organization represents the current and immediate reflection that the stakeholders have towards an organization. It is related to the various physical and
behavioural attributes of the organization, such as business name, architecture, variety of products and services, tradition, ideology, and to the quality cues communicated by the organization’s products, services and people. (p. 1055)

In other words, brand image for the authors consists in the mental pictures stakeholders have of the visual and non-visual features of an organization in terms of how the organization is communicated and experienced concretely. The image of a brand, as Kapferer (2008) notes, originates from the brand’s target audience. For him, “The image refers to the way in which [groups] decode all of the signals emanating from the products, services and communication covered by the brand.” This means that brand image does not emerge from a vacuum; rather, it “is both the result and interpretation” of brand identity by publics (Kapferer, 2008, p. 174).

According to Aaker and Keller (1990), brand reputation refers to the perceptive judgment a consumer makes about the quality of a brand (as cited in Tiwari, Kumar, & Anish, 2010, p. 16). Fombrun and Rindova (1996) seem to agree with this definition as they conceptualize “reputation” in the phrase “brand reputation” as “a collective representation of a firm’s past actions and results that describes the firm’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders” (as cited in Mazzei, 2014, p. 223). Reputation, in the view of Fombrun and Rindova (1996), measures how a company or firm is perceived by both internal and external stakeholders. Defining reputation in terms of corporation, Topalian (2004) states that “Corporate reputation refers to the expectations, attitudes and feelings that consumers have about the nature and underlying reality of the company as represented by its corporate identity” (as cited in van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, p. 44). Based on this definition, one can assert that brand reputation has to do with how stakeholders view a brand to have fulfilled its promise to them. For van Riel and Fombrun (1996), “Corporate reputation is the overall estimation in which a company is held by
its constituents” (p. 44). In other words, “A corporate reputation represents the ‘net’ affective or emotional reaction—good-bad, weak or strong—of customers, investors, employees, and general public to the company’s name” (as cited in van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, p. 44).

A further understanding of the term brand reputation comes from Dowling (1986). According to Dowling (1986), “A reputation is the set of meanings by which a company is known and through which people describe, remember and relate to it” (p. 112). In other words, for Dowling (1986), reputation is “the net result of the interaction of a person’s beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about the company. A company will not have a reputation—people hold reputations of the company” (p. 112). Thus, one can conclude that brand reputation is borne out of the meaning stakeholders input to a brand following their interaction with it. In other words, brand reputation is the interpretive meaning given to the brand overtime by customers or publics. Brand reputation is therefore the persistence of a particular image of a brand over a long period of time.

Clearly, what emerges from the above-cited scholarship on identity, image, and reputation is that, while identity originates from internal organizational communication, image and reputation are the products of corporate communication. Thus, the brand identity of the Catholic Church, for example, is what key members of the religious organization say it is, and the brand image and brand reputation of that religious community constitute the impressions of ordinary members and outsiders. Such a linear perspective is, however, problematized by such scholars as Christensen and Askegaard (2001) and Cheney (1991). Problematizing the strict dichotomy scholars draw between identity and image (and of course, reputation), Christensen and Askegaard (2001), for example, note that identity formation is the product of the communicative interactivity between internal and external organizational stakeholders even as
image is a composite of both internal and external impressions. Similarly, in defining the construct of organizational identity, Cheney (1991) notes that it is located at the nexus of the shared interests between the organization and its publics or stakeholders (see also Mead, 1934)\(^2\). While not dismissing the perspectives already cited, the present work accepts the insights provided by Christensen and Askegaard (2001) and Cheney (1991), recognizing that the Catholic Church, for example, cannot articulate its brand identity without some input from external stakeholders such as avowed enemies and activist groups, as well as, secular American society in general. Moreover, within the ranks of the Church’s hierarchy, there is a clear sense of what the image and reputation of the ecclesial community are.

2.6. Brand-Building Models

Various scholars have proposed different brand-building models. Of the lot, the following have proved to be effective:

1. Brand orientation model
2. Brand leadership model
3. Brand asset management model
4. Customer-based brand equity model
5. Corporate brand-building model
6. The Nonprofit Brand-IDEA model

\(^2\) According to Mead (1934), the individual self is constituted by one’s societal membership. In other words, what makes up the self is the “organization of the attitudes which are common to the group” one is a member of (p. 162).
2.6.1. Brand Orientation Model

Proposed by Urde (1999), the brand orientation model treats brands as strategic resources. As he explains, the brand orientation is a perspective “in which the process of the organization revolves around the creation, development, and protection of brand identity in an ongoing interaction with target customers with the aim of achieving lasting competitive advantages in the form of brands” (Urde, 1999, pp. 117-118). Critical to the success of this brand-building model is the careful and intentional development of a brand architecture guided by the brand identity. The challenge of this model, though, as Urde (1999) rightly points out, is the possibility of the discrepancy between organizational goals and customer needs and wants. He, therefore, cautions that, while customer views should not be ignored, they must not be allowed to define the direction, development, and identity of the brand (Urde, 1999, p. 122).

The brand orientation model, in the view of Urde (1999), must begin with a clear conceptualization of the internal identity of the brand. “The brand then becomes a strategic platform that provides the framework for the customers’ wants and needs” (Urde, 1999, p. 129). Once a brand’s internal identity is clearly defined, managers can construct the brand mission. Then, armed with the internal identity and mission of the brand, managers embark on the course of creating meaning and value for the brand.

Thus, in the view of Urde (2003), the brand orientation model is a two-part process, namely, the internal process and the external process. Internally, the brand-building team articulates the identity of the brand to members of the organization and undertakes a number of activities aimed at helping internal publics embrace and live the brand identity. Externally, members of the organization who have embraced the identity of the brand work together to establish a bond.
between the brand and its customers by communicating the value and meaning of the brand to them, that is, the publics.

2.6.2. Brand Leadership Model

Originated by Aaker and Joachimstaler (2000), the brand leadership model, as a brand-building strategy, presupposes that brand building yields both brand assets and success. Preceding the implementation of this model is the strong belief on the part of the upper echelons of management that the payoff for building a strong brand is competitive advantage that can be quantified in monetary terms. The objective of this model “is to create strong brands” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17). Accordingly, the brand leadership model requires that a company articulate a clear brand identity, which is “a vision of how that brand should be perceived by its target audience” (Aaker & Joachimstaler, 2000, p. 27). Importantly, the authors note that “The brand identity is the heart of the brand leadership model, because it is the vehicle that guides and inspires the brand-building program” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 27). As such, the lack of clarity in the brand identity will hamper the successful implementation of the brand-building program. An effective “brand identity needs to resonate with customers, differentiate the brand from competitors, and represent what the organization can and will do over time” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 40).

The successful articulation of a brand identity system in the brand-building program includes the following:

1. avoiding a limited brand perspective;
2. linking (brand) to a compelling functional benefit whenever possible;
3. ignoring constructs that are not helpful;
4. generating deep consumer insight;
5. understanding competitors;
6. allowing multiple brand identities;
7. making the brand identity drive the execution of the brand-building program; and
8. elaborating the brand identity. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 50).

Ultimately, a successful implementation of the brand leadership model must consider the following important coordinates:

1. that branding goes beyond mere advertising to include public relations, promotions, news and press releases, direct mailing, events, etc.;
2. that brand building is about innovation;
3. that the methodical and excellent execution of brand-building programs is rewarding;
4. that the product or service as it is experienced by the consumer is very important;
5. that the brand is more than the product, as a strong brand has personality, organizational associations, emotion, and self-expression;
6. that the brand should be guided and directed by the brand team;
7. that brand managers and builders should ensure that the brand has an emotional connection with publics; and
8. that the subbrands are able to narrate the story of the main brand and manage customer perceptions. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, pp. 194-195).

2.6.3. Brand Asset Management Model

Based on the premise that a company’s most valuable assets are its brand and target audience, the brand asset management model seeks to manage the relationship between a brand
and its publics (Davis, 2000). According to Davis and Dunn (2002), “There is growing support for viewing and managing the brand as an asset and thus having the brand drive every strategic and investment decision” (p. 15). Treating brand as an asset is warranted, the authors argue, because every brand leader has the following three important strategic objectives: to increase customer loyalty, to differentiate from other brands, and to establish market leadership (Davis & Dunn 2002). Brand management, according to Davis (2000) is “a balanced investment approach for building the meaning of the brand, communicating it internally and externally, and leveraging it to increase brand profitability, brand asset value, and brand returns over time” (p. 12).

Regarding its implementation, the brand asset management model involves four phases of eleven steps. The four phases are: “developing a brand vision,” “determining brand picture,” “developing a brand asset management strategy,” and “supporting a brand management culture” (Davis, 2000, pp. 2-8). While the first phase consists of only one step, that is the “elements of a brand vision,” (Davis, 2000, p. 3), the second phase is made up of three steps, namely, “determining brand image,” “creating brand contact,” and establishing a “brand-based customer model” (Davis, 2000, pp. 3-6). In other words, at the first phase, the brand-building team states the objective of its brand-building efforts. At the second phase, the team seeks to understand how its brand and competing brands are perceived by customers. The third phase which consists of five steps, namely, “positioning the brand,” “extending the brand,” “communicating the brand’s position,” “leveraging the brand,” and “pricing the brand,” is about developing the strategy of the brand asset in order to realize the objective of the brand (Davis, 2000, pp. 6-8). Lastly, the fourth phase, made up of two steps, that is, “measuring return on brand investment” and “establishing a brand-based outline,” is about getting an organization to accept the brand culture and living it (Davis, 2000, p. 8).
2.6.4. Keller’s Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model

Proposed by Keller (1993), the Customer-Based Brand Equity model (CBBE) is premised on the fact that “the power of a brand lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand over time” (p. 15). Accordingly, Keller (2001) claims that a brand’s power “resides in the minds of customers” (p. 15). According to Keller (1993), CBBE can be defined “as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (p. 8). The three important coordinates of this definition, as Keller (1993) points out, are “differential effect,” “brand knowledge,” and “consumer response to marketing” (p. 8). Keller (1993) explains that by comparing “consumer response to the marketing of a brand with the response to the same marketing of a fictitiously named or unnamed version of the product or service,” a marketer can determine a brand’s differential effect (p. 8). Brand knowledge consists in two elements: brand awareness and brand image. By brand awareness, Keller (1993) means the facility with which a brand comes to mind at any point in time (p. 3). Brand awareness is made up of “brand recognition and brand recall performance” (Keller, 1993, p. 3; 2001, p. 16). While brand recognition has to do with a customer’s ability to identify a brand on the basis of a previous experience, brand recall involves the customer’s ability to call to mind the brand “when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue” (p. 3). Brand image refers to the “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory” (Keller, 1993, p. 3). A powerful brand enjoys the following distinguishing characteristics: “favorability, strength, and uniqueness” (Keller, 1993, p. 3). According to Keller (1993), these important dimensions of brand knowledge are critical in determining a consumer’s differential response to a brand.
As a brand-building model, the CBBE consists of four series of steps, “where each step is contingent on successfully achieving the previous step” (Keller, 2001, p. 8). The four steps are: brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses, and brand relationships (Keller, 1993; 2001). These steps, according to Keller (2001), answer the following respective questions as posed by the customer: “(1) Who are you? (brand identity) (2) What are you? (brand meaning) What do I feel about you? (brand responses) (4) What kind of association and how much of connection would I like to have with you? (brand relationships) (p. 15; emphasis in original).

Building a brand that uses the CBBE model begins with the articulation of the brand’s identity to ensure brand awareness. The accomplishment of this step is contingent on the creation of “brand salience with customers” (Keller, 2001, p. 16). In other words, to achieve a brand’s identity, brand managers must ensure that customers understand the brand’s ability to satisfy their needs; once this understanding is achieved, customers are likely to choose the brand over other competing brands in the product or service category. Brand awareness has two dimensions, namely depth and breadth (Keller, 2001). “Depth of brand awareness refers to how easily customers can recall or recognize the brand. Breadth refers to the range of purchase and consumption situations where the brand comes to mind” (p. Keller, 2001, p. 16). Hence, as Keller (1993; 2001) notes, a brand which enjoys high saliency among customers has deep and broad brand awareness.

The second stage in the CBBE brand-building process is giving meaning to the brand. Here, the brand building team must “create a brand image and establish what the brand is characterized by and should stand for in customers’ minds” (Keller, 1993; 2001, p. 16). Brand meaning, in the view of Keller (2001), “can be distinguished in terms of more functional, performance-related considerations vs. more abstract, imagery-related considerations” (p. 16). The following
attributes and benefits underlie the functionality of a brand: “primary characteristics and supplementary features”; “product reliability, durability, and serviceability”; “service effectiveness, efficiency, and empathy”; “style and design”; and “price” (Keller, 2001, pp. 16-17). Brand imagery is filtered through the following attributes: “user profiles”; “purchase and usage situations”; “personality and values”; and “history, heritage, and experiences” (Keller, 2001, p. 17). Keller (2001) explains further that

the brand associations making up the brand image and meaning can be profiled according to three key dimensions: (1) strength (how strongly the brand identified with a brand association), (2) favorability (how important or valuable the brand association is to customers), and (3) uniqueness (how distinctively the brand is identified with the brand association) (p. 17).

Powerful brands, therefore, are ones that have favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in the minds of customers.

The next stage in the CBBE brand-building process is to observe “how customers respond to the brand, its marketing activity, and sources of information (i.e., what customers think or feel about the brand)” (Keller, 2001, p. 18). According to Keller (1993; 2001), brand responses are of two kinds: judgments and feelings (p. 18). Customer judgments of brands relate to “quality,” “credibility,” “consideration,” and superiority” (Keller, 1993; 2001, p. 18). Customer feelings have to do with one or more of the following: “warmth,” “fun,” “excitement,” “security,” “social approval,” and “self-respect” (Keller, 1993; 2001).

Finally, the brand team has to focus on building strong relationships with target audience. Essentially, this stage involves the team’s ensuring that “customers have resonance with the brand” and “feel in synch with the brand” (Keller, 2001, pp. 18-19). This customer-brand
resonance comprises four categories: “behavioral attachment” (how frequent and how much do customers buy the product or service?), “attitudinal attachment” (how strongly do customers feel about the brand?), “sense of community” (do customers feel connected with the community of brand users?), and “active engagement” (are customers willing to invest important resources in the brand?) (Keller, 2001, p. 19). Keller (2001) notes that strong brand relationships are characterized by “intensity and activity” (p. 19), characteristics realized when customers feel attached to a said brand, are connected with the users of the brand, feel proud to belong to the community of brand users, and invest their resources in the brand.

2.6.5. The Corporate-Branding Model

Conceived in the 1990s, the corporate branding model emerged out of a need to shift focus from product brands to corporate brands. According to Aaker (2004a), corporate branding is a process of deliberately shaping the image of a corporate entity to reflect its historical roots, people, and existential strategy. Similarly, Einwiller and Will (2002) write that corporate branding is “a systematically planned and implemented process of creating and maintaining a favorable image and consequently a favorable reputation for the company as a whole by sending signals to all stakeholders and by managing behaviour, communication, and symbolism” (p. 101; see also van Riel, 2001). An approach that treats organizations as brands, the corporate branding model requires that brand managers interact meaningfully with their organization’s multiple publics, be they internal or external (Balmer & Gray, 2003; Knox & Bickerton, 2003; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Aaker, 2004b). In interacting with their multiple publics, managers must be guided by the core values and vision of the organization they represent. These core values must be concretely experienced by customers in their use of the organization’s products and services;
as well, organizational behavior and communication must foreground these core values. As Urde (2003) points out, “Core values influence continuity, consistency and credibility in the building of corporate brand” (p. 1036).

According to Balmer and Gray (2003), the corporate brand-building model consists of three elements, namely, strategic vision, organizational culture, and corporate image. To these three elements, Knox and Bickerton (2003) add a fourth, that is, competitive organizational environment shaped by present image and culture. In the course of the branding-building process, each of these elements must be carefully articulated and aligned with the others through effective dialogic communication among the brand team, top management of the organization, the rest of the organization’s internal publics, and external stakeholders (Hatch & Shultz, 2003).

Knox and Bickerton (2003) propose six “conventions” constituting the corporate brand-building process:

1. Contextualization of brand: Brand contextualization means understanding the current brand position and culture.
2. Construction of brand: Constructing the brand consists in positioning it in a way that is consistent with stakeholder expectations and values.
3. Confirmation of brand: Confirming the brand takes place when both the internal and external audiences are made to understand the nature and identity of the brand.
4. Consistency of brand: Brand consistency involves making sure that in all its communications with multiple publics the same self-image of the brand is conveyed.
5. Continuity of brand: Brand continuity involves the alignment between business processes and corporate brand.
6. Conditioning of brand: Brand conditioning involves the ongoing monitoring and managing of the performance of the brand in the market. (p. 12)

Corporate brand-building is thus a never-ending activity because the detection of a problem calls for either the tweaking or relaunching of the whole process.

2.6.6. The Nonprofit Brand-IDEA Model

The Nonprofit Brand-IDEA model is the fruit of the collaborative efforts of Nathalie Laidler-Kylander, Christopher Stone, and Shephard Stenzel (see Kylander & Stone, 2012; Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014). Specifically tailored to fit nonprofit organizations, the Nonprofit Brand-IDEA model was initially based on four principles, namely “integrity, democracy, ethics, and affinity” (Kylander & Stone, 2012, p. 40; Laidler-Kylander, 2012, 170); later, these principles were revised to three, that is, integrity, democracy, and affinity (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014, p. 9). By integrity is meant the aligning of the identity and image of a nonprofit organization, as well as the aligning of both (i.e., internal identity and external image) with the organization’s mission and values in a way that incarnates a brand characterized by clarity, distinctiveness, consistency, and credibility (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014, p. 10).

The principle of democracy, on the other hand, refers to “the process of engaging internal and external stakeholders” of a nonprofit organization wishing to brand (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014, p. 11). In other words, by the principle of democracy is meant the communicative engagement among organizational members, staff, participants and volunteers who understand a nonprofit organization and are committed to being its ambassadors (Laidler-Kylander, 2012, p. 170). Brand ethics has to do with how a nonprofit brand conceptualizes itself and acts in a manner that reflects its core values. In the words of Laidler-Kylander (2012), “brand ethics
aligns both the brand identity and the brand image with the core values and culture of the organization. Brand ethics appear in a double role: the establishment of an ethical brand, and the ethical use of brand” (Kylander, 2012, p. 171). Then, the principle of brand affinity is a characteristic of a nonprofit organization that “works well alongside other brands, sharing space and credit generously, promoting collective over individual interests” (Laidler-Kyalnder, 2012, 171; Kylander, 2012, p. 40). In other words, brand affinity is characterized by a collaboration between a nonprofit organization and other partners in the pursuit of shared interests.

To construct a nonprofit brand, using the Brand-IDEA model, an organization must first conduct research into people’s perception of it, define its identity, and determine who its audiences are. Then, the nonprofit organization must connect its mission, values, and strategy. Next, the organization must align its brand identity and image by allowing both internal and external stakeholders to participate in its running in a democratic fashion. In other words, both external and internal stakeholders must be engaged in ways that allow them to provide important ideas beneficial to the organization as they communicate freely and share their own stories. Having established a democratic culture, the nonprofit organization in the process of branding itself must apply the principle of affinity by collaborating with other entities with visions and values that reflect its own. In order to achieve this goal, the organization has to “understand its ecosystem, the trends and forces shaping the ecosystem, and the key actors and players” (Laidller-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014, p. 141). Once it discovers who its key allies are, the organization collaborates with them by promoting not only its own offerings but also those of partners. Finally, it is important that the organization evaluate the outcome of its branding process. This task is achieved using “the Role of Brand Cycle” (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014, p. 147) that suggests that “you measure both organizational cohesion and external trust as
fundamental precursors to the ability of your organization to effectively and efficiently implement its mission and as indicators of strong brand” (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014, p. 147). The next section will examine the whole idea of brand rebuilding, rebranding, or revitalizing.

2.7. The Meaning of Rebranding/ Brand Rebuilding/ Brand Revitalizing

According to Osman (2008), “Rebranding is the process of marketing an existing product or service of one brand with a different identity involving radical changes to the brand name, logo, image, marketing strategy and advertising themes” (p. 59). The author goes on to say that in advertising the synonym for “rebranding” is “repositioning”, adding that a product or service is usually repositioned in an effort to raise sales (Osman, 2008, p. 59). Importantly, Osman (2008) rationalizes that the essence of all rebranding efforts is to refocus and re-imagine an existing brand. Like Osman (2008), Dibie (2013) conceptualizes rebranding as “a marketing strategy in which a new name, term, symbol, design, or a combination thereof is created for an established brand with the intention of developing a new, differentiated identity in the minds of consumers, investors, and competitors” (p. 26; see also Singh, Tripathi, Yadav, 2012). A key point in Dibie’s (2013) understanding of rebranding is the facticity of changing the existential reality of a brand in terms of its name, image, marketing strategy, and advertising themes” (p. 26). The rationale for this change, as Dibie (2013) views it, is “to reposition the brand/company, occasionally to distance itself from negative connotations of the previous branding, or to move the brand up the market…” (p. 26). Similarly, Dev and Keller (2014) write that rebranding or revitalizing a brand means breathing new air into a brand concept message as and when necessary to enable it meet the challenges of new trends, respond adequately to the demands of
stakeholders, and address existential threats head-on (p. 1). With a perspective akin to the already cited authorities, Muzellec, Doogan, and Lambkin (2003) assert that rebuilding a brand involves assigning a new name and identity to a brand in crisis and repositioning it in the minds of consumers as being different from other competitors in the market. Agreeing with this understanding of rebranding, Andrew and Kim (2007) think that rebranding focuses on changing the way customers perceive an existing brand and how it is positioned in the marketplace. Furthermore, in the view of Keller (1999), rebranding is a process whereby an organization repositions its brand without compromising customer loyalty. Stuart and Muzellec (2004), also propose that to rebrand is to alter the identity of a brand through change of name, logo, and slogan.

For Daly and Moloney (2004), however, rebranding is a complex process and must therefore be conceptualized as a continuum involving three forms of changes, namely, minor changes, intermediate changes, and complete changes. Minor changes usually involve alterations in logo, symbols, and other visuals and are therefore referred to as aesthetics. Intermediate changes, however, relate to the new ways in which a brand has to be communicated to stakeholders and is referred to as repositioning (also see Rosenthal 2003). Finally, total or complete changes to a brand involve a complete overhaul of the brand image and identity, and hence, is referred to as rebranding (Daly & Moloney, 2004).

Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) also assert that rebranding involves changing a brand’s aesthetics and position in the market. While not completely disagreeing with Daly and Moloney (2004), Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) distinguish between two major forms of rebranding: “evolutionary” rebranding and “revolutionary” rebranding (p. 805). They explain that evolutionary rebranding involves gradual minor changes to a brand’s slogan, text, and
positioning; however, revolutionary rebranding involves major changes to the name, slogan, text, and positioning of a brand (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006, pp. 805-806). The authors caution that since stakeholders’ image of an organizational brand is largely framed by a combination of both formal and informal branding activities of the organization, evolutionary rebranding and revolutionary rebranding must be seen as two sides of the same coin involving “market positioning and visual aesthetics” (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006, p. 819). Importantly, whether evolutionary or revolutionary, rebranding can be tactical or strategic (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006, p. 819). Rebranding is tactical when it is triggered by external marketing events, and is strategic when an organization seeks to add value to its brand by “integrating and separating elements in the brand architecture” (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006, p. 819).

For Singh, Tripathi, and Yadav (2012), rebranding may involve either just a simple restyling of the way a company does business or a complete change of recognized name, adding “Changing brand names, with all their associated values and promises, is a critical element of rebranding” (p. 92). Likewise, Beus and Matanda (2010) urge that the rebranding focus must be directed not only at external stakeholders but internal ones as well. Focusing on internal communication helps employees to understand and appreciate what is at stake, leading them to buy into the vision of the rebranding efforts (Beus & Matanda, 2010; Merrilees & Miller, 2008). Once employees identify with the rebranding vision of the organization they can well represent the qualities of the new brand to external stakeholders (Beus & Matanda, 2010, p. 2; Keller, 1993). The fact is that “The more employees are informed about the brand changes, the more comfortable they are in communicating the brand values to customers” (Beus & Matanda, 2010, p. 2). Internal brand promotion thus ensures that employees both understand the new brand and
take ownership of it (Beus & Matanda, 2010). In the view of Schiffenbauer (2001), internal branding aligns employee behavior with the values of the new brand.

In summary, to rebrand or rebuild a brand “implies the action of ‘brand again,’ or ‘brand renewal, refreshment, makeover, reinvention, renaming and reposition’” (Merrilees & Miller, 2008, as cited in Phang, 2012, p. 256). Ultimately, as Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) assert, rebranding seeks to transform the brand image of an organization or product. In full agreement with what scholars have said about rebranding, the present dissertation holds the view that rebranding is an attempt by a struggling brand to reclaim stakeholders’ lost trust by making changes to its existential reality and communicative choices.

2.8. Rationale for Rebranding

Why would an organization want to rebrand/rebuild its brand/revitalize its brand? To this question, Dev and Keller (2014) answer that rebranding is necessary because of the possibility of an organizational brand “los[ing] its vitality” (p. 1). Dibie (2013) lists a number of factors warranting brand rebuilding, including

(1) when the life cycle of a product or brand comes to an end;
(2) when the lifestyles of consumers change and new competing brands enter the market;
(3) when an existing brand is hit by a scandal; and
(4) when a fresh start becomes the only option open to an old brand (p. 27; see also Phang, 2008; Petburikul, 2009, p. 156).

Such a perspective is consistent with that of Beus and Matanda (2010) who argue that “rebranding is often the most viable solution of revitalizing tired and underperforming brands” (p. 1). In the same way, Branca and Borges (2011) think that organizations rebrand to add value
to existing brands and to convey to stakeholders these brands have undergone positive transformations.

For Greyser (2009), rebranding becomes a categorical imperative when an organization faces reputational crisis. He points out that reputational crises take different forms, are caused by different factors, and affect a variety of audiences:

[Some] were the result of problems that festered over longer periods, such as the priest sex abuse scandal affecting many Catholic archdioceses [and dioceses] in the U.S., the accounting scandal that eventually ruined the once-respectable firm of Arthur Andersen, or the bribery scandal over selection of host cities that tarnished the reputation of the International Committee. (Greyser, 2009, p. 591)

The following, therefore, are some of the causes of reputational crises: (1) “product failure,” (2) “social responsibility gap,” (3) “corporate misbehavior,” (4) “executive misbehavior,” (5) “poor business results,” (6) “spokesperson misbehavior and controversy,” (7) “death of symbol of company,” (8) “loss of public support,” and (9) “controversial ownership” (Greyser, 2009, pp. 591-592; Petburikul, 2009, pp. 155-156). Any of these crises can pose a major challenge to the very existence of an organization and its brand identity because they strike at the organization’s brand essence, defined as “the distinctive attribute/characteristic most closely associated with the brand’s meaning and success” (Greyser, 2009, p. 592). Such a view suggests that the occurrence of a crisis in any organization creates a dissonance in the minds of publics and that rebranding is the only effective remedy to curing such a malady.

In the view of Singh, Tripathi, and Yadav (2012), however, rebranding is a necessary way to restructure an organization that has been merged with another, bought off, or divested. In such a situation, rebranding becomes a means to demonstrate to stakeholders the severance of
ties with the old brand. Agreeing with such views, Branca and Borges (2011) assert that rebranding is due to “changing external conditions, weaker competitive position, changing ownership structures and/or changes in corporate strategy” (p. 176; see also Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Ultimately, rebranding must involve a re-clarification and repositioning of a challenged brand (Signh, Tripathi, and Yadav, 2012). Accordingly, the authors advice that “Your goal in rebranding should be to make it easier for customers and prospects to understand exactly why your company should be one of their top choices—why there are few credible substitutes for your company in the market” (Singh, Tripathi, & Yadav, 2012).

Regardless of purpose, the rebranding process may have one of two orientations; that is, either proactive or reactive (Zahid & Raja, 2014). Zahid and Raja (2014) explain that, while a proactive rebranding process is intended to stay ahead of competitors by seeking to gain future advantage in the marketplace, a reactive process is a response to an existential challenge threatening the brand. In the case of a reactive process, the rebranding effort is an attempt to redefine the identity of a brand in hopes that the old one may be forgotten (Goi & Goi, 2011). Hence, the purpose of rebranding is to reflect a new identity and a new image (Juntunen, Saraniemi, & Jussila, 2009, p. 4; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006).

When faced with reputational crisis, an organization, in attempting to rebrand, must examine the following key coordinates: “the [existing] brand elements,” “the crisis situation,” “company initiatives,” and “results” (Greyser, 2009, pp. 592-593). By examining these coordinates, an organization can figure out the threat to its brand essence. Singling out the priests’ sexual abuse scandal and its effect on the brand essence of the Catholic Church in America, Greyser (2009) makes the following important observation:
Trust and faith are the essence of the brand of the Catholic Church (and most religions). This can affect attendance at services, fundraising, and the credibility of the Church’s position on public issues. In my view, the length of the priest sex abuse issues and efforts to hide them had a negative impact on trust and faith, and later serious effects on the financial condition of the Church; the essence of the brand was eroded, but not destroyed. (p. 593)

If trust and faith are the essence of religious brands, then integrity and efficacy are the brand essences of accounting firms and pharmaceutical companies respectively, the lack of both of which makes rebranding a categorical imperative.

In view of the fact that reputational crisis consists in a threat to brand essence, it is important that organizations communicate effectively by constructing an authentic image in an effort to overcome crises (Greyser, 2009, p. 595). By authentic image, according to the Arthur Page Society’s *The Authentic Enterprise* (2007), is meant “conforming to fact, and therefore worthy of trust, reliance, or belief” (as cited in Greyser, 2009, p. 595). Greyser (2009) advises us that effective and truthful communication as a way of dealing with reputational crises must be founded on trust, which has three important components. These constituents of trust are “an organization’s integrity (fair and just),” “goodwill (caring),” and “competence (the ability to do what an organization says” (Greyser, 2009, p. 596).

According to Greyser (2009), there are four essential contexts that provide an opportunity for an organization facing reputational crisis to construct an authentic image. The first context consists in the organization’s communicative efforts. Here, the organization must talk “authentic” (Greyser, 2009, p. 597). The second context consists in the organization’s behavior. Here, the organization must seek to live its core values or make choices that are consistent with
its core values. The third context consists in the organization’s commitment to its core values. In other words, faced with reputational crisis, an organization must retain its authenticity by remaining faithful to its core values and core essence; it must stick with what defines it. The fourth context consists in the organization’s defending its authenticity. Here, the organization must appeal to its “reputational reservoir’ and the trust it has generated over time” (Greyser, 2009, p. 597).

Greyser’s (2009) advice to organizations facing reputational crises is to communicate truthfully, address problems in a forthright manner, and support credible initiatives (p. 598). He writes:

In the face of crisis, especially when it is rooted in a problem that is or will become visible, I believe an organization should admit the truth, even if embarrassing. Also, it should forthrightly try to address the problem, even if it involves changing corporate behavior. And it should support the initiative with credible communications.

Communications alone cannot do the job. (Greyser, 2009, 598)

In the view of Greyser (2009), then, effective rebranding can be located at the nexus of organization’s communicative acts and behavior. In other words, an organization cannot redeem its brand image by saying one thing and doing a completely different thing. The only way such an organization can dig itself out of the hole of reputational crisis is to align its behavioral choices with communicative acts.

2.9. Rebranding Models

Different processes of rebuilding a brand have been proposed by different scholars. Examples of such branding models include:
2.9.1. The Light and Kiddon Rebranding Model

According to Light and Kiddon (2009), the process of rebranding a struggling brand consists in six steps, including the following:

1. changing the focus of the organization;
2. restoring organizational brand relevance;
3. relaunching organizational brand experience;
4. making organizational brand results oriented;
5. building anew organizational brand trust; and
6. aligning all brand elements to achieve ultimate goal. (pp. 34-38)

Light and Kiddon (2009) explain that the first step consists in changing the focus of the organization facing brand crisis from product mindset to customer mindset, that is, making customer needs drive the activities of the new brand. Next, restoring organizational brand relevance means understanding the market, segmenting customers on the basis of needs, defining the brand promise of the organization, and creating an insight that resonates with customers. The third step then seeks to recreate the old brand experience which helped develop customer loyalty toward the brand. While the fourth step reorients the brand to one that yields expected results, the
fifth seeks to renew customer trust in the new brand being built. At the final step, the rebranding team seeks to align all elements of the new brand in order to achieve its ultimate goal.

2.9.2. The Park’s Hotels Rebranding Model

Based on their study of the rebranding of The Park’s Hotels in India, Dev and Keller (2014) proposed another seven-step process. The seven steps are as follows:

1. conducting a brand audit of the organization,
2. locating the market position of the brand,
3. constructing the brand platform of the organization,
4. articulating the beliefs of the organizational brand,
5. evoking the brand experience of the organization,
6. repositioning the organizational brand, and
7. relaunching the new organizational brand (p. 1)

Dev and Keller (2014) explain that their seven-step process of rebranding an organization “is logical and incremental as each step depends in part on what is accomplished in the preceding step, gradually modifying and refining the revitalization until it achieves the desired objective” (pp. 1-2). Further, they advise that the rebranding team must strike the appropriate balance in the process of rebuilding the organizational brand, “create compelling ‘best of both worlds’ positions,” “offer a set of related but distinct points of difference,” and “inform and enforce the brand with brand filters…” (p. 8).

Rebranding, for Dev and Keller (2014), must begin with a brand audit to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the existing brand, as well as the cause of the problem it is facing. The next step is to locate the position of the brand in the market, that is, how it is perceived by
the customer. The third step constructs the new brand position of the organization being rebranded, after which the brand team articulates the new beliefs or vision of the new brand. In step five, the team evokes the brand experience of the new brand in concrete brand rebuilding events. Next, the organizational brand is repositioned in terms of the offerings promised to customers. Finally, the new brand is relaunched in the market, with a promise to make life better for customers.

2.9.3. The Daly and Moloney Rebranding Model

Based upon their study of how the Irish phone company Eircell was rebranded as Vodafone, Daly and Moloney (2004) propose a rebranding framework consisting of “three sequential but overlapping sections,” namely,

1. analysis,
2. planning, and
3. evaluation. (pp. 34-35)

The authors explain that the analysis section involves the examination of the state of the brand in the market to determine its strength and how that might be leveraged in the rebranding process. Following this analysis, new values and visions are set for the new brand. The next section of the framework consists of three stages of planning, namely “communicating to internal customers,” “renaming strategy,” and “the rebranding marketing plan” (p. 34). Finally, evaluation allows for a determination of what works and what does not work for the rebranding campaign and how the process can be refined. As an ongoing activity, evaluation is encouraged throughout the whole process of rebranding.
2.9.4. The Muzellec and Colleagues’ Rebranding Model

In the view of Muzellec, Doogan, and Lambkin (2004), however, rebranding consists of four stages:

1. repositioning,
2. renaming,
3. redesigning, and
4. relaunching. (pp. 34-35)

At the repositioning stage, the rebranding team sets the objective of the rebranding process, one that consists in deciding on a new position to be created in the minds of stakeholders and customers. Renaming the brand involves choosing a new name for it, while redesigning has to do with the rebranding team’s creating a new visual layout for the new brand to be reflected in “stationery, brochures, advertisements, annual reports, office, and delivery trucks” (Muzellec et al, 2004, p. 35). The final stage of relaunching the brand consists in communicating the new brand identity to stakeholders.

2.9.5. The Phang Rebranding Model

Like Muzellec et al. (2003), Phang (2008) proposes a four-stage rebranding process:

1. analyzing,
2. planning,
3. implementing, and
4. evaluation. (p. 34)

The stage of analysis involves examining factors creating the brand crisis and the drivers of the rebranding process. In planning the rebranding process, the rebranding team makes important
decisions regarding the “repositioning, renaming, restructuring and redesigning” of the organization before the launching of the new brand (Phang, 2008, p. 34). At the implementing stage, the new brand is launched in two phases: first to internal stakeholders, and second to external publics. Finally, evaluation measures the success of the new brand relative to the original objectives of the rebranding process.

2.9.6. The Juntunen and Colleagues’ Rebranding Model

Another rebranding process which deserves a look is the seven-stage process proposed by Juntunen et al. (2009). Theirs is a perspective influenced by their conceptualization of corporate rebranding. According to the authors,

Corporate rebranding is a systematically planned and implemented process of planning, creating and maintaining a new favourable image and consequently a favourable reputation for the company as a whole by sending signals to all stakeholders and by managing behaviour, communication, and symbolism in order to proact or react to change. (Juntunen, Saraniemi, & Jussila, 2009, p. 3)

The seven stages proposed by Juntunen, et al. (2009) are the following:

1. triggering,
2. analyzing and decision-making,
3. planning,
4. preparing,
5. launching,
6. evaluating, and
7. continuing. (pp. 3-6)
Triggering refers to events that drive the rebranding process, including company decisions and factors causing changes. The analysis stage involves analyzing the market, competition, and existential possibilities affecting the brand. In addition, both the internal company culture and old brand are analyzed. Next, the planning stage consists in setting a vision and goals for the new brand. Then, the stage of preparing involves “plans and pretesting for launching” (Juntunen et al., 2009, p. 6). At the stage of launching, the new corporate brand is communicated first to internal stakeholders and then later to external stakeholders. The evaluation stage has to do with the rebranding team’s measuring the success or failure of the new brand in terms of stakeholder awareness and profits. Importantly, there is a caution that every stage of the rebranding process has to be evaluated before moving to the next stage. Finally, the continuing stage involves the need for the organization to continue to improve the quality of its products or services, provide ongoing orientation and education to personnel, and ensure that both management and employees pay attention to the corporate brand strategy in all their actions. This directive is critical because as the authors put it, “Corporate rebranding necessitates synergy between marketing, human resource management and strategy” (Juntunen et al., 2009, p. 7; also see Hatch & Schultz, 2003).

2.10. Effects of Rebranding

According to scholars, rebranding has effects on the life of a brand. Patrick (2013), for example, identifies six effects of rebranding on a company’s product brand. These effects include identity, customer relations, professionalism, trust, sign of quality, and value of brand (Patrick, 2013, as cited in Dibie, 2013, p. 31). With regard to identity, rebranding shapes the face of the brand in the public sphere through its name, logo, and communication about the brand.
Besides, rebranding improves customer relations as the brand identity is shaped to respond to customer needs. Professionally, rebranding makes an organization business-minded, well-focused, and effective in its transactions with stakeholders. Further, rebranding aligns company behavior with values, resulting in customer trust. Also, by delivering on its promise, the rebranded product or organization becomes associated with quality. Finally, a successful rebranding process adds value to the product or organizational brand.

Ultimately, in the view of Tevi (2013), “rebranding enhances, regains, transfers and/or recreates brand equity” (p. 120; also see Petburikul, 2009), which Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) define as a set of assets as well as liabilities connected with the name and symbols of a brand (also see Keller, 2014). Providing a much more expansive definition of brand equity by tying it with corporate organization, Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) claim that corporate brand equity must be seen as “the differential response by the firm’s relevant constituencies, i.e., customers, employees, suppliers and other stakeholders, to the words, actions, communications, and products or services provided by an identified company” (p. 807; also see Keller 2000). This view that rebranding impacts brand equity is one that is shared by Branca and Borges (2011), who posit a strong connection between rebranding and brand equity management, stating “Firms wanting to add to their offer through corporate rebranding have to evaluate and manage their brand equity” (p. 176). Since scholars consider only strong or leading brands as the ones with brand equity, rebranding, in the view of Tevi (2013), Branca and Borges (2011), and Muzellec and Lambkin (2006), then, elevates a struggling brand to a much stronger and better position in the marketplace (also see Keller, 1999). Keller (1999) points out that once a brand goes through a successful rebranding process it regains its favorability, strength, and uniqueness among customers and stakeholders (also see Andrews and Kim, 2007).
2.11. Conclusion

The foregoing review of literature on brand, branding, and, rebranding has provided important insights into how a product, organization, or any entity for that matter can be branded and rebranded. Nevertheless, the available literature on rebranding cannot provide a model robust and sufficient enough to rebuild the Catholic brand in America. This is because an effective way of rebuilding the Catholic Church brand in the United States must avoid a redenomination of the religious organization or an overhaul of its core identity, for doing so will likely have a negative impact (see Muzellec et al., 2004). Rather, an effective rebranding model for the Catholic Church in view of the priests’ sexual abuse scandals must maintain the name Catholic and defend the core values or identity of the ecclesial community, while at the same time differentiating the Church from predator priests and irresponsible bishops even as it characterizes it as a model institutional citizen, one that has played a leading role in providing access to quality education, healthcare, and other social services in the United States. It is the view of the present dissertation that such a model can be effectively provided by Isocrates’ Antidosis. This Isocratean rebranding model consists in the following important coordinates: (1) objective; (2) articulation of problem and planning; (3) implementation, which includes appeal to biography, differentiation and dissociation, appeal to the goodwill of publics, and making moral choices that give advantage; (4) evaluation on the basis of the judgment of target audiences.
Chapter 3

Isocratean Theory of Self-Defense and Self-Representation

3.1. Introduction

In attempting to construct a new brand for the beleaguered American Catholic Church, I purpose to use Isocrates’ (353 B.C./2000) notions of self-defense and self-representation or self-characterization as seen in his text the *Antidosis* as my theoretical framework. A text on self-defense against an imaginary opponent who accuses him of corrupting Athenian youth and teaching them to argue unfairly, the *Antidosis* presents Isocrates as a faithful Greek and a patriot, one whose educational enterprise prepared students to be responsible citizens of the Athenian *polis* in particular, and the Hellespont in general (Isocrates, 353 B.C./2000). While he defends rhetoric as an effective tool for the construction of human society, Isocrates (353 B.C./2000) differentiates himself from false sophists whose ultimate aim was to make money immorally by making promises they never were able to keep. In the process of constructing his defense, Isocrates reimagines himself as a promoter of what is quintessentially Greek, a lover of Athens in particular and Greece in general, and a different teacher from all the other teachers of rhetoric. This chapter begins with a look at the biography of Isocrates, followed by an examination of the tax and legal systems of Athens, the Isocratean theory of self-defense and self-representation, and a conclusion that articulates the Isocratean model of rebranding, which will be employed in chapter six to construct a new brand for the American Catholic Church.
3.2. Biography of Isocrates

Born ca. 436 B.C., Isocrates was a member of a rich Athenian family (Jebb, 1962; Benoit, 1984; Mirhady & Too, 2000, pp. xvi, 2). He studied with such important teachers as Tisias, Prodicus, Gorgias, and Theramenes, as well as associated with Socrates (Jebb, 1962; Benoit, 1984; Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. 2). During the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC), his family lost most of its wealth in its efforts to fulfill its liturgical obligations which consisted in funding the war. After the Great War, Isocrates took up in 403 B.C. logography, a profession he not only abandoned in 390 B.C., but with which he also never wanted to have anything to do for the rest of his life (Jebb, 1962; Mirhady & Too, 2000; Haskins, 2004; Too, 2008; see also Poulakos, 1997;). He then founded a school, where he taught and wrote, “setting forth his educational, philosophical, and political views in essays that took the form of speeches but were not meant for delivery” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xvi; see also Jebb, 1962; Wagner, 1992). As a founder of a school in the fourth century, Isocrates had a broad understanding of philosophy and rhetoric, both of which he considered synonymous. Commenting on Isocrates’ view of the synonymy between philosophy and rhetoric, Benoit (1984) writes, “So, rhetoric as the worker or science of persuasion, is a branch of philosophy, it can alter perceptions of things, it allows us to dispute with others and seek knowledge of ourselves” (p. 113). Scholars report that Isocrates seemed to have been very successful in his educational endeavor, as students from the whole of the Greek world flocked to his school and as he was counted among Athens’ 1,200 richest citizens, a group required by law to finance warships and choruses (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. 2; see also Benoit, 1984; Wagner, 1992). According to Mirhady and Too (2000), the success of the school lasted beyond the lifetime of its founder, noting “Isocrates greatly influenced education and rhetoric in the Hellenic, Roman, and modern periods until the eighteen century” (p. xvi).
For Isocrates, public speaking was a means, not for self-aggrandizement, but for participation in the political life of the Athenian *polis*. Hence, he cast himself as a principled teacher of rhetoric and philosophy. Devoted to shaping the character of his society, Isocrates wrote letters and gave political advice and directions to such important political figures as Dionysus, Philip, Timotheus, and Archidamus (Mirhady and Too, 2000, p. 2).

In 356 B.C., Isocrates lost a court case initiated against him by a wealthy Athenian citizen called Megacleides on the grounds that Isocrates was the richer of the two and therefore had to undertake the public service of funding a trieme\(^3\) (Mirhady & Yoo, 2000, p. 201; Too, 2008, p1). A couple of years later, at the age of 82, Isocrates, still disillusioned by the injustice of the court case, would seek to mend the damage done to his public image by writing his defense in what came to be known as the *Antidosis* (Isocrates, 353 B.C./2000; Mirhady & Too, 2000; Too, 2008). In this text, he constructed an image of the patriotic citizen who had paid his dues to society by virtue of his giving a rhetorical education to the youth of Greece (Isocrates, 353 B.C./2000).

As a writer, Isocrates is credited to have written the following works among many others: *Busiris* (391 B.C.), *Against the Sophists* (390 B.C.), *Panegyricus* (380 B.C.), *To Demonicus* (374 B.C.), *To Nicocles* (374 B.C.), *Nicocles* (372 B.C.), *Encomium to Helen* (370 B.C.), *Evagoras* (365 B.C.), *Areopagiticus* (355 B.C.), *On Peace* (355 B.C.), *Antidosis* (353 B.C.), *To Philip* (346 B.C.), and *Panathanaicus* (342 B.C.). In these works, he articulated his views on education, politics, and philosophy, while at the same time criticizing the perspectives of opponents. Providing an overall assessment of Isocrates’ education and writings, Mirhady and Too (2000) assert the following:

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\(^3\) An Athenian tax system that required rich citizens to support public works from their personal resources for twelve months.
At the core of his teaching was an aristocratic notion of arête (“virtue, excellence”), which could be attained by pursuing *philosophia*—not so much the dialectical study of abstract subjects like epistemology and metaphysics that Plato marked as “philosophy” as the study of practical application of ethics, politics, and public speaking. (p. 3)

Thus, far from being an abstract concept, wisdom or philosophy, for Isocrates, emerges out of “habituation and trial by concrete” situations (Haskins, 2004, p. 40). As Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) himself says in the *Antidosis*, “I think the wise are those who have the ability to reach the best of opinions (*doxai*) most of the time, and philosophers are those who spend time acquiring such intelligence as quickly as possible” (15.271; Marsh, 2013).

3.3. Athenian Tax and Legal Systems

While Athens had nothing like a general tax system, it did impose an annual tax on foreign residents, import and export duties, as well as required tributes from allied city-states. Besides, there was in place a “system of liturgies…by which in a regular rotation the rich provided funding for certain special needs” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxi). Mirhady and Too (2000) tell us that there were two main liturgies, namely, “the *choregia*” and “the trierarchy” (p. xxi). The *choregia* was a tax regime that involved a sponsor’s supervising and paying for the training and stage performance of chorus, one that consisted in dancing and singing at public festivals (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxi). The trierarchy, however, required a sponsor to pay for and command a warship for twelve months (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxi). According to Mirhady and Too (2000), although trierarchy was a very expensive endeavor, rich Athenians who accepted to undertake it expended even more than was legally required in order to burnish their credentials as patriotic citizens. Nevertheless, it often did happen that a man who thought he
had been unjustly assigned a liturgy might refuse to carry it out, protesting that somebody else who was richer should be the one to fund the trierarchy. In such a situation, the person unwilling to undertake the trierarchy could legally request that he exchange (antidosis) his property with the one he thought was richer if the other man refused to step in to finance the liturgy (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxi; Too, 2008). Additionally, rich Athenians also had to pay a special tax on their property as and when the need arose.

Concerning the legal system of Athens, nine archons had an administrative responsibility toward trials and the legal procedures that led up to them. All important cases argued in court were settled by jurors after they had listened to the presentation of points of law by opposing parties. Usually, jurors first listened to plaintiffs before hearing defendants who had to present their own cases. Because litigants could not speak more than twice in a legal dispute, “A single speech might thus combine narrative, argument, emotional appeal, and various digression, all with the goal of obtaining a favorable verdict” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxi).

Usually, trials were preceded by both private and public hearings where evidence was presented, followed sometimes by arbitration as required by law (Mirhady & Too, 2000, xxi). The purpose of these preliminary sessions and arbitrations was to ensure that parties familiarized themselves with each other’s arguments. While litigants usually presented their own cases, they could obtain the help not only of friends and family but also of logographers as well. Mirhady and Too (2000) inform us that, for all cases that took place in the popular courts, the final verdict was delivered by about 200 or more jurors (p. xxii). However, when it came to murder and religious cases, the verdict was delivered by “the Council of the Areopagus or an associated group of fifty-one Ephetae” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xiii). Verdicts were usually delivered after jurors voted immediately following the legal presentations of litigants. According to the
Athenian legal system, verdicts went in favor of sides that garnered a majority of jury votes, with defendants winning when there was a tie. Besides, “In some cases where the penalty was not fixed, after a conviction the jurors voted again on the penalty, choosing between penalties proposed by each side” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxiii).

Court cases usually followed a procedure known as a *dike*, which translates as “a suit” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxiv). In this procedure, the injured party or (in the case of murder) relatives filed a suit against the offending party. However, court cases involving injuries to slaves and women were filed by slave-owners and male relatives respectively. Besides the *dike*, there was also the procedure of *graphe* (i.e., writing or indictment), “in which ‘anyone who wished’ (i.e., any citizen) could bring a prosecution for wrongdoing” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxiv). Mirhady and Too (2000) explain that *graphai* was instituted by Solon to ensure that public offenses, private crimes such as hubris and crimes which involved victims unable to defend themselves were prosecuted.

By the end of the fifth century, the procedure of *graphai* had started to be abused by “[sycophants] (sykophnatai), who allegedly brought or threatened to bring false suits against rich men, either to gain part of the fine that would be levied or to induce an out-of-court settlement in which the accused would pay to have the matter dropped” (Mirhady and Too, 2000, pp. xxiv-xxv). To stop the abuse of *graphai*, sycophancy was criminalized, and plaintiffs who dropped cases or were unable to secure a fifth of juror votes were fined a 1,000 drachmas (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. xxv).
3.4. The *Antidosis* and Isocrates’ Theory of Self-Defense and Self-Representation/Self-Characterization

From the text of the *Antidosis*, we learn that Isocrates (353 B.C./2000) wrote his defense at age 82 (15.9) in response to his losing a liturgy trial and his witnessing firsthand people’s resentment toward him during the trial (Too, 2008, pp. 1, 201; Mirhady & Too, 2000). As Too (2008) explains, Isocrates realized the need to set the record of his image and reputation straight, following the bitter experience of having to defend himself in court and people’s antagonism toward him (p. 1). Hence, one can say that “The *Antidosis* is an idiosyncratic text because, as Isocrates constantly points out, it is a fictional defence. It is invented and written to address the ‘lies’ spread about him by his detractors after he lost a prior, historical liturgy trial” (Too, 2008, p. 23). From what Too (2008) says, then, to achieve his goal of self-defense, Isocrates composed a fictional defense against a fictitious Lysimachus, whom he labeled as a sycophant (p. 201). This Lysimachus took Isocrates to court on the charges of having “corrupted the young of Athens through his teaching” and having “taught them how to argue unjustly” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. 202; Too, 2008). Commenting on the *Antidosis*, Too (2008) makes the following observations:

…the author fabricated a legal proceeding involving the question of the exchange of property; he has made up a sycophant, no doubt a caricature of such historical figures; he has invented accusations, which are charges that might have been plausibly brought against a teacher of rhetoric, and he has composed the present oration in the form of an apology. (p. 1)

Besides, Isocrates exaggerated the fictional case against him, raising the stakes by presenting himself as one facing imminent threat to his life (Too, 2008).
In spite of the exaggerations, however, Isocrates’ self-portraiture is significant, as it has the potential to offer a template for self-defense in situations where one finds oneself misrepresented by enemies and detractors. As Too (2008) points out, “Fictions are inevitably to some degree reflections of social reality, and the Antidosis offers a literary image of the city-state in the fourth century B.C.” (p. 4). Importantly, serving as a tool for his self-representation, this Isocratean speech, “described as an image (eiken) of Isocrates’ life, thought, and character” (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. 202; Marsh, 2013), can easily lend itself as a theory of self-defense and self-representation that can be used to rebrand an institution as old as the Catholic Church now struggling to survive in the United States just as it did to Isocrates, thereby making a significant contribution to the Athenian political community in classical times (Mirhady & Too, 2000, p. 204).

In what is left of this chapter, the dissertation examines Isocrates’ self-defense and self-representation in the Antidosis and then map out a rebranding model that emerges out of the said text. The remainder of the chapter is set out as follows: a preamble in which Isocrates provides a background to the defense he intends to undertake, the purpose of the defense, the description of his detractor, his self-defense and self-representation, and a conclusion that summarizes the Isocratean theory of self-defense and self-representation, from which a rebranding model is then be constructed.

3.4.1. Preamble

Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) begins his speech by noting that in the past he had been misrepresented by sophists who claimed his work concerned forensic oratory (15.1; Too, 2008). At that time, he did not deem it necessary to defend himself because he “did not think their
babblings had any authority,” and was convinced that Athenians knew him as one interested in more important matters of state (15.2-3). Apparently, his decision to ignore past allegations against him had not helped matters because he continued to face more accusations even in his retirement. At this point in his life, he tells us that he was “subject[ed] to an exchange (antidosis) over the matter of funding a trierarchy and to a trial in connection with it” (15.4). Besides, there is evidence that people were antagonistic toward him as they had bought into past misrepresentations about his life and career. He points out further, “Others, who know perfectly well how I spend my time, were jealous and experienced the same feelings as the sophists, and they delighted in those holding a false impression of me” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.4; Too, 2008). Finding himself besieged on all sides by enemies and fellow Athenians, he had no choice but to undertake the liturgy as ordered:

…when my opponent spoke completely unjustly on the matters under judgment, slandered the power of my speeches, and exaggerated my wealth and the number of students, they judged the liturgy to be my responsibility. Thus I bore this expense, as is fitting for those who are not put out by such affairs and are not in any way wasteful or heedless where money is concerned. (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /200015.5)

Convinced that he was held in low esteem by Athenians who did not know him well, Isocrates decided to set the record straight by “reveal[ing] to them and others in the future, my life and the education (paideia) that is my preoccupation” (15.6).

3.4.2. Purpose

For Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000), the only way to mount an effective self-defense against his detractors in the court of public opinion was to compose a speech
that would be (as it were) an image (*eikon*) of my thoughts and my life as a whole. I hoped that this would be the best way to make the facts about me known and to leave this behind as a memorial, much finer than bronze statues. (15.7)

In order not to arouse the envy of his audience, Isocrates decided against a eulogy, choosing rather to pursue his agenda through forensic rhetoric. Consistent with dicanic rhetoric, he invented a sycophant who brought a charge of wrongdoing against him “and who had invoked the slanders employed in the exchange suit, and then composed my arguments after the fashion of a legal defense” (15.8).

3.4.3. Lysimachus

According to Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000), Lysimachus makes the following false accusations against him: (1) that he makes weaker speeches sound stronger (15.15); (2) that he corrupts the youth “by teaching them to speak well and [to gain] the upper hand in the law-courts contrary to the interests of justice” (15.30); and (3) that his “students were not only laypersons but also public speakers, kings, and tyrants, that I took great sums of money from them, and that I continue to do so even now”(15.30). For Isocrates, Lysimachus is a liar for making such accusations, ones that are typically levelled against the sophists. The truth is that none of the accusations is backed by facts.

Besides being a liar, Lysimachus is a dangerous man, who has put him Isocrates in a precarious position by accusing him of making weaker speeches sound stronger, thereby attacking the very weapon with which he Isocrates can defend himself. Hence, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) can claim
Everything has gone against me: while others refute slanders through speech, Lysimachus has slandered precisely my speeches so that if I appear to speak successfully, I will stand convicted of the accusations he has made against my cleverness. Yet if I speak less adequately than he has led you to expect, you will think less well of my conduct. (15.16)

Lysimachus’ motivation, however, is not pure, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) asserts. Rather, he has initiated the current court case out of monetary considerations and to enhance his status in the sight of Athenians.

Furthermore, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) describes Lysimachus as a sycophant and an enemy of Athens. As a sycophant, Lysimachus is contentious, savage and inhuman, seeking always to make money by dragging innocent people to court (15.315). In the view of Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000), being responsible for all the evils that have befallen Athens, particularly the Peloponnesian War, sycophants continue to cause havoc to society by word and deed. They were the ones who criticized respectable citizens for being oligarchical and Spartan sympathizers, compelled their victims to admit to crimes they never committed, and abused Athenian allies, accusing them falsely and robbing them of their possessions, and ultimately turning them against the city (15.317-318). Thanks to sycophants, Athenian lives were lost during the Great War with Sparta, Athens’ democracy was threatened twice, the wall of the city was torn down, and Athens was almost enslaved by its enemies (Isocrates, 353 B.C. /2000, 15.320). As an enemy of the Athenian polis, Lysimachus also attacks that which defines the very essence of the city-state: public speaking and responsible public speakers.

In characterizing his accuser as a liar, threat to national security, sycophant, and public enemy, Isocrates hopes to influence the jury’s perception of Lysimachus, thereby enhancing his own position and public image.
3.4.4. Isocrates’ Self-Defense and Self-Representation

Isocrates (353 B.C./2000) begins his self-dense and self-representation by appealing to his biography:

I lived my past life without anyone accusing me of violence or injustice during either the oligarchy or the democracy; and it is clear that no one has sat as an arbitrator or juror concerning my affairs. I know not to harm anyone myself and not to seek revenge in court when I am wronged but to resolve our differences with the help of my opponent’s friends. (15.27)

In defending himself against Lysimachus, Isocrates (353 B.C./2000) constructs a self-image of peacefulness and quietude, an image of a person who neither harmed nor took anybody to court (see also 15.33; Poulakos, 1997; Haskin, 2004; Too, 2008). Indeed, whenever he found himself in the position of a victim, he had resorted to peaceful settlement through the mediation of opponents’ friends. Being an innocent, quiet, and harmless citizen, all that he needs from the jurors in the present case is their goodwill as they listen to his defense (15.28).

Isocrates (353 B.C./2000) also appeals to his biography as a counterargument against the claim of financially exploiting the city. He argues that, far from being actively engaged in exploiting fellow citizens, he has always loved a life of peace and quiet; therefore, he is not a threat to Athens security. He claims:

I have organized my life not for the sake of wealth or out of arrogance, and I do not look down on those who do not live as I do myself. I loved peace and the quiet life..., and in particular I saw men who live this kind of life enjoying a good reputation both here and elsewhere. I thought that such a life was sweeter than the life of those who are always
occupied and was, moreover, more suited to the activities in which I initially engaged.

(353 B.C. /2000, 15.151)

Thus, rather than criticizing him, Athens should praise Isocrates who would not take money from fellow Athenians, as doing so would mean depriving the poor ones among them of their ability to provide for themselves the basic necessities of life. While he founded his school in order to recuperate the family wealth lost during the Peloponnesian War and as a result of his expensive education, his target was not fellow Athenians but students from elsewhere who, attracted by his reputation and philosophy, would be willing to pay for their tuition. By making such a choice, he had hoped for a quiet life. Unfortunately, his dream had not materialized, as “instead of the reputation I anticipated, contests, dangers, envy, and slanders besiege me” (15.163). In other words, the precarious position he now finds himself in was hardly one he had bargained for, having always sought to be a quiet, peaceful person, whose life is characterized by ethical responsibility in terms of professional practice and engagement with fellow Athenians.

Moreover, contrary to the accusation that he Isocrates has “received many valuable gifts from the king of Salami” for teaching him forensic rhetoric, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) claims that his interest is not in litigation but important issues of the Athenian body politic (15.40). Thus, apart from appealing to his biography in his self-defense and self-representation, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) adopts the tactics of outright denial and of contradicting his opponent’s claims.

Besides, in his self-defense and self-representation, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) differentiates himself and his rhetoric from other teachers and their rhetoric by claiming that he gets more students than all of them combined:

Indeed, that those who compose speeches for others who have cases in the law-courts are legion is apparent to everyone. Yet as many as there are, none of them has ever been seen
to deserve students while I have received more, as my accuser says, than all those who devote their time to philosophy. (15.41)

Furthermore, Isocrates says that textual evidence from his speeches themselves gives the lie to the claim that his political discourse is subversive and has had a corrupting influence on Athenian youth (15.56). Quoting from his *Panegyricus*, Isocrates clearly differentiates his rhetoric from that of other teachers by demonstrating that his speeches celebrate the glory of Athens’ past by eulogizing its virtues and the bravery of its past heroes. The reason for promoting his brand of political discourse, he argues, is to encourage the youth to learn from the virtues of both their city and ancestors and not to make money (15.60). Besides, the speech titled *On the Peace* supports his assertion that he loves Athens, as in it he seeks to counsel the city to make peace not only with Chios, Cos, Rhodes, and Byzantium but also the rest of the world. Such a move, considering the existing circumstance, was the wisest course of action, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) argues.

Moreover, his *To Nicocles* further proves that “all [his] speeches pertain to virtue and justice,” and not meant for self-aggrandizement as Lysimachus alleges. The reason he constructed that speech, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) explains, was to inform Nicocles’ thinking on political leadership and thereby benefit him (15.69). In this speech, he spoke to the prince like any other Greek citizen. As he elaborates,

In fact, I defended his citizens and urged him, as far as I could, to create a government as mild as possible for them. And if whenever I speak with a king, I do so on behalf of his subjects, I would surely exhort those who are under democracy to consider the interests of the people. (15.69)
The speech urged Nicocles to take his kingly role seriously and to “disregard pleasure and pay attention to public affairs” (Isocrates, 353 B. C./2000, 15.72). Urging him further to develop *phronesis* in governance, Isocrates stressed to Nicocles to ensure that the upper class treated the lower class fairly. Clearly, Isocrates’ (353 B. C./2000) speeches have the following distinguishing characteristics: (1) they praise the virtues and deeds of ancestors; (2) they are political discourses that promote the image of Athens; and (3) they exhort Greeks to take action against their enemies (15.76-77). Significantly, this evidence in support of his self-defense portrays a rhetor who uses his profession to promote civic virtues in the *polis*.

Isocrates further differentiates his activities from those of other teachers by asserting that, while his rhetorical offerings are realistic, those of the other teachers “who claim to turn people toward self-restraint and justice” are unrealistic—unrealistic because “they exhort people to a virtue and to a wisdom unrecognized by others and debated over by themselves, whereas I exhort them to one acknowledged by everyone” (15.84). Unlike these other teachers whose grand design is to get people to follow them, Isocrates’ (353 B. C./2000) objective as a teacher of rhetoric is to “persuade the whole city (of Athens) to undertake activities which will lead to their own happiness and will free the rest of the Greeks from their present evils” (15.85). In other words, while his rhetoric is about empowering through civic education, the rhetoric of the fake sophists essentially disempowers people by making them vicious (see Chase, 2009). Clearly, the evidence does not support the claim that he Isocrates is a social liability. Accordingly, he asks:

How is it possible that an individual who exhorts all citizens to better and more just leadership of Greece could corrupt his students? Would anyone with the ability to compose such discourses try to invent wicked speeches about matters, especially when he has benefitted from his discourse, as I have? (353 B. C./2000, 15.86)
Precisely because his speeches promoted the good of Athens, his good reputation spread far and wide, resulting in his attracting numerous students (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.87-88).

Besides, Isocrates claims that his activities and associations make him different than other teachers of rhetoric. In fact, a look at the list of former students of his school proves as false the claim that he is a corrupting influence on the youth, as “Athens has crowned [them] with gold crowns not because they were greedy for other people’s belongings but because they were good men and spent much of their own wealth on the city” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.93-94; Marsh, 2013). Precisely because former students like Eunomos, Lysitheides, Callippus, Onetor, Antikles, Philonides, Philomelos, and Charmantides have proven themselves to be model citizens, it is only fair that he their teacher should be rewarded and not sanctioned (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.93,95). As he puts it,

I would be the most unfortunate of all if I alone did not receive the same assessment as others who are judged better or worse on the basis of their activities and associations but instead were to have the same reputation as those who are discredited for their activities, even though I spent my life with men like these and have conducted myself beyond reproach until this point in my life. (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.97)

Confident that throughout his life he has associated with people of exemplary conduct, Isocrates can make the following claim: “If some of those who have associated with me have behaved well toward Athens, toward their friends, and toward their own households, I ask you to praise them and not give thanks to me” (15.99). On the other hand, if there is anyone he associated with who turned out to be a social liability, then he should be punished by the jury. Clearly, for Isocrates, one’s reputation is largely affected by the kind of associations one forms.
What is more, the life and achievements of Timotheus, Athens’ most illustrious military leader and a former student of Isocrates, offer compelling evidence that he Isocrates does not associate with hoodlums (Too, 2008; see also Chase, 2009; Marsh, 2013). He challenges members of the jury to take a look at the biography of Timotheus to see if the army general did any wrong against Athens and to punish him the teacher accordingly:

…I make the same proposal about him as about the others: if Timotheus was a bad man and committed many wrongs against you, I ask to be party to this, to be punished, and to suffer just like the guilty. But if he is shown to be a good citizen and a general unlike any other we know of, then I think you should praise him and thank him…. (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.106)

As a military leader, Timotheus was brave, strong, and kind, being “able to determine against whom war must be waged and who one should have as allies” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.117) and being able to “bring together an army suited to the current enemy, organize it, use it advantageously” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.119). Because he reflected before taking any military action, Timotheus was never feared by the Greek cities he conquered; rather, in his presence, these cities felt secure. His successes, according to Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000), could be attributed to Athens’ military power on one hand, and Timotheus’ goodwill toward the vanquished on the other.

Goodwill, which Isocrates (370 B. C. /2000) in To Nicocles says is one of the three elements which combine to provide an impregnable defense for a king—the others being friendship and wisdom—was understood by Timotheus to be a “strategy…greater and finer than the destruction of many enemies and numerous victories in battle” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 115.122). Through acts of justice and moderation, therefore, Timotheus demonstrated his
goodwill toward conquered cities (see Marsh, 2013). Accordingly, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) can say of the general, “Because of the reputation he gained from these actions, many cities that were badly disposed toward you received him with their gates thrown wide open” (15.125). Under the leadership of Timotheus, therefore, Athens’ reputation among other Greek city-states improved.

The problem with Timotheus, though, was that he failed to demonstrate the same goodwill toward fellow Athenians, thereby hurting his reputation at home. The following advice on the importance of goodwill in political discourse is instructive:

…those who wish to engage in public life and be well liked must choose the best and most useful deeds, and the truest and most just words; in addition, however, they must consider carefully how they can be seen by others to say and do everything graciously and benevolently, for those who give little thought to these matters appear to their fellow citizens to be rather difficult and intolerable. (15.132)

For Isocrates, then, personal conduct and audience perception are critical for image and reputation construction. Timotheus could have won the goodwill of his fellow citizens toward himself if he had treated them with grace and benevolence, virtues which could have endeared him to them. As Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) writes, “If you gratify people, they judge everything you do not according to how things actually are but in whatever way helps your case; they will overlook your mistakes…” (15.134). “Goodwill,” as Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) views it, “makes everyone behave in this fashion” (15.134). Timotheus’ diminished image in Athenian imagination, as Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) sees it, can be put down to his lack of consistency in courting the goodwill of all audiences. As the ace rhetorician puts it, “You seek to acquire by every means the goodwill of other citizens toward Athens, and you think it the greatest good, but
you do not realize that you must secure it from Athens for yourself” (15.135). Timotheus could have won the goodwill of his fellow citizens by identifying with them and showing them that what interested them also interested him (15. 137; see also Aristotle, 353 B. C. /2004; Cheney, 1983).

Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) moves on to deal with his predicament by painting a gloomy picture of his present circumstance in life. Specifically, he appeals to the emotions of his audience by casting himself as one whose very existence is threatened by spurious sophists and sycophants. Athens, he asserts, presently turns justice on its head by punishing the virtuous and patriotic citizen while encouraging infamous sycophants like Lysimachus to commit perjury and make false allegations with impunity. What is troubling is that “I, who have never done anyone any wrong, have kept from sycophancy, and have instead benefitted from foreigners, who think they have been treated well, find myself in this general peril, as if I have done something terrible. (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.164). Athens, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) argues, is being unjust to him by prosecuting him for his successful life while rewarding sycophants like Lysimachus. What Isocrates finds absurd is that, while foreigners, who pay money for the education they receive do not complain, Athens, the direct beneficiary of his generosity, begrudges him of his kindness. He is at a loss as to why somebody like he who has “praised the city and our ancestors much more finely, should be unable to live the rest of my life safely” (15.166).

Having established his predicament in contemporary Athenian society, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) shifts from direct self-defense to the defense of his brand of philosophy, which he says “had been unjustly slandered” (15.170). Employing the same tactic marshalled in defending his person, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) argues that if it can be proven that philosophy has the ability
to corrupt students, then not only must all those brought before the court be punished, but also anyone found to commit his life to the pursuit of the subject. On the other hand,

If the opposite is true…and it benefits and improves those who study it and makes them more valuable, then you must stop those who spread slanders about philosophy; you must deprive the sycophants of their rights; and you must advise the young to engage in this activity rather than pastimes (15.75).

The issue, as Isocrates sees it, is whether philosophy is destructive or constructive. He reasons that if philosophy is destructive, then those who engage in it must be punished, but if constructive and beneficial, then sycophants, who tend to discursively devalorize it must be duly punished. His life indubitably proves, though, that philosophy or rhetoric is beneficial, as it improves practitioners’ quality of life.

By philosophy, Isocrates means rhetoric or the intersection between ethics, politics, and public speaking (Haskin, 2004). Accordingly, he goes on to provide a theoretical explication for how rhetoric might be mastered. Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) claims that the successful mastery of rhetoric depends on three important variables, namely, natural talent, education, and practice (15.187). Hence, he can insist that critical to a successful education in rhetoric is the combined efforts of both teacher and student. While the teacher is responsible for educating the student and helping him to hone his skills, the student must have the requisite natural ability to speak in public and to be willing to practice constantly (Isocrates 353 B. C. /2000, 15.188; Marsh, 2013). Ultimately, practical experience on the part of both teacher and student is key to ensuring a successful rhetorical education, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) avers. But although both nature and practice are critical in rhetorical education, Isocrates is of the view that comparatively the former plays a greater role in the process, noting “Someone must have a mind capable of inventing,
learning, working hard, and memorizing; a voice and clarity of speech that has the capacity to persuade audiences not only by what he says but also by his harmonious diction” (15.189).

Besides, one must have enough courage to speak in public (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.190).

Ultimately, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) insists that to be “gifted at speaking (legein) and at acting (prattein), one needs the full complement of both nature and training, adding, “and both in the same person would make him unsurpassable by others” (15.191).

Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) thus constructs an image of a rhetorical theory different from that of the sophists. As noted above, he employs the same tactic of differentiation in both defending himself and his profession. In his Against the Sophists, he argues that a good rhetorical model has the following distinguishing characteristics: (1) it reflects context of speech event; (2) it has property; and (3) it has originality (Isocrates, 390 B. C. /2000, 13.13; Marsh, 2013).

Precisely because contemporary sophistic rhetoric lacks these characteristics, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) thinks the sophists deserve to be students and not teachers. With a good teacher who insists that a student practice continuously the art of public speaking, the student will definitely turn out to be an accomplished rhetorician (15. 207).

Isocrates further appeals to the principle of advantage in dismantling the accusation that he makes money by using his rhetorical education to corrupt his students (see Marsh, 2013). This argument of advantage was first made in the speech titled Nicocles, a look at which can throw more light on how the rhetorician treats it in the present speech (see Isocrates, 372 B. C. /2000). He argues in that text that, just as people show reverence in religious matters or practice virtues in order that their lot in life will improve, so do people study rhetoric in order to do well in society. For Isocrates (372 B. C. /2000), the user of rhetoric and the advantages of rhetoric are two different realities; hence, society must blame those who misuse rhetoric and not rhetoric
itself. As he says, “we must not criticize the actions through which some might virtuously gain advantage, but the men whose actions are wrong or whose words are deceitful and unjust” (Isocrates, 372 B. C. /2000, 3. 2). Further reiterating this point, Isocrates (Isocrates, 372 B. C. /2000) argues that if one cannot blame “wealth, strength, and courage” simply because they can be abused by people, then rhetoric should not be bastardized because it is sometimes misused. By failing to bifurcate rhetoric and those who abuse it, people “have erred to such an extent that they do not notice that they are opposed to such an activity which, of all the qualities of human nature, is the cause of all the greatest good” (3.5). The fact is that rhetoricity and sophism are not synonymous.

In the Antidosis, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) argues that people desire things for three reasons or advantages, namely, for pleasure, for profit, and for honor (15.217). Thus, if the actions of human beings are shaped by the advantage to be gained thereof, what would he gain by corrupting the youth? He asks his audience. He goes on to pose the following questions to buttress his argument of gaining advantage by moral choices:

Do I derive pleasure at seeing or learning that they are evil, or have the reputation of being evil among the other citizens? Who is so insensitive that he would not be hurt to hear such criticisms of himself? I would certainly not be admired or have such a high reputation if I turned out such students; instead people would despise and hate me more than those who are guilty of other wicked crimes. (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.218-219)

As an ethical sophist, his greatest and finest advantage consists in producing intelligent and model citizens well-respected by their peers. He points out that his rhetoric students bring advantage to the polis as they “inspire in many the desire to share their education with them,
whereas the wicked repel even those who previously were intending to study with their teacher” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.220). The desire for advantage makes it inconceivable that he, as a moral educator, would make immoral choices and thereby ruin his reputation, Isocrates insists. He believes that “people improve and become worthier if they are interested in speaking well, have a passion for being able to persuade their audience, and also desire advantage” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.275). In other words, associating with rhetoric, as he does, is advantageous because it raises one’s social standing.

Importantly, Isocrates’ notion of advantage is different from the perspective generally held by people in society. For him, advantage is that which gives one real power. To gain advantage in Athens means choosing to write and deliver speeches deserving of praise and honor, speeches “that are important and noble and promote human welfare,” not speeches that deal with unjust and insignificant topics (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.276). Besides, the desire for advantage means that the philosophical and ambitious person must at all times speak well and intelligently (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.277; Too, 2008; see also Chase, 2009; Marsh, 2013). To gain advantage in a rhetorical context also means that in order to persuade one’s audience, one must build a strong reputation in the imagination of one’s audience. As he asks, “Who could fail to know that speeches seem truer when spoken by those of good name than by the disreputable, and that arguments acquire more authority when they come from one’s life than from mere words?” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.278). Doing evil is in no way advantageous, Isocrates insists. Indeed, such unethical conduct as graft and false representation disadvantage people in the polis. As he notes, “No one is more disadvantageous in his entire life than such men; no one live in greater poverty or in greater disrepute, and no one is more wretched” (Isocrates, 353 B. C./2000, 15.281). Clearly, for Isocrates, the construct of advantage must be
grounded in concrete moral choices. Simply put, gaining advantage in society requires that one form a good reputation, for anything short of that will bring public disgrace.

By good reputation, Isocrates (353 B.C./2000) means the condition of one who is righteous and is devoted to the gods, family, and fellow citizens (15. 282). Since Isocrates does not want public embarrassment, the last thing he will do is to either teach the youth to be corrupt or exploit them financially. The key to persuasion in public discourse is not deceit, but gentility and good reputation, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) avers: “The more ardently someone wants to persuade his audience, the more he will strive to be a gentleman (kalos kagathos) and to have a good reputation among citizens” (15.278; see also Chase, 2009; Marsh, 2013). Virtue, in Isocrates’ opinion, is thus a sine qua non in public speaking. The intelligent speaker, Isocrates argues, marshals not only good arguments but also relies on his virtues to win over his audience. Hence, he insists that “the reputation of being a gentleman not only makes the speech more persuasive but also makes the actions of one who has such a reputation more honorable” (Isocrates, 353 B.C. /2000, 15.280). By arguing in this fashion, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) not only differentiates his school and rhetoric from those of others, but he also dissociates himself from teachers of rhetoric who pay more attention to delivery than the content of public discourse and character of speaker. In his view, effective communication can only be informed by responsible moral choices.

To gain advantage in public discourse, one must avoid evil and ensure that there is correspondence between one’s words and actions. Fake sophists get it wrong when they consider as advantageous victory won by deceit. He therefore strongly disagrees with the fact “that those who rely on a wicked nature and evil deeds to gain a little profit while acquiring an evil reputation [have] an advantage” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15. 285; Marsh, 2013). For him,
those with the advantage are “the most righteous and just, who profit from good and not from evil” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15. 285; Marsh, 2013). Thus, one cannot gain advantage in public without being virtuous.

Comparatively, it is the youth with rhetorical training that have an advantage in the polis, not those who spend their time drinking, socializing, and amusing themselves without making any effort at self-improvement. Furthermore, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) says of the youth not interested in rhetorical education: they drink, gamble, and flirt with girls (15.287). If anybody deserves to appear before the present jury, it should be these morally depraved youth, not he who has been helping to train responsible youth for Athens. The youth he spends his time teaching have given up satisfying their carnal desires in order to gain an education. Such students very early in life became convinced that “a person must tend to himself before attending to his affairs, must not hurry or seek to rule others before finding someone to oversee his intellect, must not rejoice in or pride himself” on anything other thing than a good education (15.290; Marsh, 2013). If such is the perspective of the students Isocrates has had in his school, then they deserve praise and not censure, being better and more prudent than their peers.

Rhetorical education gives his students advantage in public discourse by shaping their character and endowing them with the ability to reason, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) argues. He points out further that through practice rhetoric students train themselves to use words properly, something that those without rhetorical education cannot do. Crucially, rhetoric endows one with rational ability and the philosophical sophistication to address issues thoughtfully and purposefully. Hence, in the view of Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000), communication education is the one discipline that helps the human person realize his or her full potential as a rational animal. (15.292). By this rhetorical move, Isocrates seeks to portray himself as a patriotic citizen of
Athens, one who has made it his life-long ambition to train the youth of the city and other neighboring states to succeed in both public and private life. Therefore, to accuse him of corrupting young people is to misrepresent the facts and to derail Athens’ progress as the leading city of Greece.

For Isocrates, choosing to corrupt students is irrational because it will give him no advantage or pleasure. The fact is that anybody who pursues such an agenda receives as his reward notoriety, not pleasure. When detractors make the accusation that good sophists like himself corrupt the youth, they fail to realize the irrationality of their claims because what wise person “would waste money for the sake of evil, when they can do evil whenever they want without paying anything?” (15.225). The sheer numbers of students who come to his school both authenticate and validate his educational program, Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) argues. As he puts it,

It is evident that people travel by ship, pay money, and go to all sorts of trouble because they think they will become better and that their educators here will be more intelligent than those at home. All Athenians should be proud of this and value those who are responsible for the city’s reputation in this. (15. 226)

Obviously, no one would come to his school, much less waste his resources on rhetoric if the payoff is the acquisition of a diabolical personality.

Having established the fact that people choose to study rhetoric in his school because of the benefits therein, that is, the advantage it gives them in life, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) goes on to demonstrate that historically all accomplished Athenian statesmen were trained rhetoricians. He argues that in Athens those who have excelled in public life are all rhetors. For example, people like Solon affected the polis in a positive way because of their rhetorical roots
For Isocrates, then, public communication benefits not only the individual but also the whole society, as it promotes responsible conduct in the *polis*. Athens owes its prestigious position among the Greek city-states to its illustrious public speakers and not to sycophants like Lysimachus and his ilk. Indeed, the inclusion of Solon, Pericles, Anaxagoras, and Clazomenae on the list of Athens’ illustrious sons is enough proof of rhetoric as a cause for good. If this argument holds, then, “Could there be a clearer demonstration than this that the power of speech does not turn men criminals? No, it is those who have my accuser’s nature who, I think, continually engage in evil words and actions” (15.236). Thus, by his words and actions, Isocrates differentiates himself from Lysimachus and his like, accusing them of being liars and evil.

Unlike the other sophists who meddle in active politics, Isocrates is “among the most politically uninvolved in Athens” (15.227). He stays away from litigants at the courts, only interacting with people who share his vision. Moreover, he is simple and orderly in his daily life, being interested, not in “speeches concerning private contract disputes or those that attack others, but only those that men everywhere respect” (15.228). What this point means is that Isocrates has nothing to do with forensic rhetoric which has no credibility; rather, he espouses public discourse (*logos politikos*) which enjoys universal respectability because its main preoccupation is the promotion of human progress (Poulakos, 1997; Marsh, 2013). He asks his auditors, “Isn’t it more fitting to praise rather than put on trial men who do not get involved in such matters, and who do not live without discipline, or engage in any shameful activity?” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.238). As an educator, if he did not train students to be like himself, that is, quiet and politically uninvolved, the students’ fathers and relatives would be up in arms against him, calling for his head. But since he always delivers on his educational promises, “they bring me
their sons, pay my fees, and rejoice when they see them spending the day with me, while sycophants slander us and give us trouble” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000,15.241). Certainly, he Isocrates poses no danger to life in the polis; hence, there is no justification for the suit filed by Lysimachus against him.

The real reason for the false accusations against him and his students, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) claims, is his accusers’ jealousy and delusion. For although they admire good public speakers, “they fault young people who wish to achieve this honor” of speaking well in public (15.246). Being delusional and jealous, they accuse the youth, who submit themselves to the rigors of continuous practice and philosophical studies, of negligence of duty. Indeed, what Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) finds unfathomable is that “When some danger befalls the city (of Athens), they (the sycophants) listen to their advisors who are best at speaking on public matters and they do whatever such men advise” (15.248). Surprisingly, the same persons turn around to “slander those who take the trouble to present themselves to be useful to the city” in times of trouble (15.248). Such irrationality is a clear manifestation of confusion and disrespect toward Peitho, the god of persuasion. Why on earth should those who take to gymnastics, a less honorable profession, be commended while students who spend their resources on public speaking, a profession synonymous with Athens and an honorable one at that, be devalorized?

Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) argues that eulogizing practitioners of less important activities like gymnasium is irrational because no athlete has brought glory to Athens; only Athenian rhetoricians have made a name for the polis, as through them “Athens became the most blessed and greatest of all the Hellenic city states through man’s intellect. (15.251). By this argument, Isocrates impresses upon the jury that, far from engaging in any activity detrimental to the
wellbeing of Athens, he has helped given the city a positive image by virtue of his rhetorical education.

Isocrates’ next move in shaping a positive self-image is to demonstrate how his rhetorical profession has played a crucial role in the construction of human civilizations. In what scholars describe as the *Hymn to Logos*, Isocrates (353 B.C./2000; Poulakos, 1997; Mirhady & Too, 2000; Too, 2008; Marsh, 2013) eulogizes the power of speech, arguing that it “is responsible for the greatest goods” (15.253), distinguishing human beings from animals and being responsible for human progress:

For in our other facilities…we do not differ from other living beings, and in fact we are inferior to many in speed, strength, and other resources. But since we have the ability to persuade one another and to make clear to ourselves what we want, not only do we avoid living like animals, but we have come together, built cities, made laws, and invented arts (*techne*). Speech (*logos*) is responsible for nearly all our inventions. It legislated in matters of justice and injustice and beauty and baseness, and without these laws, we could not live with one another. By it we refute the bad and praise the good; through it, we educate the ignorant and recognize the intelligent. We regard speaking well to be the clearest sign of a good mind, which it requires, and truthful, lawful, and just speech we consider the image (*eidolon*) of a good and faithful soul. With speech we fight over contentious matters, and we investigate the unknown. We use the same arguments by which we persuade others in our own deliberations; we call those able to speak in a crowd “rhetorical” (*rhetorikoi*); we regard as sound advisors those who debate with themselves most skillfully about public affairs. If one must summarize the power of discourse, we will discover that nothing done prudently occurs without speech (*logos*),
that speech is the leader of all thoughts and actions, and that the most intelligent people use it most of all. (15.253-257)

Clearly, humanity’s very existence is framed and ordered by the power of speech. In fact, persuasive speech functions as the most effective tool for the construction of reality, distinguishes human beings from animals, unifies us as members of the same human community, ensures peaceful co-existence among us as human beings, and is the difference between the fool and the wise, the stupid and the intelligent (see Papillon, 2007). Therefore, to allege misconduct against him on the basis of his educating students to speak well in public for the betterment of their societies is counterintuitive and disingenuous. Such an accusation can only emanate from demented persons, people who have lost sight of the very definition of man as a speaking animal.

As an authentic philosophy, that is, a philosophy with practical application in ethics and politics, Isocrates’ brand of rhetoric promotes good citizenry. As he puts it, “I don’t think we should call what does not at present benefit our ability to speak or act ‘philosophy.’” (15.266). Rather, what has no practical value should be denominated as “mental gymnastics” or “preparation for philosophy” (15.266). In his view, valorizing such mental gymnastics or “quibbling,” is the work of those who have nothing useful to do in Athens (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.269). Isocrates’ (353 B. C. /2000) considered opinion is that “Those wishing to do something useful must rid all their activities of pointless discourse and irrelevant action” (15.269). He claims that he does not, like the fake sophists, offer an education that “can produce self-control and justice in those who are by nature badly disposed to virtue” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000,15.274). Rather, his education prepares students to be able to form the best opinions in contingent circumstances. His conviction is that “the wise are those who have the ability to reach the best opinions most of the time, and philosophers are those who spend time acquiring such
intelligence as quickly as possible” (15.271). Thus, as far as Isocrates is concerned, philosophy is practical wisdom which one needs to be able to reach the best decisions in real life situations.

Rhetoric, according to Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000), is an enabler and a cause for good. Athens’ superiority to the other city-states is not due to its military endowments, constitution, or just laws, but because of its “superior education in intellect and speech (15.293-294). What sets the jury and the city of Athens apart, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) contends, is rhetorical education, the very thing for which he is given a bad name. Yet, the indubitable fact is that Athens is considered “the teacher of all those who are skilled in speaking and teaching,” an accolade well-deserved by the city, as it “makes available the greatest rewards for those who have the ability” to speak, opening up opportunities for those who want to engage in the art of public speaking (15.295).

For sycophants like Lysimachus to attack him and his profession is tantamount to their committing a treasonable offence against Athens, whose true identity is the ability to speak well. In other words, communicative ability and competence, for Isocrates, is quintessentially Athenian. In light of this reality, Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) can claim,

Furthermore, everyone here acquires experience, which most of all produces the ability to speak. In addition, they think that our common dialect, and its moderation, our flexibility, and our love of language contribute significantly to our culture of discourse (he ton logon paideia). Hence, they are right to think that all who have skill at speaking are students of Athens. (15.296)

If Athens’ core identity is the ability to speak well, an identity that has won it the admiration of the world, then Athens should embrace who it is and jealously guard it. Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) goes on to caution the city, “Be careful to avoid becoming utterly ridiculous by
condemning as something trifling this reputation that you have among the Greeks more than I have among you’’ (15.297). This statement is significant as it seeks to show that, far from being a saboteur of Athens’ image, Isocrates is an ardent supporter of the city of his birth. In fact, all that he has done in his life is to model himself on Athens’ public-speaking image; hence, just as Athens is famous for its public-speaking prowess so is Isocrates. Therefore, any critique of him with regard to his profession is a critique of the city of Athens. Athens, represented by the jury, should dismiss the accusations against him, because by condemning him as a teacher of rhetoric, the city will be condemning itself and hurting its credibility as the birthplace of rhetoric.

Athens is currently perceived by outsiders through two conflicting prisms, one positive, the other negative. Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000) tells the city through its jury representatives that those with a positive view of it “are fond of you as they can be and lay their hopes of salvation in you” (15.299). For this group of admirers, Athens is the only city of Greece while all others are villages; therefore, it deserves the right to serve as the metropolis and capital of all Greece. Moreover, the admirers aver that Athenians are the most gentle, sociable, and suitable human beings of all Greeks. Indeed, “People use such warm terms that they do not hesitate to declare that punishment by an Athenian is more pleasant than favorable treatment through the savagery of others” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.300). On the other hand, there are those who dismiss such glowing attributes showered on the city of Athens because of the conduct of sycophants, accusing “the whole city of being unsociable and cruel” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.301). Because they contribute to the negative image of the city in some circles, sycophants like Lysimachus should be severely punished (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.301, 303). However, people like himself who, through their profession as teachers of rhetoric, have won numerous admirers for the city, must be rewarded for being patriotic citizens. As he says, “These men
acquire a much finer and more fitting reputation for the city than athletes” who are usually celebrated with pomp and pageantry (15.302).

Having made his case with compelling arguments, Isocrates concludes his self-defense and self-representation with a call to action. He urges the jury to consider the following: (1) Stop the madness being engineered by the sycophants; (2) Rhetoric performs the most important activity of training the soul to act responsibly; (3) Encourage young people with the means to take up rhetorical education; (4) Value those who render public service; and (5) Condemn as traitors those who live dissolute lives. The consequence of these harsh measures, in the view of Isocrates, will engender a change of attitude in the youth of Athens (15.304-305). In other words, the choice before the jury is clear: they should punish sycophants for causing confusion in the city and reward reputable citizen-teachers of rhetoric like himself for promoting the Athenian ideal of civic responsibility. Such a course of action will deter any future occurrence of sycophancy, while at the same time encouraging the youth to take up rhetorical education.

Importantly, Isocrates tells the jury not to forget the immense contributions of public discourse to the progress of the city of Athens. The fact is that it was public speakers who fought the tyrants, defended the masses, and saved democracy (15.306). In other words, if illustrious Athenians like Cleisthenes and Miltiades achieved immeasurable success for the city because of their training in rhetoric, then the case against him has no merits, Isocrates claims. All these great individuals succeeded in life because of their good reputation and ability to speak well and not because they mirrored the lifestyle of sycophants like Lysimachus (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.308). It is therefore in Athens’ interest to “cherish, honor, and cultivate those who are superior by nature and education as well as those who desire to be such” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.309). The fact is “that leadership in noble and important enterprises, the ability to save
our city from danger and the protection of democracy are in the hands of such men, not sycophants” (15.309). If speaking well in public is the very quintessence of Athens, then Athens’ proscribing political rhetoric and punishing its promoters is tantamount to committing suicide, argues Isocrates.

If sycophants are liabilities, why reward them by taking the allegations they make against responsible and patriotic citizens like himself seriously? Isocrates wonders. He declares, “I find it difficult to watch sycophancy getting better treatment than philosophy, the former accusing while the latter defends itself” (Isocrates, 353 B. C. /2000, 15.312). The situation has arisen because of the mistaken notion that sycophants are sophists when in reality they are not. True sophists are not as savage, inhuman, and contentious like contemporary sycophants, Isocrates argues (15.315). Historically, there is evidence that while older Athenian generations admired the true sophists, they were suspicious of sycophants and justifiably treated them harshly. He reminds the jury how sycophancy used to be punished more severely than the gravest of crimes in times past, how sycophants were indicted, publicly prosecuted, and condemned for being irredeemably evil, blatantly savage, and inhuman (15.314-315). For as long as sycophants were recognized as dangerous to national security, they were held in constant check. However, the situation is different in contemporary times, as sycophancy holds sway in all of Athens.

In ending his presentation with an appeal to the jury, Isocrates shows that, although he marshals effective arguments, appeals to his biography, appeals to the emotions of the jury, and stresses his predicament in order to persuade his audience, he is under no illusions as to who has the final word in the rhetorical space. At the end of the day, it is the judgment of the jury that matters. Therefore, throughout his presentation, Isocrates appeals directly to the members of the audience, calling upon them to take note of his contribution to the state and rule in his favor.
Implicit in this Isocratean posture is the acceptance of dissent in public discourse (see Marsh, 2013). A speaker might appeal to the goodwill of audience and make strong arguments as well as good choices that inure to his benefit; nevertheless, he or she must allow his or her audience to pass a verdict on what he or she has presented to them. Communication, from an Isocratean perspective, then, is not one-sided but dialogic.

3.5. Conclusion

Having looked at how Isocrates tries to present the true image of his life, career, and character, one may summarize his theory of self-defense and self-characterization thus:

1. Self-defense and self-characterization must have a clear objective. In the present situation, the objective is the creation of the authentic image of Isocrates’ life, career, and character.

2. The problem that has warranted the present rhetorical act must be identified and unveiled in all its gory details. For Isocrates, the problem creating the distortion of the true image of his life, work, and ethos was Lysimachus in particular and the sophists in general.

3. Self-defense must be grounded in the biography of the speaker. Such a discursive move serves as a reminder to the audience regarding the past life of the speaker. In his self-defense and portraiture, Isocrates reminded the Athenian jurors of his past life of peace and quiet, association with accomplished Greek teachers, funding of liturgies or public works, educating Greek youth to be public speakers, and works promoting Athenian culture, values, and ideals.
4. A speaker intending to defend the self and create a positive image must demonstrate enormous goodwill toward his or her audience. Isocrates reminded his audience that Timotheus had a poor image at home in Athens because he failed to show goodwill toward his countrymen. Goodwill is achieved through justice and moderation on the part of the speaker. Importantly, too, the very logic of goodwill proscribes taking one’s audience for granted. It recognizes the position of one’s audience and aligns oneself with that position. Thus, Isocrates would argue that, in teaching rhetoric and writing speeches, he was doing no more than promoting what was quintessentially Athenian.

5. Self-defense must also involve the rhetorical move of clearly differentiating oneself from others whose conduct leaves much to be desired. In the *Antidosis*, Isocrates differentiated himself from Lysimachus and the fake sophists by arguing that while he fulfilled his promises to his students, the others did not.

6. Self-defense must also involve an outright denial of false accusations made against the speaker.

7. A speaker must gain advantage in the eyes of his or her audience by demonstrating ethical responsibility in past conduct.

8. A speaker must remember that the success of his or her presentation depends on the judgment of his or her audience. Isocrates demonstrates a clear understanding of this reality by identifying with his audience and calling upon them to rule in his favor.

From the Isocratean theory of self-defense and his self-characterization just outlined, one can construct Isocrates’ model of brand rebuilding as follows:
1. Objective: This refers to the purpose or goal of the process of rebranding. In other words, this stage is where the rebranding team clearly lays out what it wants to achieve.

2. Description of problem and planning: At this stage, the problem that needs to be addressed is articulated. In the case of Isocrates, the problem was Lysimachus and his accusations. Applied to rebranding, this stage examines the crisis situation of the existing brand and marshals the specific strategic plan to address the problem at hand.

3. Designing and implementing rebranding strategy: This phase involves the following steps:

   - Appeal to biography: Isocrates’ first attempt to defend the self and cast a credible image was to appeal to the history of his life. In rebranding terms, an organization like the Catholic Church should articulate its identity and appeal to its history by giving an account of its life and activities since its beginnings in the United States.

   - Differentiation and dissociation: Having provided a historiography of his existential reality, Isocrates went on to differentiate his rhetorical education from that of other sophists and dissociate himself from them. Applied to rebranding, this is the stage where an organization like the Catholic Church facing brand crisis must differentiate itself from predator priests and irresponsible bishops, casting itself as caring, inclusive, and trustworthy ecclesial community, one that seeks to remain a model institutional citizen in the United States.
• Establishing goodwill toward audience: In order to win over one’s audience to one’s side, one must not antagonize them; rather, one must identify with audience members and show that one is interested in their concerns. In rebranding itself, then, the Catholic Church must demonstrate goodwill toward its multiple publics, including victims, law enforcement, the media, activist groups, and church members, particularly those scandalized by the abuses and cover-ups.

• Making moral choices that bring advantage: In defending his image, Isocrates told his audience how he fulfilled his promises to his students and did not take advantage of them. In other words, he made choices that gave him credibility. In making such moral choices, Isocrates believed that he was giving himself advantage in the eyes of the Athenian public.

4. Audience judgment and evaluation: Throughout the course of his presentation, Isocrates invited the jury to pass judgment on his communicative and moral choices. Implicitly, Isocrates was suggesting that the creation of the true image of his life and career was to be a collaborative effort between himself and the jury. Applied to the concept of rebranding, an organization like the Catholic Church must be transparent to its publics and involve them in all activities and efforts to rebrand since ultimately it is these audiences that must judge whether it is trustworthy or not. Thus, the evaluation of the rebranding process and new brand must be guided by audience feedback.
Chapter 4
The Evolution of the American Catholic Brand

4.1. Introduction

The beginnings of the American Catholic brand can be traced to the sixteenth century when Spanish Missionaries opened a Catholic parish in St. Augustine, Florida. This early Catholic Mission ended without much impact following the 1763 Treaty of Paris which saw the English take over the State of Florida (Hennesey, 1981). Meanwhile another attempt made to establish a Catholic presence in the United States would take place in Maryland in 1634, where the Baltimores, English Catholics, controlled political power for long spells. From Maryland, the faith spread to the rest of the country in spits and spurts, ultimately becoming the single most dominant Christian denomination in the United States by the eighteenth century (Walch, 1996; Carey, 2004). By mid-twentieth century, the Catholic brand in America had evolved from being a pariah commodity into being accepted as a powerful institution with a lot to offer American society. Over time, through education, healthcare, social welfare, and evangelizing work, the Catholic brand gained more equity in American religio-social consciousness. This chapter is developed according to the historical periods that characterized the evolution of the Catholic brand in America, namely, (a) 1634-1829, (b) 1830-1959, (c) 1960-2001, and (d) 2002 to date (see Hennesey, 1981, p. 5).

4.2. The Period from 1634 to 1829

One cannot examine the evolution of the American Catholic brand without acknowledging the veracity of the observation by Walch (1996) that “Catholicism is one of the
oldest traditions in North America” (p. 249). Walch (1996) goes on to explain that “Beginning with the establishment of the parish of St. Augustine in the Spanish colony of Florida in 1565, the Church has nurtured both the spiritual and material welfare of millions of Americans” (p. 249). Such a view is supported by Carey (2004), who has noted that “From the sixteenth to early nineteenth century, Spanish, French, and English missionaries, merchants, explorers, soldiers, governors, and their servants and slaves brought a Catholic presence to the New World” (p. 1). These European missionaries came to North America with the specific aim of helping their countrymen maintain their religious faith and of evangelizing the natives of the New World (Carey, 2004, p. 1). Early on the European missionary endeavors consisted in the setting up of parishes and mission stations that catered to American Indians living in the southern part of what is now the United States “from Florida to the Southwest, along the California coastland, on the northern borderlands from the St. Lawrence Seaway to the western Great Lakes, down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, and on the Mid-Atlantic coastlands of Maryland and Pennsylvania” (Carey, 2004, p. 1; see also Walch, 1996, p. 12). This early missionary effort largely failed as there was very little to show for it at the time the Spanish left Florida in 1763.

From 1634 to 1776, however, the state of Catholic missionary activities in the United States began to improve. Beginning from 1634, “English Catholics planted and sustained their religion in the colonies of Maryland and Pennsylvania” (Carey, 2004, p. 10). Due to the success of this missionary effort, by the time of the Declaration of Independence from British colonial rule, there was an impressive number of Catholics in the two states. These Catholics, as Carey (2004) tells us, would play an active role in the War of Independence and “joined in the political process of constitutional-building at the state and federal level” (p. 15).
Generally, though, Catholics in the thirteen English colonies were treated as second-class citizens. Indeed, Casanova (1992) tells us that, prior to the era of Revolution and Independence, Catholics as a religious group in the thirteen English colonies suffered discrimination and persecution (p. 77). For example, in 1642, Virginia passed a law that prevented Catholics from holding public office in the state (Ellis, 1956, p. 113). Similarly, Massachusetts passed a law in 1647 “banning Catholic priests from the state” (Ellis, 1956, p. 114; see also Walch, 1996, p. 13; O’Toole, 2008, p. 89). Walch (1996) adds that not only were priests banned from the State of Massachusetts but also “Catholics were prohibited from holding religious services, preaching Catholic doctrine, or organizing their own congregations” (p. 13). Only in Maryland did Catholics enjoy some semblance of political protection, but even there, the fate of Catholics changed according to the political situation. Ellis (1956) reports that, “Through the instrumentality of Cecilius Calvert, the Baron of Baltimore, Maryland on April 21, 1649 passed an act of religious toleration that allowed Catholics the freedom to practice their religion in the state” (p. 115). However, four years later, on 20 October 1654, when the Puritans took over power in the state, a law was passed disenfranchising Catholics in Maryland (Ellis, 1956, p. 117; Walch, 1996). Such an anti-Catholic law, Ellis (1956) writes, only worsened the situation of Maryland Catholics who suffered more persecutions at the hands of Protestants (p. 118).

Elaborating the sorry state of Catholics in Maryland and most of the thirteen English colonies, Walch (1996) writes,

In Maryland, Catholics were denied the right to vote, to practice law, or to hold public office. Priests in Maryland were subject to fines for celebrating the Mass or presiding at other religious services. Even though they had only a handful of Catholics, other colonies passed a series of laws similar to those of Massachusetts and Maryland. Only in
Pennsylvania and Rhode Island—two colonies founded by dissenters—did Catholics have any measure of religious freedom” (p. 13).

Catholicism in the first period of its existence in America, then, was a pariah religion, its adherents being subjected to constant harassment wherever they lived.

The reason for such antipathy toward Catholics and their faith was that most Protestant Americans up until the nineteenth century were convinced that the pope was the Antichrist referred to in the Book of Revelation. With this conviction, Protestants rejected the very notion of Catholics being Christian. As Gleason (1987) puts it, “The organization over which the Pope presided was in no sense to be thought of as a branch of the Christian Church” (p. 39). As far was Protestant Americans were concerned, because the very idea of Americanism meant the outright rejection of the Roman pope, Catholics, as his followers, could in no way become good Americans (p. 39). As a depraved religion, Catholicism was nothing but “part of a benighted and vicious system” which the Puritans hoped to have left behind in Europe when they came to the United States, the New World (Gleason, 1987, p. 40). In the words of Hennesey (1981), “For Puritans, Catholicism was a corruption of the Christian message; Rome was Babylon, the pope the anti-Christ of the Apocalypse” (p. 36). Thus, for many Americans, whether evangelical or Protestant, “Catholicism was intrinsically irreconcilable with Americanism on the level of principle” (Gleason, 1987, p. 40; see Casanova, 1992, p. 77). Indeed, in the view of Walch (1996), “The very idea of tolerating Catholics was regarded by many colonists as an act of weakness, a betrayal of English liberty and a denial of righteousness of the Protestant faith” (p. 13).

During the American Revolution, however, colonial antagonism toward Catholicism rapidly diminished as both Catholics and non-Catholics came together to fight the common
enemy, England. Walch (1996) recounts that during the War of Revolution, “Protestant editors and clergymen turned their pulpits and pens away from the ‘evils of Catholicism’ to attack all who gave comfort to the detested ‘red coats’” (Walch, 1996, p. 15; see Casanova, 1992). He adds that particularly in the 1770s a number of states enacted legal regimes that granted full citizenship to Catholics and upheld “the freedom of conscience and religion” (p. 15). For example, in 1776, both Pennsylvania and Maryland legalized the practice of Catholicism within their borders (Walch, 1996, p. 15). Such legal moves were appreciated by Catholic who “responded by fighting for independence side by side with their Protestant compatriots” (Walch, 1996, p. 15).

Following the passage of the freedom of religion act, Catholicism began to experience significant growth and indigenous priests began to take up leadership positions within the Church. Carey (2004) tells us that “From 1776 until 1815, John Carroll was the central figure in the transformation and institutionalization of American Catholicism” (p. 17). As a bishop from 1789 on, John Carroll “presided over the initial stages of the development of the Catholic community from a tiny, geographically and politically restricted, colonial priestly mission into a free, geographically expansive, episcopally organized national church” (Carey, 2004, p. 17). Such a positive development was facilitated by such landmark events as the “Revolutionary War, the subsequent establishment of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the French Revolution and the consequent arrival of French emigres, and westward expansion” (Carey, 2004, p. 19; see Casanova, 1992). Indeed, in the view of Bishop Carroll, Catholicism by 1815 had undergone “a revolution, if possible, more extraordinary [sic], than our political one” (as cited in Carey, 2004, p. 17).
According to Carey (2004), the institutional presence engendered by the creation of Carroll as a bishop “stabilized American Catholicism and enabled the systematic development of other institutions that provided for the religious and cultural needs of the new nation” (p. 19; see Hennesey, 1981). One important decision Carroll took that impacted the Church in a big way was the convocation of a diocesan synod in 1791 to create the space for the deliberation of important issues with his clergy, including “the mode for the continuation of the episcopacy, the ordering and uniform administration of the Sacraments and ecclesiastical discipline, the exterior government of the clergy, and the means for a decent support of the clergy” (Carey, 2004, p. 20). Such administrative and ecclesiastical policies gave concrete form to the fledgling Church, distinguishing it from its Protestant counterparts and positioning it for future growth.

So effective was John Carroll as a bishop that by 1815 when he died “American Catholicism had been significantly transformed” (Carey, 2004, p. 25). Specifically, what helped lay the foundation for more growth during the Carroll era included “the establishment of the episcopacy, religious orders, schools, and new congregations” (Carey, 2004, p. 25). Not surprisingly, then, by 1815, the number of Catholics in the United States had jumped from a paltry 25,000 in 1785 to 100,000 as result of “natural increase, immigration, and the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory” (Carey, 2004, p. 25; see also O’Toole, 2008, p. 43). Geographically, too, the Church expanded from Maryland and Pennsylvania to New York, Virginia, Florida, Maine, Detroit, and New Orleans. The faith reached these places not only through missionary activities but also through the movement of ordinary Catholics. According to Carey (2004), Catholics of all ethnic groups “became a part of the early American movement into the frontiers of upstate New York, western Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and the Ohio River Valley and the Mississippi River Valley where French Catholics had previously established a few pioneer
villages” (p. 25). Carey (2004) explains that Catholicism began to spread rapidly over the United States because Catholics who settled in new areas ensured that a diocese—“a permanent sign of the church’s presence and promise of institutional stability”—was established for them (p. 25).

The impressive growth of Catholicism, though, did not happen without teething challenges, of which one was lay trusteeism (Carey, 2004, p. 28), a practice in which “Catholic lay people ran their parishes and usually hired and fired their pastors” (Morris, 1997, p. vii). For many bishops and pastors, this practice was inconsistent with the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church; accordingly, not only did they reject lay trusteeism but they also took the lay trustees “to the civil courts to settle specific issues, present[ing] petitions before state legislatures, and appeal[ing] to the papacy to reinforce the hierarchical nature of the Church” (Carey, 2004, p. 28). These efforts to wrestle church control from the grips of lay trustees failed, however, leading the Archbishop of Baltimore, James Whitfield, to call the first ever provincial council in the United States in 1829 (Carey, 2004, p. 28). At this council, the bishops “legislated against the laity holding titles to ecclesiastical properties, reaffirmed the bishop’s exclusive right to select, appoint and remove pastors; and outlawed lay patronage in the United States” (Carey, 2004, p. 28). Decrees such as these and canonical injunctions against lay trusteeism would eventually create a powerful episcopal body in the country. As Carey (2004) puts it, “Out of the struggle over lay trusteeism came a strong reassertion of episcopal authority and power within the church; the means of asserting that power, the provincial council, initiated a distinctive national episcopal conciliar governing tradition” that served as a compass for the American Catholic Church in the nineteenth-century (p. 29). Thus, by the end of the first phase of the evolution of the American Catholic brand, bishops had become the single most dominant body within the Church in the United States, with the ability to define its identity, a situation that
triggered further complications such as “violent nativism that threatened Catholic internal unity and self-identity (Carey, 2004, p. 29).

According to historians, the period 1634-1829 could be described as the republican phase of American Catholicism (Casanova, 1992, p. 81). Casanova (1992) explains that this phase was characterized by “a self-confident Catholic colonial elite which...had learned to keep their piety and their public affairs strictly separate” (p. 81). This elite group of Catholics, proud of their republican worldview, insisted that, contrary to the Protestant claim of Catholicism’s incompatibility with republican ideals, there was nothing wrong with being a faithful Catholic and an American patriot. Speaking to the U.S. Congress on January 8, 1826, the Most Reverend John England, Bishop of Charleston Catholic Diocese asserted,

You have no power to interfere with my religious rights; the tribunal of the church has no power to interfere with my civil rights. It is a duty which every good man ought to discharge for his own, and for the public benefit, to resist any encroachment upon either.

We do not believe that God gave the church any power to interfere with our civil rights, or our civil concerns. (as cited in Casanova, 1992, p. 82)

This republican phase of the Catholic Church which treated religion as a private matter would be challenged from the 1830s on, following the influx of swaths of immigrants from Europe, a situation that ushered in the second phase of the evolution of the American Catholic brand, also known as the immigrant phase of the Church (Casanova, 1992, p. 82; Dolan, 2002)

4.3. The Period from 1830-1959

The year 1830 marked the beginning of significant growth in the Catholic population in the United States and yet another phase in the evolution of the Catholic brand in America (see
According to Carey (2004), the Catholic population in the United States rose from 318,000—representing 3 percent of the national population—in 1830 to 4.5 million—representing 13 percent of the national population—in 1870 (p. 30; see also Casanova, 1992, p. 76). In fact, by 1850, the Catholic Church had become the single most dominant Christian denomination in the United States with “a strong institutional presence from coast to coast” and a total population of 1.7 million (Carey, 2004, p. 30; Casanova, 1992, p. 76). The reason for this growth in the view of Carey (2004) and other scholars could be put down to the influx of Irish and German Catholic immigrants into the country, “the annexation of Texas in 1845, the acquisition of territories in the Southwest and California after the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo (1848), and the acquisition of the Pacific Northwest territories (1846)” (p. 30; see Casanova, 1992, p. 76).

Such exponential growth of the Church in numerical and geographical terms in post-independence era reactivated the old Protestant antagonism toward Catholics. As Carey (2004) observes, “The rapid increase of Catholic immigrants, the geographical spread of Catholicism, the manifestations of institutional strength and stability, the emancipation of Catholics and Ireland in 1829, and the traditional Protestant-Catholic theological antagonisms” engendered visceral anti-Catholic sentiments after 1830 (p. 31; see also Casanova, 1992; Moore, 1956; Dolan, 2002). Giving further clarification to Protestant hostility toward American Catholics, Dolan (2002) explains that the heavy presence of immigrants in the Catholic Church gave it an aura of foreign identity, warranting the following observation by Isaac Hecker, a convert to Catholicism, the “Church is not national with us, hence it does not meet our wants nor does it fully understand and sympathize with the experience and dispositions of our people. It is principally made up of adopted and foreign individuals” (cited in Dolan, 2002, p. 58). In other
words, as Hennesey (1981) rightly points out, “Immigration transformed American Catholicism” (p. 145). This immigrant Church became the target of Protestant xenophobic rhetoric. In the 1850s, such Protestant xenophobic rhetoric found expression in a well-organized and militant crusade that gave birth to the Know-Nothing political movement which targeted Catholic lay and clergy alike (Carey, 2004, p. 31; see also More, 1956, p. 4; Casanova, 1992; Dolan, 2002). Indeed, on such major fronts as politics, religion, economics, culture, and moral life, Catholics were subjected to persistent Protestant attacks. Politically, for example, “American Nativists charged that Catholicism was an enemy of republican institutions and a friend of foreign despotism” (Carey, 2004, p. 31). For these Nativists, “Catholic theology, dogmatic and conciliar statements, as well as papal and episcopal church structures were basically opposed to republicanism, democracy, and civil and religious liberties” (Carey, 2004, p. 31).

Moreover, Hennesey (1981) recounts that the image of the Catholic Church in Protestant imagination was not helped by the hordes of European immigrants who poured into the United States from the 1830s. These immigrants, “odd-smelling, odd-looking, odd-speaking,” drunk anytime, even on Sundays (Hennesey, 1981; p. 118). As a church whose membership was mainly made up of such social misfits, the Catholic Church in America was anything but attractive. In the words of the Reverend John Baird, “Of all the forms of error in the United Sates, Romanism is by far the most formidable” (as cited in Hennesey, 1981, p. 118). Baird’s views were re-echoed in 1847 by the Reverend Horace Bushnell, who noted that “Our first danger is barbarism [the influx of foreigners], Romanism the next” (Hennesey, 1981, p. 118). As a church that posed danger to the United States, Catholicism, in the view of Baird, was characterized by three major issues:
1. The simultaneous efforts which have been of late made by her hierarchy on many of the States to obtain a portion of the funds destined to the support of public schools, and employ them for the support of their own sectarian schools, in which neither the Sacred Scriptures, nor any portions of them, are read, but avowedly sectarian instruction is given…

2. The efforts-making [sic] by the hierarchy to bring all the property of the Roman Catholic church—church edifices, especially priests’ houses, cemeteries [sic], schools, colleges, hospitals, etc. into the possession of the bishops…

3. The disposition, long well known, of some of the leaders of the great political parties, to court the Romanists for their votes at elections, and the willingness of the hierarchy to be regarded as a ‘great power in the State,’ and as, in fact, holding the ‘balance of power.’ (as cited in Hennesey, 1981, p. 118)

In other words, for Baird, the funding of Catholic schools with public funds, the control of church property by the hierarchy, and the political influence of Catholics were a great source of worry to Protestants.

Religiously, Catholics were labeled as “priest-ridden, intolerant, proscriptive, and against free rational inquiry” (Carey, 2004, p. 31). Indeed, as a religious institution, the Catholic Church was considered to be in complete opposition to enlightenment principles and ideals. Carey (2004) gives us a helpful insight into Protestant assessment of the Catholic position on the enlightenment thus:

Catholicism was also against the spirit of the age, the great foe of progress, and clung to outdated religious forms. It was the religion of a dead tradition, having little interior life and little respect for the Bible. In social, economic, cultural, and moral life, Catholicism
debased its members, hindered their material prosperity, encouraged ignorance and
superstition, and failed to insist on an adequate moral code. (p. 31)

Such was the negative image with which the Catholic Church was represented in Protestant
debates and political campaigns. For example, John Breckinridge, a graduate from Princeton and
minister of religion, made the following derogatory remark about the pope: “Popery is the
malaria of the nations” (as cited in Hennesey, 1981, p. 120). In the view of Walch (1996), the
Protestant hatred of Catholicism could be summarized in three keys points: (1) that Catholicism
was an idolatrous religion; (2) that Catholicism and democracy were diametrically opposed to
each other; and (3) that Catholic immorality would lead to the death of America as a nation (p.
25). The antagonism that drove such negative rhetoric was responsible for the 1834 incineration
of the Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, the 1844 Bible riot in Philadelphia, and
the 1855 “Louisville’s Bloody Monday battle” (Carey, p. 31; see also Dolan, 2002, p. 56;
O’Toole, 2008, pp. 89-90; Morris, 1997). Besides, O’Toole (2008) cites the following anti-
Catholic and anti-popery rhetoric signed by “A True American” as evidence of Protestant
antagonism: “Be it known…that all Catholics and all persons in favor of the Catholic religion are
a set of vile impostors, liars, villains and cowardly cut-throats…. I bid defiance to that villain the
Pope” (cited in p. 89). Such unprovoked virulent hostility toward Catholics was common during
the immigrant phase of the American Catholic brand. Consistently, such groups as the Know-
Nothing movement mounted coordinated efforts in the form of vitriolic communication with the
express purpose of excluding Catholics from public office and hopefully from the country

In spite of these negative attacks, though, the Catholic Church in the United States still
grew due to a number of factors. Carey (2004) writes that “The national expansion and
development of Catholicism were directed and controlled primarily by five institutions that modeled and shaped American Catholic consciousness and its orientation to American society for years to come” (p. 33). These institutions included “the national episcopal councils, the local episcopacy, the clergy, communities of women religious, the schools” (Carey, 2004, p. 33). The episcopal councils that helped shape the destiny and define the identity of the Catholic Church in America were made up of seven provincial and three plenary councils, all of which took place in Baltimore (Carey, 2004). These councils were instrumental in establishing “a uniform national system of ecclesiastical government,” provided the platform for a unified ecclesiastical communication, “defined the nature of episcopal authority in the church, helped to construct a national Catholic identity, provided a code of uniform ecclesiastical discipline, and encouraged the development of Catholic devotionalism and a disciplined moral life” (p. 33).

Clearly, then, the hostile environment in which Catholics found themselves from the 1830s on, rather than dampening their spirits, motivated them to build their own enclaves that soon paralleled the larger American society; in other words, Protestant hostility only deepened the sense of common religious identity among Catholics (Dolan, 2002, p. 132). Articulating the response of immigrant Catholics in the face of virulent hostility, Dolan (2002) writes that Catholics started to establish save havens in major cities. For these early immigrant Catholics, “Religion became a badge of identity, and the local parish became the hub around which much of their lives revolved. Socially and religiously they became separated from American society (Dolan, 2002, p. 58). O’Toole (2008) elaborates Dolan’s (2002) view by noting that immigrant Catholics viewed their parish Church as “not just a place of spiritual solace amid the turmoil of uprooting from the old and transplanting to the new,” but rather as a place where their children received formal education and “where they gathered with their neighbors in the many societies
that flourished there” (O’Toole, 2008, p. 95). O’Toole (2008) also notes that, as far as immigrants were concerned, the Church brought stability in the midst of chaos, even as it provided opportunities to their children in terms of education, religious vocations, higher degrees, and career choices (p. 96).

The immigrant, separatist Catholic community that characterized the second phase of the evolution of the American Catholic brand was guided by a father figure in the person of a local bishop. As father and protector, the bishop cared for “a flock not able to care for itself and surrounded by hostile enemies” (Greely, as cited in Casanova, 1992, p. 83). Thus, as a religious community, the immigrant Catholic Church was different from other groups in terms of “religion, class, and ethnicity,” distinguishing characteristics that they hoped would help them advance their interests in the new country (Casanova, 1992, p. 83). In other words, as Casanova (1992) notes, the ultimate agenda of the immigrant Church was to help immigrants hold on to their Catholic faith, insulate them against Protestant virulent assaults, and ensure that they enjoyed equal status with their Protestant counterparts even if that meant living in separate enclaves. In the view of Dolan (2002), the separatist move by Catholics, particularly their leaders, was an attempt to protect the Church from being Americanized (p. 70). The main focus of the Church’s hierarchy, Dolan (2002) points out, was to provide the basic needs of their immigrant community by setting up for them “churches for worship, schools for education, hospitals for healing, and numerous other institutions and organizations” (p. 70).

In pursuance of their immigrant agenda, Catholics, already suspicious of the public school system, decided to establish their own schools, beginning with the parochial school system, as it became clear to them that the public school system was an appendage of Protestantism (Dolan, 2002; see Hennesey, 1981; Gleason, 1987). Casting the Catholic antipathy
toward the public school in the mode of ideological differences, Dolan (2002) writes, “It was this basic conflict between the ideology of the common school and Roman Catholicism that led to the development of the Catholic school system” (p. 60; see Ellis, 1956). As the foundation of Catholic education, the parochial school system soon began to serve as the external manifestation of Catholicism in America. Thus, Dolan (2002) is right to point out that by the end of the nineteenth century the parochial educational system served as American Catholicism’s distinguishing mark and “the cornerstone of an extensive independent, Catholic educational system comprising high schools, colleges, and universities that was unparalleled in the United States” (p. 60).

The establishment of Catholic schools also became an effective proselytizing tool even as it gave to millions of people a formal education, thereby ultimately ensuring the spread and continuation of the Catholic faith and empowering immigrants to successfully meet the challenges they faced in their adopted country (Carey, 2004, p. 35). In the words of Carey (2000), “The Catholic school became a primary institutional symbol of the immigrant church, reflecting a symbiotic relationship between Catholicism and American values, simultaneously incorporating purposes of both” (p. 35). Thus, one can argue that Catholic school system catered to the educational needs of the immigrant Catholic community, served as a bulwark against the Protestant controlled public-school system, and functioned as “an attempt to unite the communication of knowledge with the cultivation of piety, and the means of preserving cultural and religious solidarity” (Carey, 2004, p. 35). Besides, Catholic education served as an alternative in a “religiously pluralistic society,” even as it “furthered the general antebellum American desire to create good and virtuous citizens by means of knowledge and religion” (Carey, 2004, p. 35).
Unsurprisingly, non-Catholics reacted negatively toward Catholic education, considering it very divisive (Walch, 1996). These non-Catholics were appalled that Catholics could not appreciate the importance of the public school system, articulated by Walch (1996) as follows:

First, common schools would be used to promote universal literacy. An enlightened citizenry would be the best line of defense against foreign conspiracy and the enemies of democracy. Literacy would open the minds of immigrant children, allow them to think for themselves, and make them less dependent on parish priests and foreign-born parents for guidance. Second, by mixing children from all backgrounds and social classes, common schools would forge a common national identity, an identity based on deference, diligence, honesty, thrift, and other conservative social values. Immigrant children would be encouraged to abandon their ties to their parents, homeland, and religion and embrace the American republic and Protestant religion. Reformers argued that the twin goals of literacy and national identity would ensure the new nation of homogeneity in its national culture. (p. 26)

These noble goals of common education, in the view of Protestants, could not be fully realized by all Americans due to the introduction of the Catholic school system. Hence, from the very beginning of the Catholic school system, there emerged a concerted Protestant effort to kill it.

In response to this negativity, the Church’s hierarchy called the First Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1852 to address the challenges facing the Catholic school system (Hennessey, 1981). At the Council, the bishops of the Church committed themselves to establishing a school in all the parishes of every diocese within the country and pay from diocesan coffers the salaries of all trained teachers hired to teach in parochial schools (Hennessey, 1981, p. 101; p. 117). The result of this firm episcopal commitment was that by 1884, of every ten parishes, four had
parochial schools. Writing about the growth of parochial schools, Hennesey (1981) observes, “In 1880 there were 2,246, with 405,234 students. By 1900, 3,811 schools had 854,523 students, and in 1910 there were 4,845 schools and 1,237,251 students” (p. 187).

Church historians have noted that the success of the parochial school system not surprisingly worsened the relationship between Catholics and non-Catholics in the United States. Determined to curtail the rising tide of popery in the Republic, Protestants resorted to legislative means to make life miserable for Roman Catholics. For example, after the First Plenary Council of 1852, Massachusetts passed a law mandating all children of school-going age to attend public school or government-approved private schools in the town or city in which they resided (Fraser, 2010, pp. 68-73). Because most immigrant Catholic parents could not afford the tuition of private schools, they ended up sending their children to public school. Then, to the consternation of these parents, Massachusetts in 1855 passed a law requiring the reading of the King James Bible in public schools (Fraser, 2010, pp. 68-73). When such a law was adopted by most states in the country, Catholics petitioned their respective state officials to support their parochial schools where they wanted to educate their children. Such a request was only met with Protestant harassment and legal oppression, ultimately necessitating another plenary council.

The Second Plenary Council, convened in 1866, also took place in Baltimore. Its main concerns included the enforcement of compulsory common education, the expansion of public schools, the funding of Catholic parochial school system, the systematic legal assault on Catholic property, all manner of virulent hostility toward Catholics and their faith, and the future of the Church’s hierarchy (Guilday, 1932, pp. 192-198). During the Council, the Catholic bishops adopted the U.S. Senate’s method of holding large sessions and sub-committee meetings, an approach scholars have noted was proof that the hierarchy was willing to embrace the best values
of America (Guilday, 1932). Furthermore, among the invited guests at the opening session of the Council was President Andrew Johnson, a Protestant.

At the end of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore (1866), the bishops adopted and promulgated acts meant to define the Catholic Church in America and differentiate it from non-Catholic ecclesial communities. Apart from encouraging bishops and their pastors to open more schools in order to meet the educational needs of the growing Catholic population, the Council articulated Catholic doctrines and administrative policies regarding the creation of dioceses, care of clergy, evangelization of African Americans, and Church property and government (Fanning, 1907). This Second Plenary Council would be followed by a third one to address both persistent and new Catholic problems.

The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore convoked in 1884 was particularly important in addressing pressing existential issues in the years following the Civil War, including “clerical rights, the treatment of immigrants, the missions to Indians and black Catholics, [and] Catholic education,” as well as, the need “to enact legislation that would govern the American church for years to come” (Carey, 2004, p. 54; see also Hennesey, 1981). Among the legislative instruments the Third Plenary Council issued that would have far-reaching consequences on the institutional Church were the following:

…a series of legislative decrees that provided, among other things, for some clerical consultation in diocesan administration and for the participation of some clergy in the election of bishops, prohibited clerical involvement in politics…and established measures for a uniform national catechism (the Baltimore Catechism), for a national collection to assist the missionary efforts among black Catholics and Indians, and for the
condemnation of secret societies. One-fourth of the decrees were concerned with Catholic education at various levels. (Carey, 2004, p. 54)

As M. A. Vinovksis (personal communication, Fall, 2011) observes, apart from the fact that there were more decrees on education than on any other issue, the Third Council did not just suggest but rather authorized that pastors establish parochial schools within two years after the Council’s conclusion. Insisting on the part that parents must play in order to ensure the success of the Catholic parochial system, the Council fathers decreed that “we not only exhort Catholic parents…but we command them with all authority in our power, to procure a truly Christian education for their offspring [by sending] them to Catholic…schools” (as cited in M. A. Vinovksis, personal communication, Fall, 2011). The bishops also acknowledged at the Third Plenary Council the significant role high school and university education plays in the life of the human person. Compared to the first two councils, the Third Plenary Council seemed to have made the greatest impact, as the years following its conclusion witnessed significant growth in the numbers of Catholic parochial schools (3, 500 total by 1900). Moreover, the Third Council laid down specific guidelines for the evaluation of pastors and principals of Catholic parochial schools (Finke & Stark, 2005).

After the Third Plenary Council, the bishops of the United States set out to expand the frontiers of the Church through education and evangelization. Such efforts paid off in statistical terms as by 1900 there were about 11 million Catholics living in the United States (Finke & Stark, 2005; Morris, 1997; Dolan, 2002). Such exponential growth, in the view of Hennesey (1981), meant that, by the beginning of the First World War, the Catholic Church “was well established in the United States with a constituency of multi-national origin.” (p. 219). Similarly, Dolan (2002), claims that “Catholics had come of age by the closing of the century. Members of
the largest denomination in the country, they were much more confident about their place in America” in the last decade of the nineteenth century than a decade before (p. 72). More importantly, the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the federal government’s recognition of the Catholic Church’s contribution to basic education in the United States when the U.S. Office of Education asserted in its 1903 Report that, “The most impressive fact in the United States today…is the system of Catholic free parochial schools. No less than one million children are being educated in these schools” (Walch, 1996, p. 100). This recognition, however, did not stop mainly Protestant Americans from considering Catholics, in spite of their long presence in the country, as aliens and un-American. (Hennessey, 1981, p. 219-220).

The alien tag notwithstanding, American Catholics “grew in self-assurance and acquired a sense of chosen-ness therefore reserved in America for those with better Puritan credentials” (Hennesey, 1981, p. 221). And rather than allowing their separateness from the generality of American society to bother them, they took it as “a source of pride” (Hennesey, 1981, p. 221). Accordingly, as a proud American religious community, the Catholic Church formed the National Catholic War Council during the First World War in an effort to demonstrate its commitment to social and political action in the country (Dumenil, 1991). Functionally, the War Council represented the Church to the United War Work Campaign and collaborated “with government agencies to explain the Church’s point of view and to promote policies in accordance with Catholic belief and interest” (Dumenil, 1991, p. 23). In addition, the Council was instrumental in influencing the legislative process through its engagement with law-makers. All these efforts, as Dumenil (1991) notes, had one main goal: to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that “Catholicism promoted patriotism and citizenship” (p. 23).
Despite their patriotism in during the First World War, though, Catholic loyalty to America in the post-war years was persistently doubted as was the case in the previous century. The reason for the persistent doubt, as historians explain, was Catholics’ unalloyed loyalty to their pope in Rome, a situation that Protestants read as a sign of disloyalty to the United States of America (Carey, 2004; see also More, 1956; Hennessey, 1981; Dumenil, 1991; Dolan, 2002). Charles G. Marshall, for instance, found it hard to believe that a “loyal and conscientious Roman Catholic” could embrace “the principles of civil and religious liberty on which American institutions are based” (Hennesey, 1981, p. 235; O’Toole, 2008). Indeed, for Protestant Americans, Protestantism was the only national religion of the country, and to choose Catholicism over it was un-American (Dolan, 2002, p. 132). This anti-Catholic rhetoric was characterized by the activities of groups like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), American Protective Association (APA), the Covenanters, Guardians of Liberty, and Knights of Luther, all of which made it their singular purpose to defeat the pope in America (Hennesey, 1981, p. 246; Moore, 1956, p. 9, 15; see also Dumenil, 1991; McGreevy, 1997). The antagonism would drive the efforts made by the Free Masons and KKK to ban the private school system in Oregon in 1922 on the grounds that: “All true Americans must see the logic of denying all minority groups, especially Catholics, the right to have their own schools, the very training ground for later corrupt activities” (cited in Walch, 1996; see also Dumenil, 1991; McGreevy, 1997). Besides the anti-rhetoric campaigns of these groups, the State of Alabama passed a law that allowed officials to inspect religious convents. Moreover, to further cast the Catholic Church as a religious institution with an anti-American agenda, Governor Sidney J. Catts publicly “announced that the pope was planning to invade Florida and transfer the Vatican here” (Hennesey, 1981, p. 246), a view shared by Owen Wister, a novelist who claimed that the Roman Catholic Church was “an
organized power alien to American ideals (cited in Hennesey, 1981, p. 246; see also Moore, 1956, pp. 87-88). In the media too, the Protestant magazine *The Christian Century* described the Catholic Church as a religious community whose membership lacked the rational power to make decisions for itself and rather committed “their spiritual interests to the arbitrament of a self-constituted authority” (Hennesey, 1981, p. 246; see also McGreevy, 1997, 107). Similarly, in a 1927 editorial, the *New Republic* asserted:

> The real conflict is not between a Church and State or between Catholicism and Americanism, but between a culture which is based on absolutism and encourages obedience, uniformity and intellectual subservience, and a culture which encourages curiosity, hypotheses, experimentation, verification by facts and a consciousness of the processes of individual and social life as opposed to conclusions about it. (as cited in McGreevy, 1997, pp. 106-107)

The portrait of the Catholic Church in this editorial is that of an oppressive, dictatorial, and anti-scientific religious organization. Clearly, then, as Moore (1956) notes, the Catholic Church was still derogated for cultural, political, and theological reasons in the second period of the evolution of its brand.

According to historians, the tag of disloyalty and un-patriotism that hung around the necks of Catholics accounted in large measure for the unsuccessful attempt by Al Smith, a New York governor and Catholic, to win the White House in the election of 1928 (Carey, 2004, p. 82; see also McGreevy, 1997; McCartin, 2003). As Carey (2004) observes, Smith’s bid for the American presidency raised the question of the compatibility between Catholicism and American democratic culture (p. 82). In other words, “The Whole question of double allegiance reasserted itself in the campaign: ‘Can a Catholic be loyal to his church and, as president, to his country’?”
(Carey, 2004, p. 82). For many Protestant Americans, the answer to such a question was negative, seeing the Catholic Church’s doctrines as inherently “antithetical to American constitutional ideals” (Carey, 2004, p. 82; see also Hennesey, 1981; Moore, 1956). Moore (1956) reports that a Protestant minister from South Carolina, for example, would not vote for Al Smith because of his allegiance to the pope, a man “who claims to be political ruler of the whole world” (p. 88). Ultimately, Smith lost his presidential bid, not because he could not match his opponent’s rational argument but because of the bigotry of Protestant America, which demanded that Catholics “establish the compatibility of their religion with American democratic ideals, laws, and practices” (Hennesey, 1981; see also Moore, 1956). Such a rejection on purely irrational grounds inflicted deep wounds on the psyche of Catholic Americans that would fester for a long time.

For Catholics, the rejection of the Democratic candidate Al Smith in the presidential election of 1928 was one more instance in a long line of instances in which Protestant America excluded them from participating in the political life of the country they loved. Such exclusion caused Catholics “unhappiness, insecurity, and anxiety about [their] ambiguous identity” in American society (Dumenil, 1991, p. 26). The Catholic predicament was powerfully articulated by no better a person than Admiral William S. Benson, the leader of the National Council of Catholic Men in 1920 in the following way:

They meet the bigots in their work, in their neighborhood life, in the organizations to which they belong. If they are teachers, they are in danger in many instances of being discharged. If they are in public life, their religion loses them votes and prevents them, perhaps, from giving their full services to their city, state or country. In some way or other we are all handicapped. (as cited in Dumenil, 1991, p. 26)
Benson’s sentiments were supported by hard evidence such as the anti-Catholic uproar that compelled Judge J. McGraw to withdraw from the Republican National Committee race in 1920. (Dumenil, 1991, p. 26). Morris (1997) writes that Catholics generally coped with the persistent discrimination they faced in the American public sphere by establishing “parallel Catholic organizations,” such as “Catholic businessmen’s clubs, medical societies, bar associations, teachers’ guilds, youth organizations, historical, sociological, and economic associations, Catholic book clubs and literary guilds, and a flourishing national Catholic press” (p. ix; see also Dumenil, 1991). The running of such parallel organizations, though, was in no way a sign that Catholics were going to abandon their patriotism as Americans. In fact, scholars have noted that the more they separated themselves from mainline American society, the more Catholics demonstrated their patriotic spirit, willing to serve the country they loved whenever the occasion demanded (Dumenil, 1991; Casanova, 1992). Meanwhile, in spite of the fact that the Catholic Church experienced a resurgence of the 1850s nativist virulent hostility in the 1920s, its membership witnessed an increase from 18 million in 1920 to 20 million in 1930, a statistic that would more than double thirty years later (Hennesey, 1981, p. 237; p. 283). Besides, the Church’s system of higher education enjoyed considerable growth and expansion during the same period. According to Hennesey (1981), the number colleges and university rose from 130 in 1921 to 163 by 1928 (p. 237).

As patriotic citizens, Catholics again supported the American war effort during the Second World War (1939-1945). As Hennesey (1981) notes, “Catholic patriotism [during the War] was unalloyed. Church leaders supplied encouragement” (p. 280). Catholics served as soldiers, chaplains, and contributed in monetary terms to support American soldiers fighting abroad (Hennessey, 1991). Hennessey (1981) mentions that in most World War II movies, the
chaplain seen attending to wounded soldiers were almost always Catholic. The War thus provided American Catholics the platform to demonstrate their patriotism.

The period after World War II created a space for the Catholic Church to add to its numbers and physical infrastructure. This period was characterized by unprecedented economic boom that saw a lot of Catholics climb from the bottom rungs of the socio-economic ladder to middle-class status. Carey (2004) tells us that “American Catholics took advantage of the expanding wealth and built numerous new churches, schools, and other large religious institutions, some of which had been delayed during the previous fifteen years by the Depression and the war” (p. 93). Besides, the institutional Church gradually began to play an important role in shaping the moral consciousness of the country, as its hierarchy appealed to both Catholics and non-Catholic Christians to change society for the better (Carey, 2004, p. 94). Specifically, the bishops campaigned for a Christian America where indecency and immorality had no place (Carey, 2004, p. 95). In pursuit of this moral agenda for American society, “the American bishops established the League of Decency in 1934 and the National Office for Decent Literature (NODL) in 1938” (Carey, 2004, 94). These two institutions were responsible for evaluating the morality or otherwise of every movie and pamphlet that came out. Initially meant as moral guides for only Catholics, the ratings of the two institutions soon found acceptance among even non-Catholic religious leaders who treated them as morally binding on all Christians (Carey, 2004, p. 95).

The role of moral gatekeeping in post-World War II America, however, drew the ire of some non-Catholics who accused the Church of attacking America’s democratic freedoms (Carey, 2004, p. 93). For example, in his work American Freedom and Catholic Power, Blanshard (1949) reflected the non-Catholic fear of the Church when he accused it of being anti-
democratic, oppressive, disloyal, and reactionary (p. 23), or as Morris (1997) puts it, “antihumanist, antisexual, a dangerous financial octopus” (p. 224; see also Carey 2004, p. 96; McCartin, 1965). Blanshard’s (1949) concern, however, was not with ordinary lay Catholics, whom he considered to have fully integrated into American society. Rather, his concern was with the Church’s hierarchy which, in his view, refused to integrate, “being fundamentally Roman in its spirit and directives,” as well as being “an autocratic moral monarchy in a liberal democracy” (p. 14). Blanshard (1949), therefore, wanted Americans to speak up against the Catholic Church’s dominance in politics, medicine, art, entertainment, literature, scholarship, and education.

The accusations of trying to control America politically, economically, and socially notwithstanding, Catholics were determined to be major players in post-World War-II America. As Carey (2004) says, “Hopeful, institutionally and numerically strong, and active in the promotion of an American Christian culture, Catholics were withdrawing from their ethnic conclaves, battling each other ideologically, and calling for some moderate reforms in Catholic attitudes and practices” (p. 93). Morris (1997) vividly describes the new image of the Catholic Church in the postwar years this way:

Its public image in the 1940s and 1950s was nothing short of specular: if movies are to be believed, all battlefield chaplains were Catholic priests. In the booming industrial Northeast and Midwest, Catholic chaplains were fixtures at labor union meetings, and, in many cities, the majority of union officers and leaders, and sometimes even the majority of business labor negotiators, regardless of their religion, were graduates of Catholic labor schools. Bishop Fulton Sheen became the most successful public lecturer in the history of television (p. ix).
Thus, as the Catholic Church began to be recognized as a legitimate religious institution in American society, its members were accepted as representing the core values of the country. Such a positive image would be critical in the election of a Catholic for the first time in 1960. But even before the Kennedy election, many Protestants, having begun to appreciate the Catholic faith, had converted to Catholicism by the end of the second phase of the evolution of the Church’s brand (Hennesey, 1991). Existentially, the Church was seen as a religious community that “competed and then cooperated with the government in providing hospitals, asylums, orphanages and industrial schools” (Hennesey, 1981, p. 184). In light of such an impressive contribution to social development, one can only agree with Hennesey (1981) that the Church’s “credentials looked impeccable” in the years leading up to the Kennedy election (p. 295).

In fact, scholars tell us that the 1950s saw as well an exponential growth in Catholic population. Dolan (2002), for example, writes that, between 1940 and 1960, the Catholic population doubled, and that by the close of the 1950s, about 25 percent of Americans were Catholics. And, to accommodate the growing numbers of the faithful, more church buildings were constructed. Not surprising, “By 1959 more than four million children attended Catholic elementary schools, more than twice the number in 1945” (p. 181; see also Hennesey, 1981). Such significant growth in the Catholic population together with its socioeconomic rise attested to the fact that the decade before Kennedy’s election saw Catholics, fearlessly loyal to their religion and country, on “top of the world” (Dolan, 2002, p. 182). Hence, the sociologist Will Herberg was right when he remarked in 1955 that “the Catholic church is recognized as a genuinely American religious community,” becoming “one of the three great religions of democracy,” the others being Protestantism and Judaism (as cited in Dolan, 2002, p. 182).
In summary, the trajectory of the American Catholic brand from 1830 to 1959 was characterized by highs and lows, well-articulated by Hecker (1876, p. 445) thus:

In the midst of losses, defeats, persecutions, anxieties, revilings, calumnies, the struggle has been still carried on…. New churches were built, new congregations were formed, new dioceses were organized. On some mountainside or deeply wooded vale a cloister, a convent, a college, a seminary arose, one hardly knew how, and yet another and another, until these retreats of learning and virtue dotted the land. The elements of discord and disturbance within the Church grew less and less active, the relations between priest and people became more intimate and cordial, the tone of Catholic feeling improved, ecclesiastical discipline was strengthened, and the self-respect of the Catholic body increased.

Of course, this optimistic summation of the Catholic situation was made eighty-three years before the end of the second phase of the evolution of the American Catholic brand. Nevertheless, at the time it was made, the Catholic struggle for legitimacy and acceptable identity still continued. Only at the end of the second phase in 1959, could Hecker’s (1876) optimism reflect the existential reality of the Catholic brand in America.

4.4. The Period from 1960 to 2001

The election of John F. Kennedy, a Catholic of Irish descent, as the president of the United States, marked the finest hour of the American Catholic Church and its brand. In the words of Dolan (2002),

Kennedy’s election to the presidency was…a high point for Catholics. It was a symbolic moment that appeared to mark the end of people’s bias against Catholics. Catholics
basked in the glow of the Catholic Kennedy in the White House. His popularity enabled Catholics to stand a little taller. (p. 192; see also Morris, 1997, p. 281)

But even before the election of Kennedy, there were significant pointers to the final acceptance of the Catholic Church as an integral part of American cultural reality. Importantly, the 1950s witnessed more Catholics receiving high education and moving up the socioeconomic ladder in America.

The positive image that the Kennedy election credited to the Catholic brand was augmented by Vatican II, an ecumenical council convoked by Pope John XXIII in 1959, and lasted for three years, that is, from 1962 to 1965. Called with the main purpose of securing authentic dialogue between the Church universal and the religio-social sectors of the modern world, Vatican II reconfigured the ecclesial community as a servant. This servant image promoted by Vatican II would have implications for the branch of the Catholic Church in the United States, where it “did an about-face, abandoned its posture, and sought to become a major force in American public life” (Dolan, 2002, pp. 193-194).

According to Dolan (2002), as Catholics became more accepted in American society, they grew in confidence and began to “take moral and political positions that they believed would benefit the welfare of the nation” (p. 198). The American Catholic bishops, for example, began to issue pastoral letters that addressed important issues of both moral and political character (Dolan, 2002, p. 198). Such an episcopal attempt to shape public morality and promote social development were unheard of before mid-twentieth-century America. As Dolan (2002) rightly points out, within the Catholic Church “Issues of social justice took center stage in the 1960s as crusades on behalf of civil rights, women’s rights, and peace swept across the landscape” (p. 198; see also McGreevy, 1997). The involvement of many Catholics in these
social movements, including their participation in the protests against the Vietnam War and their “involvement with Cesar Chavez and the farm workers’ movement [as well as] the urban renewal movement that sought more affordable housing for the nation’s city dwellers,” ultimately positioned the Catholic Church as a major player in American society (Dolan, 2002, p. 199). With time, the Catholic brand in American quite rightly began to be seen as one that preached a social gospel.

Specifically, the social gospel of the Catholic bishops of the United States had two major themes, namely global economics and global peace. Dolan (2002) informs us that “Between 1966 and 1988 the American hierarchy issued 188 official statements and letters and more than half of these addressed issues of social justice” (p. 200). Regarding world peace, they made their concerns known on the threat of nuclear warfare in a 1983 pastoral letter titled *The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response*. Then on the question of global economics, the bishops, in *Economic Justice for All*, issued in 1986, expressed their concerns about the United States economy and how it must be made to serve the needs of the human person, whose dignity it must also respect. Such views, coming from the Catholic Church, received national attention, a testament to the power of the Catholic brand at the time. Explaining the rationale behind the positive review the bishops’ pastoral letter received, Dolan (2002) writes that at the point the pastorals were issued, a majority of the American people viewed official Catholic public communication as having relevance not only for only the Church community but also for the whole of society (p. 202). In other words, during the third phase of the American Catholic brand, denominationalism took a back seat with Americans generally perceiving each other as one people with one destiny. Americans were particularly impressed with the emphases the bishops placed on human dignity in their public religious communication. The pastoral letters, therefore,
were instrumental in fostering a positive brand image of the Catholic Church after the 1960s. In other words, the image of a church of people, for people, and with people was what the Catholic Church conveyed in its moral choices and national communication after the 1960s.

4.5. The Period from 2002 to Date

The strength of the American Catholic brand which arguably reached its apogee between the 1960s and 1980s, however, began to weaken following the revelations by *The Boston Globe* in January 2002 that a number of priests in the Archdiocese of Boston had sexually abused children and young people for decades and, that Church leaders, in an attempt to protect the image of the Church, had covered up the abuse (Dolan, 2002; Carey, 2004; O’Toole, 2008, p. 274). Of course, even before *The Globe* revelations, there had been media reports a decade earlier of sexual abuses on the part of Catholic clergy, but the issue never reached the level of brand crisis as it did in 2002 (Carey, 2004, p. 146). Reporting on the Boston case, Dolan (2002) writes that the immediate consequence of the clergy abuse was one of “turmoil in Boston’s Catholic community” (p. 257; see also Carey, 2004, p. 154). And as reports by several media houses of persistent and systematic clergy sexual abuse of minors reached the American public, the problem quickly rose to become a brand crisis, with the image of the Church, which had taken centuries to build, being fractured and its reputation left in tatters. In the words of Dolan (2002),

As the number of accusations against other priests in the Boston archdiocese and across the country grew, the crisis deepened with the revelation that church officials, seemingly more worried about the negative effects of a public scandal than about the well-being of
those in their care, had often reassigned accused priests to other parishes without restricting those priests’ interaction with children. (p. 257)

The picture which began to emerge with more and more revelations of clergy sexual abuse and episcopal cover-ups was that of a Church that did not care about innocent and vulnerable members, a Church that prioritized its image over the welfare of children and young people. Dolan (2002; see also Carey, 2004) is thus right, when he asserts that “Regardless of how much good the church had done—and its good works are remarkable—this scandal of abuse and cover-up has shaken to its foundation the sacred trust between priests and parishioners” (p. 257).

Clearly, the scandal gave the lie to the Church’s often trumpeted claim that respect for human dignity must guide all personal and institutional moral choices.

For Dolan (2002) the profundity of the “sadness, confusion, and sense of betrayal” that was experienced by Catholics was such that mere apologies by priests and episcopal authorities would not suffice (p. 258; see also O’Toole, 2008). He argues that the rejection of the Church’s apology was the price it had to pay for not aligning its public religious communication on “war and peace, the economy, abortion, and the death penalty” with its moral choices (Dolan, 2002, p. 258; see Kaufmann, 2008). In the view of Dolan (2002), by publicly taking strong positions on such important national issues, the Church over time had assumed a powerful moral voice in the American public sphere (p. 258). Therefore, Dolan (2002) continues, the hierarchy’s “duplicity and cover-up… has severely damaged, if not destroyed, that authority, and it will take more than just apologies to restore the credibility lost in the revelations” that began with *The Boston Globe* publications (p. 258). As he sees it, the Church’s image redemption lies in more leadership accountability and lay participation in ecclesial governance especially with regard to the appointment of bishops and pastors (Dolan, 2002, p. 258). Clearly, Dolan’s (2002) analysis of
the problem created by the clergy sexual abuse begins with the premise that the brand of the Catholic Church was grounded on a solid moral authority as evident in its communication on war and peace, the economy, abortion, and the death penalty. Such a solid brand image and brand reputation were dealt a severe blow by the immorality of priests and bishops, causing laypeople to lose faith and trust in the Church (O’Toole, 2008, p. 275). Describing the effect of the abuse in the metaphor of a burst dam, Margaret O’Brien Steinfels in a submission to the bishops at the Dallas meeting that produced the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in 2002 said, “The dam has broken…a reservoir of trust has run dry” (cited in O’Toole, 2008, p. 275; see also Carey, 2004). In light of the fractured trust in the Church and its leaders, a scholar like Dolan (2002) would argue that the Catholic brand can regain its credibility only when the leaders involved in the cover-ups have been replaced. In other words, Dolan (2002) would agree with both Aristotle (353 B.C. /2004) and Isocrates (353 B.C. /2000) that character matters in public communication.

The imperative for the Church to renew its image becomes even more urgent now than before as individual laypeople and groups like the Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) and Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) still want to identify as Catholic but expect to see a determined effort on the part of the Church to change (O’Toole, 2008, p. 276). With a slogan that runs, “Keep the faith; change the Church,” VOTF, for example, at the time of its founding, committed to three goals in regard to the clergy sexual abuse: “to support victims of abuse; to support ‘priests of integrity’…; and to ‘shape structural change within the Catholic Church’ so as to prevent such a scandal in the future” (O’Toole, 2008, p. 277). O’Toole (2008) throws more light on the admirable determination of a majority of American Catholics not to jump ship in light of the revelations of abuses and cover-ups: “In fact, many Catholics strengthened their ties
to their own local parish” and attended Mass more than before (p. 278). For many active Catholics, the bishops, not their local pastors, were to blame for the clergy sexual abuse scandals. And in spite of their anger with the Church’s hierarchy, they were determined to keep their faith (p. 278). This posture on the part of the laity is a clear demonstration of brand loyalty at its best. Nevertheless, by choosing to stay with the Church, the lay faithful have imposed a moral imperative on the Church’s hierarchy to consider reimagining the Church to reflect its core values in both communication and concrete actions like providing a safe environment for vulnerable members and holding leaders complicit in the abuse and cover-ups accountable.

In April 2002, the U.S. hierarchy demonstrated its willingness to address the brand image problem of the Catholic Church in the face of the abuse scandals when it reaffirmed with Pope John Paul II in Rome that “the sexual abuse of minors is rightly considered a crime by society and is an appalling sin in the eyes of God,” (as cited in Carey, 2004, p. 154). Moreover, the bishops committed themselves to supporting victims of the abuse and their families, as well as, helping them rediscover their lost faith and regain their psychological and mental wellbeing. The Rome meeting was followed up with another meeting of bishops in Dallas, Texas, where they adopted a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual abuse among Catholic clergy. In the so-called *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* which the episcopal body issued, they apologized for their failure to adequately address the problem and committed themselves to “dealing with this problem strongly, consistently, and effectively in the future” (as cited in Carey, 2004, p. 154).

Furthermore, not only did the bishops in the country initiate the process of laicizing and prosecuting abusive priests but they also set up bodies that would ensure transparency in how the hierarchy would deal with sexual abuses henceforth (Carey, 2004, p. 155; USCCB, 2011). These
bodies included the Office and Youth Protection tasked with the responsibility “to supervise and oversee diocesan compliance with the new policies” and “a National Review Board of primarily lay Catholic experts in various professions and fields of study” charged to support and supervise the Office of Child and Youth Protection, and to contract a reputable research institution to determine the causes and effects of the clergy sexual abuse in all the 195 dioceses and eparchies of the American Catholic Church (Carey, 2004, p. 154). These policy decisions were made in 2004, and although every diocese and eparchy now has a review board headquartered at the national office of the USCCB in Washington, DC, the image of the Church as one that does not protect its vulnerable members has not changed over a decade after the Boston Globe revelations, particularly as new allegations of abuse and cover-ups continue to come up. Between 2012 and 2015, for example, there were fresh allegations in the Archdioceses of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and St. Paul-Minneapolis, and the Diocese of Kansas City, Missouri (Hurdle & Eckholm, July 24, 2012; Goodstein, Sept. 7, 2012; Kim, Powers, & Ryan, Jan. 21, 2013; Smith & Goodstein, Jun. 15, 2015).

4.6. Conclusion

The four phases of the evolution of the American Catholic brand show that the Church has had a checkered history from when it was first brought to St. Augustine, Florida, to date. As a minority religion at the time of its establishment in the United States, the Catholic Church for most of its history in America met with hostility. Nevertheless, the Church never wavered in its loyalty to America, consistently encouraging its members to offer selfless service to their country, including serving in all the major wars in the history of the American republic. By the end of the first phase of its evolution, the Catholic brand in America with a small following had
begun to show some well-defined features as a hierarchical institution different from other religious organizations.

The second phase continued to experience the existential challenges witnessed early in the first phase, but at this point in time the Church had begun to enjoy significant growth statistically and geographically as immigrants mainly from Europe streamed into the country. On arriving at the shores of the United States, immigrants found a welcoming church that helped them integrate in their new country. Indeed, by the end of the second phase of the evolution of the Catholic brand, most American Catholics had begun to realize the American dream in terms of the acquisition of personal wealth and high education. For the institutional Church, the end of the second phase marked a watershed moment, as it began to exercise a strong influence in society by contributing significantly to education, healthcare, social welfare, and public morality.

The third phase of the Catholic brand was one characterized by immense social capital and a powerful moral voice. This phase saw Catholics confidently engaging in all spheres of American public life, the election for the first time of a Catholic as president of the United States, a predominantly Protestant country, the Church playing an active role in social reform movements, even as its hierarchy issued important pastoral letters with economic, political, and social implications. That the Church’s public communication on important national issues was well-received by a majority of Americans clearly demonstrated that the Church had finally been accepted as an integral part of the religio-social reality of the United States of America. This goodwill, enjoyed by the Catholic brand particularly between the 1960s and 1980s would be fractured, following revelations by *The Boston Globe* in January 2002 of clergy sex sexual abuse and episcopal cover-ups.
Chapter 5

Ecumenical Councils as Branding and Rebranding Moments in the History of the Catholic Church

5.1. Introduction

As an institution, the Catholic Church has always branded and rebranded itself in the course of its long history, though it never uses the terms branding and rebranding. One way through which the Church has constructed an image different than other cultural and religious realities and dealt with crises—branded and rebranded—has been through ecumenical councils. As stipulated by the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the Roman Catholic Church understands an ecumenical council as a gathering of bishops at the instance of the pope (although originally ecumenical councils were called by other persons)⁴ to address existential challenges facing the universal church at a particular point in time (Coriden, Green, & Heintschel, 1985; Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002, p. 4; O’Malley, 2008; Kelly, 2009, p. 2; Tanner, 2013). As the conveyor, the Roman Pontiff presides over ecumenical councils either in person or through his delegates (Coriden, Green, & Heintschel, 1985, Canon 338; Kelly, 2009). Besides, the acts of an ecumenical council become binding on the universal Church only after they receive the formal approval of the pope. In all, the Roman Catholic Church accepts twenty-one ecumenical councils.

⁴ All the ecumenical councils of the first millennium of the Christian Church were convoked by laypeople (see Dwyer, 1985; Davis, 1990).
This chapter examines how the Catholic Church has shaped and reshaped its identity and image through twenty-one ecumenical councils. Divided into four main sections, the chapter begins by examining how the first millennium ecumenical councils addressed important theological, disciplinary, and administrative challenges, ultimately constructing an image of an ecclesial community different from existing religious realities, including eastern mystery religions, Judaism, and Islam (see Briggs, 1903; Faulkner, 1910). The next section, then takes up the ecumenical councils that took place during the Middle Ages. Though sticking to the procedural template provided by the earlier councils, the medieval councils were mostly convoked and directed by the Roman popes, being used as tools for the articulation and expansion of papal authority. Moreover, the medieval councils played a critical role in stemming divisions and schisms in the Church, further extending its influence over most of Europe. In the third section, the chapter concerns itself with the three ecumenical councils of the modern period, namely, the Council of Trent, Vatican Council I, and Vatican Council II. While Trent was convened to address the challenges posed by the Reformers, and Vatican I called to confront the problem of modernism, Vatican II represented an unprecedented attempt by the Roman Catholic Church to update itself and engage the modern world in an authentic dialogue. The chapter concludes by arguing that, through the twenty-one ecumenical councils, the Church not only managed to resolve crises of epic proportions but also was able to give concrete articulation to its identity in a way that was unique, salient, and relevant to its multi-million followers.

5.2. The Ecumenical Councils of the First Millennium

The first time we learn of a gathering of the leaders of Christianity to deal with an existential problem was in the first century A.D. as reported by the Acts of the Apostles chapter
15. At stake at this early stage of the Christian Church was whether non-Jews had to be circumcised first before they could be admitted into the community of Christians (Davis, 1990; Tanner, 2013). This issue assumed prominence as important figures like Peter and Paul took the message of the Risen Christ to non-Jews. The backlash that their missionary endeavors attracted from some of the early Jewish Christians caused the leaders of the nascent Church to convene a meeting known as the Jerusalem Council in order to address the issue of gentile admission. Under the chairmanship of James, the brother of Jesus, the Church arrived at a compromised solution that required Gentiles to maintain their non-Jewishness, while refraining from acts offensive to Jewish sensibilities (Davis, 1990). This Jerusalem Council, the first of its kind, provided the template for future gatherings of ecclesiastical leaders to address major challenges in terms of how issues were deliberated and decisions arrived at. Nevertheless, the Jerusalem Council did not make the list of the ecumenical councils of the first millennium either because of its small size or the exceptional personalities in attendance, namely, the early apostles (Davis, 1990). In all, the Roman Catholic Church accepts eight ecumenical as having taken place in the first millennium of its existence.

5.2.1. The First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea I, 325 A. D.)

For the Catholic Church, the first ecumenical council was Nicaea I, called and presided over by the Emperor Constantine in 325 A. D. with a view to healing the wounds of division caused by Arianism (Chadwick, 1960; Grant, 1975; Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Tanner, 2013). In the view of G. L. Prestige, the issue confronting Nicaea I was how the Church as a monotheistic religion could remain faithful to its Jewish heritage and still maintain its core doctrine of the divinity of Jesus as a being different from God the Father (as cited in Davis, 1990,
p. 33). In other words, Nicaea represented the undivided Catholic Church’s attempt to articulate a monotheistic identity distinct from the pagan Egyptian and Roman religions of the time on one hand and the absolute monotheism of Judaism on the other, while at the same time holding on to the view of God as Father and Son (Faulkner, 1910; Davis, 1990). This attempt at a clear articulation of the Church’s core monotheistic identity was necessitated by Arianism, a heresy proposed by the Alexandrian priest Arius (Grant, 1975; Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2013). Davis (1990) explains that at the core of the Arian theology “is the absolute transcendence and unicity of God who is Himself without source but is the source of all reality” (p. 52). As a “transcendent, unique and indivisible being” (Davis, 1990, p. 52), God could not share his nature whatsoever because doing so would make him “divisible and changeable” (Davis, 1990, p. 52). It followed, therefore, Arius reasoned, that since God’s substance is unique, “whatever else must come into being” should do so, “not by the communication of God’s being but by creation from nothing” (Davis, 1990, p. 52). In creating the world out of nothing, God, who could not have a direct contact with the physical world, relied on the instrumentality of the Word, “a creature, generated or made…perfect beyond all other creatures but a creature nonetheless because he has a source, while God Himself has none” (Davis, 1990, p. 52; see also Kelly, 2009, 21). As a creature, the Word, in the view of Arius, was not eternal, because “though born outside of time, prior to his generation or creation he did not exist” (Davis, 1990, p. 52). As Arius put it, “there was when he was not” (as cited in Davis, p. 52; Kelly, 2009, 21). Since the Word was created, he lacked the capacity to communicate directly with or directly conceptualize the reality of God. Hence, Jesus was referred to as the Word or Wisdom “only because he shares in the essential Reason and Wisdom, God Himself” (Davis, 1990, p. 52). As the created Word, Jesus was changeable and liable to sin, though “God foresaw his virtuous steadfastness and bestowed grace
upon him in advance” (Davis, 1990, p. 52; see also Bellitto, 2002). Arius could therefore write, “Even if He is called God, He is not God truly, but by participation in grace…. He is God in name only” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 52). Ultimately, Arius conceptualized the nature of Jesus Christ as follows: “In Christ the created Word, distinct from the Logos, reason immanent in God, united himself to a human body lacking a rational soul, the Word himself taking the place of the rational element with the human composite” (Davis, 1990, p. 52).

This Arian principle had implications for the salvific mission of Jesus. As Bellitto (2002) has rightly pointed out, if Jesus was a creature, then he had no equality with the Father. Hence, even if Jesus had been the most superior human being, he could not have been divine unless God the Father had adopted him, which still would not bring Jesus’ divine nature up to par with the Father’s (p. 18). Besides, “If only God can save human beings, and Jesus is not God, then Jesus did not save human beings” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 18). Clearly then, Arianism threw the soteriological mission of Christ, the very foundation of Christianity, into doubt, thereby problematizing the core identity of the Christian faith. Because such views undoubtedly contradicted what the Christian Church had always believed, Arius’ bishop, Alexander, naturally opposed him, asking him to abandon them, a command the priest refused to obey. Consequently, Arius was expelled from his diocese. When that happened, he travelled to Palestine where he found episcopal support (Faulkner, 1910; Tanner, 2009; Kelly, 2013). Soon, the Arian controversy split the Church, a situation which infuriated Constantine who had hoped that the one faith would unite the various peoples of his huge empire (Davis, 1990; Tanner, 2009; Kelly, 2013). Initially, he tried to resolve the conflict in order to bring about religio-social peace by dispatching Ossius, bishop of Cordoba in Spain, with letters to Arius and his bishop (Grant,
1975, p. 3; Bellitto, 2002, p. 17). However, this initial attempt yielded no fruit, compelling Constantine to call an ecumenical council in 325 A.D.

At Nicaea, the council fathers, following the presentations of the positions of the Arian party and its opponents, issued a creedal statement on the Godhead and twenty canons that dealt with disciplinary issues (Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002; Tanner, 2009; Kelly, 2009). The Nicene Creed begins as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, of one substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very, begotten..., not made, being of one substance with the Father. (as cited in Percival, 2011, p. 39)

With these words, the fathers at Nicaea defined their faith as one grounded in the reality of God the Father and God the Son, co-equal and co-eternal, thereby contradicting the Arian position (see Grant, 1975; Kelly, 2009, p. 23). The council fathers also anathematized the Arian view that “there was a time the Son did not exist, that he was created from nothing, and that he did not share the same substance with the Father” (Kelly, 2009, p. 23; see also Grant, 1975).

By these formal statements, the fathers of Nicaea I sought to formally brand the Christian church as different from Judaism and Mid-Eastern mystery religions. Commenting on the significance of Nicaea, Davis (1990) observes,

What the Council of Nicaea did in its creedal statement was simply to attend to what the Scripture asserts as true about the Word of God, reduce the multitude of true statements to the one judgment which is the foundation of all the rest and appeal to the intellects of Christians for their assent to this judgment as the foundation of further religious belief and experience. (p. 71)
By so doing, Nicaea laid the foundation for the development of Christian dogma. Specifically, as Davis (1990) notes, the articulation of the dogma of the Son of God has had effect on other aspects and practices of Christianity.

Besides the creedal statement that established the equality of the Father and the Son, the Nicene fathers sought to regulate the behavior of the Church’s clergy and Church life in general in twenty disciplinary canons (Davis, 1990, 63). The first canon, for example, barred men who willingly accepted to be eunuchs from the priesthood (Tanner, 2013). Then, the second canon cautioned against ordaining new converts to the priesthood or episcopacy (Tanner, 2013). Canon 3, which condemned the practice of women living with the clergy stated that, with the exception of female relatives, the clergy should not live with any woman in their house (as cited in Tanner, 2013, p. 38). Furthermore, canon 4 stipulated the procedure for the appointment of bishops, with canon 5 clarifying how Christians excommunicated from the Church might be readmitted (Percival, 2011). Besides, canons 6 and 7 restored primacy of honor to the See of Rome, thereby placing it above the Sees of Alexandria, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. The fathers also in canon 8 stipulated how the Cathari or Novatians⁵ might be admitted into the Church, while stating in canon 9 how to promote the clergy, in canon 10 how to deal with irregular ordination, and in canon 11 how to admit lapsed Christians back into the Christian fold. While canons 12 and 13 dealt with pastoral ministry to the sick and dying, canon 14 addressed the issue of lapsed catechumens. Canons 15 and 16, however, made stipulations on the movement of the clergy between dioceses, with canon 17 proscribing usury. Then in canon 18, there was a prohibition against deacons administering the Eucharist to priests and bishops, with canon 19 calling for the rebaptism of Paulinists or followers of Paul of Samosata (Percival, 2011), and canon 20

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⁵ Novatians were followers of the priest Novatian, an antipope, who insisted on a rigorous procedure for the readmission of apostates back into the Church (Papandrea, 2008).
legislating the proper posture in prayer. The bishops also in a second declaration ordered all Christian churches to observe Easter at the same time (Davis, 1990; Kelly, 2009).

To all intents and purposes, then, Nicaea I was significant in helping the Church articulate its identity in the Greco-Roman world of the fourth century. Importantly, the Council laid down the procedure for the resolution of crises within the Christian Church. In the words of Kelly (2009),

The assembled bishops, speaking as a group, could now affirm what was Christian teaching on particular doctrinal points. Christians were no longer bound to twisting the Bible endlessly to prove a point. The bishops strove to keep to the biblical text, but, failing that, strove to propound a teaching that respected the Bible and was consonant with it. (p. 25)

Nicaea I, thus, was instrumental in providing a compelling story for the Christian Church, one that was quite distinct from any that heretics and non-Christians might tell. Such a story about the core identity of the Church in terms of what it believed and how it expected followers to live their lives was nothing other than the articulation of the brand of the Christian community (see Twitchell, 2004; Cooke, 2008). The creation of such a brand required the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, including both Arian and non-Arian bishops. To ensure that this Christian story would find resonance with the laity and the clergy, Constantine, following the conclusion of the council, promulgated its decisions, thereby making them binding on all Christ’s faithful.

5.2.2. The Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople I, 381 A. D.)

While Nicaea I managed to bring some relative peace to the Christian Church in particular and society in general (although the Arians still maintained the superiority of God the
Father to the Son) by declaring the equality of the Father and the Son, it failed to clarify the place of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity (Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002). Thus, the solution Nicaea I provided for the Arian controversy resulted in the creation of yet another crisis (Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Percival, 2011; Tanner, 2013). Bellitto (2002) articulates the questions Nicaea I failed to answer as follows: “What about the Holy Spirit and its relationship to the Father and Son? If Jesus was fully divine and divinity is superior to humanity, was Jesus’ humanity eaten up by its divinity?” (p. 20). At the core of this new threat to Church unity was the question of the language of the final pronouncements of Nicaea I; for, while Christians in the East spoke Greek, their counterparts in the West communicated in Latin. The result was that both groups thought that the other’s understanding of the term homoousios was blasphemous and heretical. Specifically, while Easterners understood Westerners to be taking the term to imply more than one nature in the Trinity, Westerners imagined Easterners to be taking it to mean that there was just one person in the Trinity. This mutual misunderstanding created tensions between the Church in the East and that in the West, making the possibility of a schism imminent (Davis, 1990; Kelly, 2009).

Besides, semi-Arians, who still persisted in their heresy of subordinationism (the view that Jesus was subordinate to God the Father), aggravated the already tense situation in the Christian Church by adding “i” to the homo found in homoousios, thereby creating another term homoi-ousios, meaning similar in nature (Bellitto, 2002, p. 20). In other words, for these semi-Arians, Jesus was similar to God the Father in nature, hence, effectively denying the divinity of the Son (Bellitto, 2002). Moreover, there were other groups that denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit (Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002, p. 20; see also Kelly, 2009). Thus, as Davis (1990) has observed, the two main challenges that prompted the convocation of Constantinople I related to
Christological and pneumatological questions, ones that needed immediate answers to restore peace in the Church (p. 103).

The immediate cause that necessitated Constantinople I, though, was the emergence of Apollinarianism, a Christological heresy incarnated by Apollinaris, a native of Laodicea, present-day Latakia in Syria (Davis, 1990, p. 103). The premise of Apollinarianism was that the Father and the Son were of one undivided substance, a view held by Nicaea I. Nevertheless, from this authentic Trinitarian doctrine emerged the heretical position that Christ had a single nature, not two as taught by Nicaea I (Davis, 1990). For Apollinarius, the only source of humanity’s salvation and redemption was Jesus, the origin of new life and “mediator between God and us” (Davis, 1990). To be able to accomplish his work of salvation, there should be no division in the nature of the Redeemer. As Davis (1990) explains, “Apollinaris believed that if the divine were merely conjoined with man, then there would be two, one Son of God by nature, the other by adoption” (p. 104). In the incarnation, both Word and flesh combined into one unity, argued Apollinaris. It follows logically, then, that

The flesh…, being dependent for its motions on some other principle of movement and action, is not in itself a complete living entity, but in order to become one it enters into fusion with something else. So it is united with the heavenly governing principle and is fused with it…. Thus, out of the moved and the mover was compounded a single living entity. (as cited in Davis, 1990).

Such a perspective, unlike the official Church position adopted at Nicaea I, implied that Jesus had only one nature, not two. This clear contradiction of official Church position had to be nipped in the bud, hence the convocation of Constantinople I.
Further Apollinaris held that the Son could not have a rational soul, because having a rational soul meant being subject to change. Indeed, as the one single God, the body of Christ “is glorified because it is the flesh of God Himself. Christ’s flesh is the proper object of worship because there is in Him one incarnate nature for the Word, to be worshipped with His flesh in one worship” (Davis, 1990, 105). In the union of Word and flesh, each element shared in the “predicates and properties of the other” (Davis, 1990, p. 106). Accordingly, in receiving the Eucharist, the faithful had the divine nature communicated to them (Davis, 1990, p. 106).

Undoubtedly, then, Apollinarianism succeeded in asserting the divinity of Jesus at the expense of his humanity, thereby disrupting the core identity of the Christian faith. Hence, the critical question that Apollinarianism raised was this: Was Christianity a religion that believed that Jesus had both divine and human natures or was it one that believed that he only had a divine nature? It was partly to answer this question that Emperor Theodosius convoked Constantinople I in 381 AD.

At Constantinople I, the Council fathers confirmed all the teachings of Nicaea I and went on to acknowledge the full divinity of the Holy Spirit, that is, as God with the same divine substance as the Father and the Son (Kelly, 2009, p. 30; Percival, 2011, p. 259). Specifically, the creedal statement agreed at the end of the Council said of the Holy Spirit, “And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets” (as cited in Percival, 2011, p. 259; see also Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Tanner, 2013). The Council also passed disciplinary decrees concerning heresies, the administration of dioceses and role of bishops, the admission of heretics back into the Church, and the primacy of Rome relative to Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria (Percival, 2011; see also Kelly, 2009; Tanner, 2013).
Like Nicaea I, Constantinople I reflected a Church that was struggling to articulate its identity and to distinguish its core values and teachings from those held by heretics. The creed and the disciplinary decrees, as well as the letter written at the end of the council to all the bishops, priests, and faithful of the Church represented an attempt to construct a unified, consistent image different from heretical views and those of other religions of the time (Faulkner, 1910).

5.2.3. The Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus, 431 A. D.)

Called in 431 A. D., the Council of Ephesus was mainly concerned with dealing with the threat of Nestorianism, a heresy that denied the title “Mother of God” or Theotokos to Mary (Davis, 1990; also see Braaten, 1963). According to Bellitto (2002), even after Constantinople I, some Christological questions lingered within the Church. Among some of these questions were the following:

How was Jesus one person, both human and divine? Was he really two separate people at the same time or he was also one person merged? Was he sometimes human and other times divine? What were the consequences of these answers for Mary and the incarnation? Was she the mother of the human Jesus only (known therefore as christokos) or was she the mother of God (making her theotokos)? (Bellitto, 2002, p. 22)

In other words, the Christological questions that persisted after the first two ecumenical councils had implications for the role of Mary in the economy of salvation. If Jesus was God, then the woman who bore him could be called the Theotokos; if not, then she was the Christokos.

The champion of the forces seeking to deny the title Theotokos to Jesus’ mother, a long-held belief in the Christian Church, was Nestorius, while the main proponent of Mary as Mother of God was Cyril of Alexandria (Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002). Nestorius stated his position
simply thus: “Let no one call Mary the *Theotokos*, for Mary was only a human being” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 140). Davis (1990) writes that Nestorius used to preach against this Marian title in every homily he gave (p. 140). Sooner, however, a group of people in the city of Constantinople who supported the title *Theotokos* for Mary countered the position of Nestorius by interrupting him during his homilies, insisting “Mary is the Mother of God” (Davis, 2002, p. 140). Such open conflict between a bishop and his congregation did not augur well for the image of the Christian Church as it created internal rift and disrupted peaceful co-existence in the larger society. To restore sanity, the Council of Ephesus was called by Emperor Theodosius II in 431 A. D (Braaten, 1963, p. 267).

At the Council, two major figures dominated the deliberations of the fathers, namely Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople. While the former argued that Jesus was God and therefore the woman who bore him as a human being deserved the title *Theotokos*, the latter claimed that as God, Jesus could not have been born by Mary; in Nestorius’ view, Mary could only be the mother of the human Jesus. After listening to the two positions and also reading a letter sent by Pope Celestine I, the reigning Roman pontiff of the time, the Council judged that Nestorius was in error and went ahead to condemn him, as well as, other heretics like the Pelagians and Massalians, and to reaffirm the creedal statements of Nicaea I and Constantinople I (Davis, 1990; Percival, 2011; also see Braaten, 1963).

The council fathers drew up the following profession of faith as the one authentically expressed by the Catholic Church from the time of the apostles:

We confess, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect Man, consisting of a rational soul and a body begotten of the Father before all the ages as touching his Godhead, the same, in the last days, for us and for our salvation,
born of the Virgin Mary, as touching his Manhood; the same of the one substance with the Father as touching his Godhead, and of one substance with us as touching his Manhood. For of two natures union has been made. For this cause we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. In accordance with this sense of the unconfused union, we confess the holy Virgin to be Theotokos, because God the Word became incarnate and was made man, and from the very conception united to himself the temple taken from her. And as to the expressions concerning the Lord in the Gospels and Epistles, we are aware that theologians understand some as common, as relating to one Person, and others they distinguish, as relating to two natures, explaining those that befit the divine nature according to the Godhead of Christ, and those of a humble sort according to his Manhood. (as cited in Davis, 1990, pp. 161-162)

From this profession of faith, the fathers of the Council of Ephesus articulated these key points:

(1) Jesus is both God and man; (2) From the Godhead, Jesus derives his divinity; (3) From Mary, Jesus derives his humanity; (4) In the one person Jesus Christ is therefore the hypostatic union of the divine and the human (see Bellitto, 2002, p. 23); and (5) What the gospels say about Jesus sometimes relates to only one of his natures and other times to both of his natures.

Upon the completion of the Council, the Fathers sent a letter to Pope Celestine I, explaining the final decisions of the august gathering (Braaten, 1963). Following the promulgation of the decisions of Ephesus, it was hoped that the Christian Church would find some peace and quiet to live the faith.
5.2.4. The Fourth Ecumenical Council (The Council of Chalcedon, 451 A. D.)

If Nestorianism necessitated the convocation of Ephesus, then monophysitism was the reason the Council of Chalcedon was called in 451 A. D. by the Empress Pulcheria (Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Percival, 2011; Tanner, 2013; see also Chew, 2006; Braaten, 1963). Monophysitism was a Christological heresy held by Eutyches, asserting that before his Incarnation Christ had two natures but only one nature after the Incarnation (Davis, 1990; Tanner, 2013). Christ, according to Eutyches, born of the Virgin Mary, was both God and man. Yet, although the flesh of Christ was different from that of ordinary human beings, his humanity was complete with a rational soul. Eutyches thus rejected the docetist Christology that asserted that Christ merely appeared to have had a human body and that “the Word and the flesh fused into a mixture” (Davis, 1990, p. 171).

At Chalcedon, the Fathers, relying on a tome or letter written by Pope Leo to the patriarch of Constantinople, Flavius (Tanner, 2013, p. 31), articulated the nature of Christ as follows:

Wherefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one voice confess our Lord Jesus Christ one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same consisting of a reasonable soul and body, of one substance with the Father as touching the Godhead, the same of one substance with us as touching the manhood, like us in all things apart from sin; begotten of the Father before the ages as touching the Godhead, the same in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born from the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, as touching the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in
no way abolished because of the union, but rather the characteristic property of each
nature being preserved, and concurring into one Person and one subsistence, not as if
Christ were parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-
begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ, even as the Prophets from the beginning spoke
concerning him, and our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us and the Creed of the Fathers has
handed down to us. (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 186)

Convinced that their Christological definition constituted the authentic faith of the one, holy
Catholic Church, the fathers ended their creedal statement by anathematizing the expression of
any faith to the contrary, “whether by writing, or composing, or holding, or teaching others”
(Davis, 1990, p. 187). From the bishops’ creedal statements, the following key points about the
nature of Christ emerge: (1) Jesus is one person, but has two natures; (2) The two natures of
Christ consist of his divinity and humanity; (3) Jesus was born by the Virgin Mary, the
Theotokos; and (4) The two natures are united hypostatically “without confusion, without
change, without division, without separation” (Davis, 1990, p. 186). Davis (1990) comments that
through their use of the four negative Greek adverbs, namely, “without confusion,” “without
change,” “without division,” and “without separation,” the fathers of Chalcedon underscored the
importance of the hypostatic union.

Looking at the work of Chalcedon, one can make the argument that the early ecumenical
councils of the Church built upon one another, as each new council further clarified earlier
ambiguous conciliar statements (Bellitto, 2002). What was significant about the councils was
that, while each remained faithful to the historical memory of the Christian Church by holding on
to the ancient faith, they all managed to respond to the intellectual and social challenges of every
age (Turner, 2013). Consequently, the councils were able to unite the Church in its first thousand
years. According to Bellitto (2002), the first four ecumenical councils of the Church were so important to the Church that Pope Gregory I (509-604) equated them with the four gospels (p. 27). Pope Gregory I was not alone in this view, for as Kelly (2009) has noted, scholars consider Nicaea I, Constantinople I, Ephesus, and Chalcedon as the most important of the early councils for at least two important reasons: (1) They set the criterion for the clarification of doctrine in the event of lack of biblical support to back that doctrine; and (2) They articulated definitively Christian teaching on the Trinity. Thus, without these first four councils, the Church would not have gotten the tools to reinvent itself as and when necessary and to articulate its beliefs, beliefs that differentiated it from other religious manifestations existing at the time.

5.2.5. Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II, 553 A. D.)

As happened previously, no sooner was Chalcedon over than the Church was confronted with yet another existential problem, one that raised doubts about the authenticity of its doctrines (Bellitto, 2002). The Emperor Justinian called Constantinople II in 553 AD to address the challenges posed by the writings of three figures, namely, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyr, and Ibas of Edessa. Bellitto (2002) tells us that “These writers were accused of being sympathetic to Nestorianism, of opposing Cyril’s teaching, and of favoring monophysitism by [still] clinging to the idea that Jesus had [only] one nature, with the divine overpowering the human” (p. 27). Besides, the hypostatic union still remained an unclear doctrine that needed further clarification (Davis, 1990, 188). In fact, Chalcedon had failed to provide specific communication on Jesus’s suffering and crucifixion.

At Constantinople II, the bishops, after reading and discussing the writings of the three controversial figures, condemned them, convinced that their role as guardians of the faith
required them to do so (Davis, 1990, 242). Following the sentence passed on the Three Chapters or the writings of Theodore, Theodoret, and Ibas, the Council went on to anathematize anyone who denied the two natures of Christ (Bellitto, 2002). Specifically, the Council fathers condemned “those refusing to confess a consubstantial Trinity, one Godhead to be worshipped in three subsistences or Persons” (Davis, 1990, 244). Besides, the Fathers denounced those who denied the Church’s doctrine that “the Word of God had two births, one from all eternity of the Father, the other in these last days being made flesh of Mary” (Davis, 1990, p. 244). Moreover, those who refused to accept the Christological doctrine of one Person and two natures in Christ were declared heretical. Also, the Council taught that

the union of God the Word is made with the flesh animated by a reasonable and living soul, and that such union is made synthetically and hypostatically, and therefore there is only one Person, to wit: Our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the Holy Trinity. (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 244).

By this statement, the Council once again rejected Apollinarianism, monophysitism, and Nestorianism, even as it endorsed the doctrine of the Theotokos.

Then, insisting on the hypostatic union of Christ, Constantinople II reprobated Christians who spoke of the two persons of Christ. In other words, the Council “condemned those who divide the natures, making of them two persons, or attempt to number the natures as if they were two wholly distinct entities” (Davis, 1990, p. 244). As both God and man, Jesus should be worshipped in his divinity and humanity, the Council ordered, insisting “Jesus Christ who was crucified in the flesh is true God and the Lord of Glory and one of the Holy Trinity” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 245).
Finally, all the heretics of the previous three hundred years were lumped together and condemned, including Arius, Eunomius, Macedodius, Apollinarius, Nestorius, Eutyches and Origen (Davis, 1990. As well, the works of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa were once more denounced and anathematized. Clearly, like earlier councils, Constantinople II was concerned about the identity of the Christian Church. Therefore, it sought to eliminate any view that distorted the authentic doctrines of the faith. In the process, Constantinople II, in marketing communication terms, rebranded the Church by articulating its authentic identity and defining its important tenets.

5.2.6. The Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III, 680 A.D.)

Called in 680 A.D. by the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus (Percival, 2011, p. 470) to address the controversy over the nature and the two wills of Christ, Constantinople III was another Christological council that sought to answer the following outstanding question: “If Jesus is one person with two natures (one human and one divine), how many wills does he have?” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 5). In other words, in spite of Chalcedon and Constantinople II which appeared to have solved all Christological questions, there was still the need to articulate the nature and will of Christ. In an attempt to answer the Christological question, some theologians fell into the heresy of monothelitism, a view that “merged the human will of Jesus’ human nature with the divine will of Jesus’ divine nature” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 5). In other words, monothelitism claimed that, as God and man, Jesus had one single will, not two.

After having met in sixteen sessions, the Council of Constantinople III promulgated its decisions, affirming the acts of the first five councils and expressing adherence to the creedal statements of Nicaea I and Constantinople I (Davis, 1990, p. 282). Accordingly, the fathers
professed faith in Jesus Christ as being perfect God and perfect man, “of one holy and
consubstantial and life-giving Trinity,” “of a reasonable soul and human body subsisting,” and
born of the Blessed Virgin through the action of the Holy Spirit, being one Person, but having
two natures (Davis, 1990, p. 282). Then, responding to the heresy of monothelitism, the fathers
asserted that in Jesus Christ are “two natural wills and two operations indivisibly, inconvertibly,
inseparably, inconfusedly” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 283). These two wills of Christ,
Constantinople III continued, “are not contrary to one another…but his human will follows and
that not as resisting and reluctant, but rather as subject to his divine and omnipotent will,” adding
that “For as his flesh is called and is the flesh of God the Word, so also the natural will of his
flesh is called and is the proper will of God the Word” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 283). The
Council further asserted that, “as his most holy and immaculate animated flesh was not destroyed
because it was deified but continued in its own state and nature, so also his human will, although
deified, was not suppressed, but was rather preserved….” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 283).
In concluding the definition of the Church’s faith in the Triune God, the fathers of
Constantinople III affirmed, “wherefore we confess two wills and two operations, concurring
most fitly in him for the salvation of the human race” (as cited in Davis, 1990, 284). With this
statement, Constantinople III concluded its deliberations, its decisions being promulgated by the
Emperor to all the bishops of the empire. Finally, the Christian Church was able to find some
relative peace, which lasted until the demise of Constantine in 685 AD.

5.2.7. The Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea II, 787 A. D.)

The Council of Nicaea II, called by the Empress Irene in 787, was intended to solve the
Iconoclast Controversy which threatened the life and growth of the Church as well as peaceful
co-existence among the peoples of the Byzantine Empire (Davis, 1990, p. 291; Bellitto, 2002, p. 31;). According to Davis (1990), the genesis of the controversy could be traced to the imperial policy of the Emperor Leo III in 726 to rid the empire of all sacred images (p. 291; see also Atkinson, 1973). Bellitto (2002) writes that the imperial directive was influenced by the belief that icons only represented the humanity of Jesus, a belief that therefore ignored his divinity. Thus perceived to be a truncation of the doctrine of the nature of Christ, icons were considered heretical. Ultimately, the images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints, in the view of iconoclasm, were to be regarded as idolatrous and anti-Biblical (Bellitto, 2002, p. 31). The ensuing enforcement of the imperial directive resulted in the breach of public peace with its attendant social insecurity as supporters and opponents clashed (Davis, 1990; Bellitto, 2002).

Davis (1990) explains that Leo’s policy created sharp divisions in the Christian Church because, by the time he assumed the reins of the empire, sacred images had become an integral part of Christian liturgy. For example, Leo’s predecessor, the Emperor Justinian II, placed the image of Jesus on his coins “with the inscription King of Kings” (Davis, 1990, p. 294). Throwing light on the importance sacred images had assumed in the religious consciousness of Christians at the time of Leo III, Kitzinger observes that

the image had begun to be thought of not simply as a reminder of the Incarnation, but as an organic part, an extension, or even a reenactment thereof. Slowly concepts had begun to evolve whereby the Byzantine religious image was to become a means of demonstrating the incarnation not merely as past history but as a living perpetual presence. The role of the image ceased to be purely didactic and was in the process of becoming sacramental like the Sacrifice of the Mass. (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 294)
In other words, for most people, sacred icons were “links to the realities of the spiritual world offering them help and protection” (Davis, 1990, p. 294). Therefore, most sacred images were taken from churches and placed in homes where they were venerated.

Leo III, however, was opposed to the use of sacred images in Christian worship because he believed that the Bible explicitly prohibited their use in that fashion. He accordingly ordered the destruction of the image of Christ on the bronze doors of his palace, an action that drew a protest from some women who attacked the officers ordered to destroy the image. The ensuing melee led to the death of several officers from the palace (Davis, 1990, 297). Besides the opposition from ordinary citizens, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Germanus, opposed the imperial propaganda against sacred icons, arguing that the incarnation of the Word as flesh and blood legitimated their use in religious worship. For Germanus,

In eternal memory of the life in the flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of His passion, of His saving death and the redemption of the world, which result from them, we have received the tradition of representing Him in His human form, that is, His visible theophany, understanding that in this way we exalt the humiliation of God the Word. (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 297)

To represent in art God, the Word, who became man, was to confirm the reality of the incarnation, Germanus held. As Davis (1990) comments, “Just as the image represents the reality of the human in Christ, so it represents the reality of our faith” (p. 297). Pope Gregory II also condemned Leo III’s iconclast propaganda, cautioning him to stay away from religious matters within the empire because they lay outside his purview. Similarly, John of Damascus opposed the imperial policy of iconoclasm, defending the use of sacred images. He argued that “If we made an image of the invisible God, we would certainly be in error, but we do nothing of the
sort” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 298). Rather, John continued, Christians only make an image of the Incarnate Word, the Son of God “who appeared on earth in the flesh, and who, in his ineffable goodness, lived with human beings and assumed the nature, quantity, shape and color of flesh” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 298). Apart from Jesus, spiritual beings like angles could also be represented in images and venerated, not adored like God, iconophiles asserted.

In spite of the opposition against iconoclasm, though, Leo demolished all sacred images he could lay hands on, leaving only the Cross. Supporters of images were tortured, mutilated, and beheaded (Davis, 1990, p. 299). Germanus himself was removed from office and replaced by Anastasius, the imperial chaplain at the time of Leo III. Meanwhile, Pope Gregory II died and was succeeded by Gregory III, who, upon assumption of his petrine office, convoked a synod at Rome which “excommunicated all those who, despising the ancient custom of the Church, refused to venerate the sacred images and blasphemed, destroyed or profaned them” (Davis, 1990, p. 299). This act of excommunication, as Davis (1990) notes, automatically led to a schism between the Church in the West and that in the East.

Leo III also died and was succeeded by his son Constantine V, a much more avowed enemy of sacred images than his father before him. Constantine not only ordered the destruction of images, but he also issued a doctrinal statement in which he outlined his major arguments against the use of sacred icons. In his Christological argument, Constantine pointed out that since Jesus was one person but of two natures, to represent his humanity in art was tantamount to overemphasizing his human nature and downplaying his divine nature; therefore, such an art would be a false representation of the true identity of Jesus. Besides, to represent the two natures was to attempt to do the impossible. The true image of Jesus, in the view of Constantine, was the Eucharist, one given to the Church by Jesus himself (Davis, 1990).
Furthermore, Constantine convoked a general council in 754 (known as the Council of Hieria)\(^6\), charged with the task of defining the doctrine of iconoclasm (Davis, 1990). In its decree that outlined the iconoclast doctrine, the Council of Hieria attributed the origins of sacred images to Satan, an error which was corrected by Moses and the prophets, as well as Jesus and his apostles. Appealing to the decrees of the six previous councils of the Church, the bishops present at the council asserted, “we found that the unlawful art of painting living creatures blasphemed the fundamental doctrine of our salvation—namely the Incarnation of Christ, and contradicted the six holy synods…” (as cited in Davis, 1990, p. 302). Furthermore, Hieria proscribed the practice of naming images and consecrating them. Christianity, the bishops argued, must be differentiated from paganism, a religious reality that found its ultimate expression in images. Saints should never be represented in images, because doing so reduced to the material the status of beings now enjoying the glory of God.

The iconoclast controversy thus created a huge crisis in the Church, as it led to a schism between the East and West, with “incalculable political and cultural consequences” (Davis, 1990, p. 306). Politically, for example, the crisis destroyed the relationship between the papacy and the Byzantine Empire, resulting in the former turning to the Carolingian dynasty for protection and help against its enemies. Thus, the Christian faith once again, as in the time of Constantine I, became a source of division in society, a division caused by the lack of agreement on important core doctrines that gave concrete definition to the identity of the Church. In the face of this identity crisis, the Empress Irene, regent of her young son Constantine VI, successor to Constantine V, wrote to Pope Hadrian, informing him of her intention to call another ecumenical council of both the churches of the East and West, an intention warmly welcomed by the Pope,

\(^6\) The Council of Hieria is rejected by both the Eastern and Roman Catholic Churches (Martin, 1978).

The Council convened by Irene first opened in the Basilica of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople on 1 August 786, but following the disruption of the opening session by soldiers loyal to the iconoclast bishops, the Empress relocated it to Nicaea where deliberations started on 24 September 787 (Davis, 1990, p. 307), with the major issue being whether or not Jesus, Mary, and the saints should be represented in images (Bellitto, 2002, p. 31).

Nicaea II, claiming to continue “with the tradition of prior general councils and their statements of faith” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 32), condemned Hieria and its acts, particularly the Horos which proscribed sacred icons (Davis, 1990, p 309). It went on to endorse sacred images as instruments capable of conveying the Christian gospel, encouraging Christians to use them properly in worship. The fathers of the Council explained the importance of sacred images in religious worship as follows:

The more frequently they are seen in representational art, the more are those who see them drawn to remember and long for those who serve as models, and to pay these images the tribute of salvation and respectful veneration. Certainly this is not the full adoration in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that given to the figure of the honored and life-giving cross, and also to the holy books of the gospel and to other sacred cult objects. Further, people are drawn to honor these images with the offering of incense and lights, as was piously established by ancient custom. Indeed, the honor paid to an image traverses it, reaching the model; and he who venerates the image, venerates the person represented in that image. (as cited in Bellitto, 2002, p. 32; see also, Davis, 1990, p. 309; Percival, 2011)
Nicaea II’s position on icons can thus be summarized as follows: (1) Sacred images remind Christians of the models of their faith; (2) Sacred images are venerated, not worshipped; (3) Sacred persons are the object of veneration, not the images that represent them *per se.*

Beside the statement against iconoclasm, Nicaea II issued twenty canons intended to address problems confronting the Church at the time. In these canons, the council fathers approved the Apostolic Canons, the acts of the first six general councils and those of local synods. Further, they declared invalid the appointment of bishops by princes (Davis, 1992, p. 310). The fathers went on to order that bishops “know the Psalter by heart, read the canons and Scriptures, and live and teach the Commandments of God” (Davis, 1992, p. 310). Also, every metropolitan province was required to hold a synod every year. Furthermore, the council issued the following prohibitions: (1) There should be no simony—“the buying or selling of church office”; (2) Bishops should refrain from extorting anything from clerics and monks; and (3) Bishops must not have women reside in their houses (Davis, 1992, p. 310).

5.2.8. The Eighth General Council (Constantinople IV, 869 A. D.)

Convoked by the Emperor Adrian II, Constantinople IV did not deal directly with any new heresy; rather, it merely reaffirmed the “the actions and statements of the seven previous councils” (p. Bellitto, 2002, p. 33). The immediate cause that occasioned the council, though, was the question of who should be the patriarch of Constantinople. The problem started with Photius and Ignatius both claiming to be the legitimate occupant of the patriarchy (Bellitto, 2002, p. 33). To resolve the conflict between the two men, a conflict which had created division in the Eastern Church, Pope Nicolas I intervened, declaring Photius the legitimate claimant to the patriarchy of Constantinople. However, a few years later, the Pope rescinded his original
decision, excommunicated Photius, and declared that Ignatius rather should be the patriarch of Constantinople.

The papal decision was immediately rejected by the Eastern Church, which in 867 called a synod that anathematized Pope Nicolas I. Soon after that event, however, Basil I assassinated his co-emperor Michael III, deposed Photius, and endorsed Ignatius as the legitimate patriarch of Constantinople. Naturally, these imperial actions created division in the Church in the East as both Photius and Ignatius had their respective supporters, who fought each other. To restore social order and peace in the Church, Basil decided to call a general council with the help of the new Pope Adrian II.

Constantinople IV opened in 869 and ended within twelve months. Unsurprisingly, the council “approved Photius’ deposition, condemned him, and burned the writings connected to his actions in 867 against the papacy” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 33). Besides, clerics ordained by Photius were denounced by the council, with their churches and altars ordered to be re-consecrated. To control the influence of the rich and powerful over the Church, the bishops at Constantinople IV ruled that managers of the homes and estates of aristocrats be not admitted to the priesthood (Bellitto, 2002, p. 37). Also, there was the condemnation of the “rumored practice whereby government officials played dress-up as priests and bishops, held mock heresy trials and episcopal consecrations, and generally ridiculed the clergy” (Bellitto, 2002, 39). Importantly, Constantinople IV went on to praise the actions of the dead Pope Nicolas I and honor him (Bellitto, 2002, p. 34).

To conclude this first section, it must be clearly stated that the general councils of the first millennium played a very important role in the life of the Church. For instance, they defined Church doctrine, laid down the procedure for Church administration, thereby ultimately shaping
the life of Christians (Bellitto, 2002, p. 35). Moreover, Bellitto (2002) points out that “General councils recognized that they were the culmination of prior local and regional meetings; they also knew their statements needed implementation throughout the church’s body” (p. 36). Therefore, general or ecumenical councils, not only defined doctrines but they also shaped the life of Christians in society. The fact was that, as Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire, the Church had to deal with the “problems of worldliness and greed” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 37); thus, general councils became the means by which the moral life of Christians and society in general were shaped in ways that were consistent with their faith. Besides, to protect the Church from the influence of secular powers, general councils “focused on bishops’ jurisdiction, independence, and mutual respect as well as their dignity in relation to secular authority” (Bellitto, 2002, 38). Crucially, though, because general councils were called to respond to crises in the Church, they functioned as kairotic moments for the rhetorical dance of branding and rebranding Christianity as a religious reality with distinct core values and concrete identity.

5.3. The Councils of the Middle Ages

As noted above, Constantinople IV marked the end of the ecumenical councils of the first millennium. All eight councils took place in the East at a time when the Church was still united. However, the unity of the Church would be breached following the mutual excommunication of the East and West in 1054 (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Tanner, 2013). The resultant schism meant that the subsequent ecumenical councils of the Church became gatherings of only Western bishops, even as the pope, not emperors, assumed the canonical right to call them. In all, the popes convoked ten general councils during the Middle Ages, including “Lateran I (1123), Lateran II (1139), Lateran III (1179), Lateran IV (1215), Lyons I (1245), Lyons II (1274),
Vienne (1311-1312), Constance (1414-1418), Basel-Florence (1431-1445), and Lateran V (1512-1517)” (Tanner, 2013, p. 46).

5.3.1. The Ninth Ecumenical Council (Lateran I, 1123)

Lateran I, the first general council to be held in the West, was convened by Pope Callistus II in 1123 “to ratify in a formal, imposing, and universal way recent papal actions taken at regional meetings in Rome” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 49; see also Kelly, 2009). Specifically, it was called to address in a comprehensive way the problem of lay investiture, that is, the appointment of bishops by secular authorities such as emperors, kings, and nobles (Bellitto, 2002, p. 49). The year before the council, imperial and papal representatives had met in the German city of Worms to draw up what became known as the Concordat of Worms, in which “The emperor renounced his right to invest bishops with their rings and croziers but kept the right to invest them with their secular powers” (Kelly, 2009, p. 75). In spite of the agreement, though, secular rulers tried to influence episcopal appointment; hence, Lateran I was the final push to end control of the Church by laypeople.

Lateran I opened on 18 March 1123 in the cathedral church of the pope as the bishop of Rome with three hundred participants in attendance (Kelly, 2009, p. 76). Among its acts, Lateran I ratified the Concordat of Worms and called for crusades against Muslim infidels occupying the Holy Land (Bellitto, 2002, p. 50; Kelly, 2009). Besides, the bishops at the council issued disciplinary decrees, “extending the Truce of God (in which nobles agreed not to fight on certain religious feast days), granting to Crusaders an indulgence from the temporal penalties (that is, purgatory) accruing to their sins, protecting the families and goods of Crusaders as well as of
pilgrims, and minor issues relating to ordinations” (Kelly, 2009, p. 76). The council also ruled that bishops, not monks, should be in charge of dioceses (Kelly, 2009, p. 76).

As a general council, then, Lateran I sought to shape the Western Church by wrestling it away from lay control, extending the Church’s influence, and positioning it as different from the Moslem religion. In the process, the Roman Catholic Church became more hierarchical than before the schism of 1054 and, hence, also distinct from the Eastern Church.

5.3.2. The Tenth Ecumenical Council (Lateran II, 1139)

Lateran II, held in 1139, was summoned by Pope Innocent II to deal with the problem of schism in the Western Church caused by multiple claimants to the papacy (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009). According to Kelly (2009), the papacy was controlled by powerful Roman families in the eleventh century; however, by the twelfth century, two of these families, namely, the Pierleoni and Frangipani families, had become the dominant forces controlling the destiny of the See of Peter (Kelly, 2009, p. 77). In 1130, after the death of Honorius II, a group of cardinals secretly elected Innocent II as his successor. The Frangipani family, not happy with the choice of pope, influenced cardinals who did not participate in the election of Innocent to elect Anacletus II, thereby plunging the Western Church in a schism (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009). In the heat of the chaos that followed, Innocent, afraid for his life, escaped to France, thus leaving Rome for Anacletus.

On 25 January 1138, Anacletus died and was succeeded by Victor IV, an Italian (Kelly, 2009). Not long after his election, however, Victor became convinced that he was in a very awkward position, as he did not enjoy the loyalty of all the faithful of the Church. He sought the advice of Bernard of Clairvaux, who counseled him to resign the papacy. Accordingly, Victor
abdicated his office and sought pardon from his rival, Innocent, who willingly granted him his request (Kelly, 2009).

With his enemy out of the way, Innocent now became the undisputed head of the Catholic Church; nevertheless, to forestall any future attempt by supporters of Victor to create problems in the Church, Innocent convoked a general council with the aim of undoing all the acts of Victor IV, the antipope (Kelly, 2009, p. 78). Lateran II began on 4 April 1139, with a hundred bishops in attendance. The council fathers confirmed Innocent as the legitimate pope, thereby effectively ending the schism. Also, Lateran II “extend[ed] the celibacy requirements to include subdeacons and deacons as well as priests” (Kelly, 2009, p. 78). Moreover, it attacked heretical positions in the Church, effectively continuing the tradition handed down by the general councils of the first millennium.

As an ecumenical council, Lateran II tried to rebrand the Western Church as a united religious community with one visible leader and clearly defined sets of values. Because of its concern for authenticity in the practice of the Catholic faith, Lateran II invalidated all the acts of the antipopes as not emblematic of the true Church of Christ. Importantly, too, the extension of the celibacy requirements to include subdeacons, deacons, and priests, further distinguished the Western Church from its Eastern counterpart where celibacy remained optional.

5.3.3. The Eleventh Ecumenical Council (Lateran III, 1179)

Summoned by Alexander III in 1179, Lateran III’s immediate concern was to insulate the Church from lay control and root out the schism of multiple popes once again (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009). According to Kelly (2009), the new schism which disrupted the life of the Western Church began in 1159 when a majority of the cardinals in defiance of the Emperor Frederick
Barbarossa elected Alexander III as the late Pope Hadrian’s successor (Kelly, 2009, p. 80). Two weeks after the consecration of Alexander, Frederick had his preferred candidate consecrated. This rival pope took the name Victor IV.

Pope Alexander responded to the imperial action by excommunicating his rival and supporter, Frederick. After the death of Victor, his cardinal supporters elected Paschal III to succeed him. Meanwhile, Frederick realized that a majority of the faithful did not support his preferred popes, and to change that situation, he decided to use military force to secure his interests (Kelly, 2009). Frederick’s army was, however, defeated by a combined force of northern Italian cities, compelling the Emperor to negotiate with Alexander in 1177. After two years of negotiations and discussions, the two parties reconciled with each other, leading to the Emperor recognizing Alexander as the legitimate pope on one hand, and Alexander lifting the excommunication imposed on Frederick on the other.

After the conflict with Frederick was resolved, Pope Alexander reasoned that the most effective way to consolidate his authority was an ecumenical council. Therefore, he promptly convoked another Lateran council, the third, which opened on 5 March 1179 (Kelly, 2009, p. 8; see also Bellitto, 2002). Lateran III “issued twenty-seven canons,” the most important of which was canon 1, intended to curb the persistence of the schism of papal election. This canon decreed that to win a papal election, unanimity was not necessary; rather, all that a candidate needed to secure the papacy was two-thirds of valid votes cast (Bellitto, 2002, p. 52; Kelly, 2009, p. 82). Further, it stated that “Anyone who did not accept a pope elected in that way incurred automatic excommunication; and consecrations, ordinations, or sacraments conferred by a pope not elected in this way...were deemed invalid” (Kelly, 2009, p. 82). There were also requirements for the ordination of a bishop: “a bishop must be at least thirty years old, of legitimate birth, and have
the requisite qualities for office” (Kelly, 2009, p. 82). With these requirements, the Council hoped to enhance the credibility of bishops and, hence, give them more authority (Kelly, 2009).

Next, Lateran III legislated against “the Cathars (pure ones) or Albigensians,” labeled as heretics for their rejection of Catholic doctrines on the sacraments and other core values, as well as “substituting a minimalist religion based on inner faith and extreme asceticism” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 53; also see Kelly, 2009, p. 83). As heretics, Cathars were also excommunicated and denied church burial, even as other punitive actions were urged against them (Bellitto, 2002, p. 53; Kelly, 2009, p. 83). Apart from the Cathars, sanctions were also proffered against Jews and Moslems (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009).

Lateran III was therefore a council that sought to confront the existential challenges facing the Church in the twelfth century. Accordingly, it took decisions intended to resolve those problems and to refocus the Church on its mission. Importantly, the canon on the procedure for the election of pope has been significant in terms of relatively stamping out papal schisms from the twelfth century to date (Kelly, 2009). As an ecumenical council, then, Lateran III rebranded the Roman Catholic Church as a hierarchical religious institution under papal leadership, a religious institution that would brook no distortions of its core values from the likes of such heretical groups as the Cathars, and infidels like Jews and Moslems (see Kurtz, 1983).

5.3.4. The Twelfth Ecumenical Council (Lateran IV, 1215)

Lateran IV was called by Pope Innocent III in 1215 with a clear agenda. As cited by Tanner (2013), the following constituted the agenda of the council:

To eradicate vices and to plant virtues, to correct faults and to reform morals, to remove heresies and to strengthen faith, to settle discords and to establish peace, to get rid of
oppression and to foster liberty, to induce princes and Christian people to come to the aid of the Holy Land. (as cited in Tanner, 2013, p. 52)

The main responsibilities of Lateran IV, then, were theological, doctrinal, moral, social, and military. This agenda was determined by the challenges facing the Church at the time of the council. For instance, in spite of the Concordat of Worms, emperors had persisted in their determination to control the Church (Kelly, 2009). Besides, the earlier Crusades had mainly been a failure, with Saladin decimating the Christian army and capturing Jerusalem and other Crusader cities in 1187 (Kelly, 2009). Also, the heresy of Albigensianism still persisted. Furthermore, there were other issues emanating from clerical indiscipline. These problems included “clerical drunkenness, incontinence, maintaining concubines, maladministration of the sacraments, elaborate clothing, poor preaching, and financial abuses of all kinds, including simony” (Kelly, 2009, p. 86). Aside from these, there was the ever-recurrent issue of abbot interference with the authority of their local bishops.

With its agenda clearly spelled out by Innocent, Lateran IV began in November 1215, meeting in three sessions, that is, November 11, 20, and 30 (Kelly, 2009, p. 90). In all, the Council issued seventy canons, the first of which was a clear statement of the faith against present heresies and the importance for one to belong to the Church as a condition for salvation (Kelly, 2009; see also Bellitto, 2002; Tanner, 2013). The next two canons condemned Catharism and required secular authorities under pain of excommunication to swear to fight any form of heresy in areas under their jurisdiction (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Tanner, 2013). Also, Lateran IV ordered bishops to investigate every form of heresy in their dioceses, prescribing deposition for failure to comply (Bellitto, 2002). And to control the spread of heresies, the Council ruled that wandering preachers should first obtain the permission of the bishops of the areas in which
they operated (Bellitto, 2002, p. 54). Indeed, canon 3 clearly articulated the Council’s view of heresy:

We excommunicate and anathematize every heresy raising itself up against this holy orthodox catholic faith which we have expounded above. We condemn all heretics, whatever names they may go under…. Let those condemned be handed over to the secular authorities present for punishment. (as cited in Tanner, 2013, pp. 56-57)

By this statement, the Council was implicitly seeking to silence every form of dissent, insisting on communicative agreement as crucial for the expression and realization of the Catholic faith. The reason for such a strong position against heresies was that, as Barrows Dunham has noted, they were perceived as “ideas that disrupt an existing society in such a way as to change, or to threaten to change, the distribution of power within it” (as cited in Kurtz, 1983). Thus, because heresies obfuscated social and organizational identity, the fathers of Lateran IV were determined to deal with their recurrence in the Church once and for all.

Lateran IV also stressed “order and ethics” (Kelly, 2009, p. 91), thereby making church life a major concern. As Kelly (2009) has rightly pointed out, canons 5 to 66 deal with the following challenges among others: “the nature of provincial councils, the appointment of teachers,” and the denunciation of clerical immorality such as “drunkenness, incontinence, and greed” (Kelly, 2009, p. 91). Bishops were also ordered to abandon aristocratic lifestyle. Furthermore, a ban was placed on the establishment of new religious orders as well as on the display of relics not authenticated by Holy See. Additionally, Lateran IV prescribed individual private confession by stating,

All the faithful of either sex…should individually confess their sins in a faithful manner to their priest at least once a year, and let them take care to do what they can to perform
the penance imposed on them. Let them reverently receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least at Easter. (as cited in Kelly, 2009, p. 91)

Such a canon, as Kelly (2009) notes, was intended to encourage the faithful “to take advantage of the grace and spiritual benefits available to them through the only sacraments that can be received on regular basis” (Kelly, 2009, p. 91).

Lateran IV, was thus held in the same spirit which had characterized the three earlier councils held in the basilica church of the pope as bishop of Rome. But more importantly, though, it was one council that expected all members of the Church, including “bishops, priests, monarchs, abbots, and even individual believers” to play some kind of role in ecclesial reforms (Kelly, 2009, p. 92). In other words, while it did not use the word “rebrand,” Lateran IV arguably represented the Church’s clearest attempt at re-imagination, reformation, or renewal.

5.3.5. The Thirteenth Ecumenical Council (Lyons I, 1245)

Pope Innocent IV called Lyons I in 1245 to address the problem posed to the Church by the Emperor Frederick, who sought to control it as Constantine and Charlemagne had done (Bellitto, 2002, p. 57; Kelly, 2009, p. 93). A year prior to the convocation of Lyons I, an unsuccessful attempt had been made by the two men at reconciliation (Kelly, 2009, p. 93). Soon after that event, Pope Innocent fled to Lyons through Genoa, living in that French city for six years (Kelly, 2009, p. 93). Once he found himself outside the control and influence of Frederick, Innocent decided to call an ecumenical council to deal with “the five wounds of the Church” (Kelly, 2009, p. 94). These five wounds included the following:

(1) reform of the clergy, (2) a new crusade to win back Jerusalem (when Frederick’s truce ended, the Muslims took back the city), (3) the danger posed to the Latin Empire of
Constantinople by the resurgent Greeks, (4) the movement of the Mongols into Eastern Europe, and (5) Frederick II’s persecution of the church. (Kelly, 2009, p. 94)

This agenda, set forth by the Pope, gives us a sense of the identity of the Church in the thirteenth century—that it was not only religious but also that it was a political entity with clear political interests. Thus, apart from seeking to use the Council to root out immorality among the clergy and protect the Church from Frederick’s influence, Lyons I was also concerned with the political situation in the Holy Land, Constantinople, and Europe in general.

Considered by scholars as one of the smallest ecumenical councils with only 150 bishops in attendance, Lyons I met in three sessions, “on June 26, July 5 and 17 of 1245” (Kelly, 2009, p. 94). Among the major decisions of the Council included the deposition and excommunication of Frederick II for his gross disrespect for successive popes, “his illegal behaviour…his unjust attacks in church lands and property, and his breaking of agreements” (Kelly, 2009, p. 94; see also Bellitto, 2002, p. 58). Lyons I then went on to accuse the Emperor of “heresy, perjury, theft, sacrilege, violation of the peace, kidnapping, and cruelty” (Kelly, 2009). And in a move to undermine the authority of Frederick, the Council relieved the subjects of the Emperor of their loyalty and obedience to him, a ruler it described as “an outcast and deprived by our Lord of every honour and dignity” (Kelly, 2009, p. 94; see also Bellitto, 2002, p. 58). Besides its concerns with Frederick, the Council urged the rich to support military campaigns in the Holy Land. Also, bishops and their priests were asked to preach to the faithful under their care in order to get them to support the Crusade efforts in the Holy Land in exchange for indulgence.

Small Lyons I might have been, but there were no illusions as regards what its mandate was: to find an antidote to heal the wounds afflicting the Roman Catholic Church. In that case, Lyons I was not different than the previous ecumenical councils. Like its antecedents, Lyons I
was intended to breathe fresh air into the life of the Church, that is, to reform and renew the Church of Christ in the face of existential challenges.

5.3.6. The Fourteenth Ecumenical Council (Lyons II, 1274)

Lyons II was convoked by Pope Gregory X in 1274, about two and half years after his election, to address the following issues: papal election, Church reforms, doctrine, and the Crusades (Kelly, 2009). According to Kelly (2009), the election of Gregory as successor of Pope Clement who died in November 1268 had taken about three years because the electing cardinals would not stop bickering among themselves. Such a protracted election allowed the enemies of the papacy to extend their influence in Europe; hence, on being elected pope, Gregory X vowed that cardinals must no longer be allowed to stall the process of papal election by unnecessary wrangling. It was to fully implement his resolve that he called Lyons II, which began on 7 May 1274 and ended on 17 July 1274, after six sessions (Kelly, 2009, p. 97).

As expected, Lyons II issued a document on the need for a new Crusade to wrestle the Holy Land from the Moslem infidels “and the obligation of Christian princes and ecclesiastics to support it, even with new taxes to be laid upon them if necessary” (Kelly, 2009, p. 97). Besides, the council addressed the doctrine of the Trinity in another document as part of efforts to reconcile the Western Church with the Church in the East, in schism since 1054 (Kelly, 2009, p. 97). Then to prevent a recurrence of the protracted process that elected Gregory X, Lyons II decreed that cardinals convene within ten days of the passing of the pope to elect a successor. During the time a papal election was underway, the cardinals were to be locked up in a room with no contact with the outside world safe servants who had to respond to their needs. “If the cardinals did not choose a pope within three days, then for the next three days their meals would
be limited to one course at lunch and one at dinner,” the decree went on (Kelly, 2009, p. 97). If they still could not elect a successor after eight days, their meals “would consist of bread, water, and wine, and they would forfeit their ecclesiastical revenues while conclave went on” (Kelly, 2009, p. 98). The decree required the secular rulers of the city where a papal election would take place to ensure that the cardinals followed the norms regulating papal election. Thus, as an ecumenical council, Lyons II was convoked not just at the pleasure of the Pope with no specific agenda; rather, following in the tradition set by the early Church, Lyons II was activated to deal with a crisis situation at a particular moment in the life of the Roman Catholic Church. It was a crisis caused by the issues of papal election, church unity and reforms, doctrine, and the Crusades.

5.3.7. The Fifteenth Ecumenical Council (The Council of Vienne, 1311)

At the instigation of King Philip IV of France, the Council of Vienne was called in 1311 by Pope Clement V at the beginning of the Avignon papacy to address three key issues: “the Templars, the reconquest of the Holy Land, and Church reform” (Kelly, 2009, p. 103; Bellitto, 2002, p. 61). Kelly (2009) writes that unlike previous general councils, participating bishops were pre-selected and the list given to Philip, who crossed out the names of sixty-six prelates he did not trust to do his bidding at Vienne (p. 103). Once all preparations toward the council had been accomplished, Vienne finally opened on 16 October 1311.

The Council of Vienne, as expected by Philip, dissolved the Knights of the Templars and ordered the burning of prominent members that included the grand master (Bellitto, 2002, p. 63). Besides, the Council anathematized all heretical groups within the Church, instituting the Inquisition to deal with all those found guilty of heretical views. Groups like the Beguines and
Beghards, “free-floating crowds of believers, many of the women, who did not fit into established groups of faithful Christians,” were condemned (Bellitto, 2002, pp. 63-64; Kelly, 2009). To ensure the success and effectiveness of the fight against heresy, Vienne ordered that every bishop must make it a policy to vigorously, diligently, and fairly root out all forms of heresies in his diocese (Bellitto, 2002, p. 64). And backing the order with the threat of suspension, the Council asserted, “If they fail, because of hatred, favor, affection, money, or temporal advantage, to proceed against someone when they ought, against justice and their conscience, then the bishop or superior is suspended from office for three years…..” (as cited in Bellitto, 2002, p. 64).

Attention was also given to the Church’s missionary activities. Along those lines, the council ordered the learning of Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic. Also, Vienne ordered the reform of clerical life, asking that the clergy live a life of holiness and take their prayers seriously (Bellitto, 2002, p. 66). To make sure that they stood out among the faithful, the Council prescribed a dress code for clerics, whose “outward garb should reveal their integrity” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 67). Bishops were particularly singled out for harsh criticisms for failing to lead by example (Bellitto, 2002, p. 69).

In evaluating Vienne as a general council, then, one can assert that it prioritized not only the eradication of heresies but also the immorality and indiscipline of the Church’s clergy as issues deserving immediate attention. By focusing on the life and moral choices of priests and bishops, Vienne seemed to suggest that the reform or rebranding of any organization must begin with the human beings that physically embody it in their quotidian activities. In other words, for Vienne, in order to rebrand the Catholic Church, one must reform the moral and professional conduct of its leaders.
5.3.8. The Sixteenth Ecumenical Council (The Council of Constance, 1414-1418)

Over a hundred years after the Council of Vienne, the Church once again summoned another general council in 1414 in the Swiss city of Constance to deal with what is known in church history as the Western Schism, which saw three rival popes all claiming to be the legitimate successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ and Prince of the Apostles (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Tanner, 2013). This schism began when the cardinals elected a non-cardinal in the conclave of 1378. Soon, after the election, however, the cardinals regretted their decision as the new pope, Urban VI, started to abuse them. The regret was then followed by the claim of invalid election on the grounds that Urban VI had been picked outside of conclave.

Later in 1378, the disgruntled cardinals, mostly French, met separately and elected a new pope who took the name Clement VII. Such a move led to two rival popes with their respective supporting cardinals claiming to lead the Catholic Church. While Urban VI had his court in Rome, Clement VII had his in Avignon; soon, the two camps excommunicated each other, leading to yet again another schism in the Church (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009). Bellitto (2002) notes that the division in the Church also affected the European secular society, as secular powers supported one or the other pope against the other (p. 78; see also Tanner, 2013, p. 64). But although secular leaders took sides in the conflict raging in the Church, ordinary Christians worried about the spiritual consequences of the schism (Kelly, 2009). Kelly (2009) clarifies for us the rationale for such fear: “Medieval Christians believed that they needed the sacraments for salvation, and the sacraments could only be consecrated by legitimate priests, who in turn were ordained by legitimate bishops, who were appointed by the legitimate pope” (Kelly, 2009, p. 106). If, therefore, there were questions about the legitimacy of a pope, could they the people of God then be saved when they died? Something, certainly, had to be done about the situation.
In 1409, through the influence of Europe’s secular leaders, a majority of the cardinals supporting the disputing popes deserted them, gathered in a “general council” at Pisa, and deposed the two popes, a move promptly rejected by both men on the grounds of canonical invalidity, for only a pope could call a council (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009). Following their deposition of the Roman and Avignon popes, the cardinals at Pisa elected the archbishop of Milan as the new pope. This man took the name Alexander V. However, since the two rival popes refused to abdicate, the Church now had three popes instead of two (Kelly, 2009, 108). Less than a year after his election, though, Alexander V died and was succeeded by John the XXIII, who was immediately forced by Emperor Sigismund of Germany to call an ecumenical council to meet at Constance in November 1414 to resolve the schism (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009; Tanner, 2013)

According to Bellitto (2002), Constance had three main tasks: “uniting the Church under one pope, reforming the Church, and dealing with heresy” (p. 86). A council deemed to be critical for the survival of the Church, Constance attracted “over three hundred cardinals and bishops from all three obediences, about three hundred theologians…many lower clergy, as well as many representatives of lay lords with great trains of servants” (Kelly, 2009, pp. 108-109). In pursuance of their agenda to unite the Church under one leader, the Council fathers ruled “to get rid of the three contesting popes, either by securing their resignations or by deposition” (Kelly, 2009, p. 109). Accordingly, the Council deposed John XXIII on 29 May 1415 and Benedict XIII on 26 July 1417 (Kelly, 2009, p. 109; Tanner, 2013, p. 65). The third contesting pope at the time, Gregory XII, however, negotiated with the Council to abdicate on condition that he be allowed to call it into session, as he regarded John XXIII, who had originally called Constance, to be an antipope with no canonical powers to convene a general council. The
Council promptly agreed to Gregory’s request, and on 14 July 1415, his representative convoked Constance, thereby giving the gathering canonical legitimacy (Kelly, 2009, p. 109). The cardinal representing Gregory also announced the pope’s resignation from the papacy. With all three claimants out of the way, Constance elected a new pope for the Church, a man who took the name Martin V.

Even before achieving its aim of getting rid of the contesting popes, Constance had issued on 6 April 1415 a decree titled *Haec Sancta (This Holy Synod)*, intended to give it legitimacy. The key point of this document is found in the opening words:

*This holy council of Constance…declares…that lawfully coming together in the Holy Spirit, being a general council and representing the Catholic Church, it holds authority directly from Christ, which authority everyone of whatever status or dignity, even papal, is bound to obey in those matters concerning the faith, the ending of the schism, and the reformation of the Church in head and members. (as cited in Kerry, 2009, p. 109; see also Bellitto, 2002, p. 86; Tanner, 2013, p. 66)*

*Haec Sancta* was followed by two other decrees, *Frequens* and *Quanto Romanus Pontifex*, in 1417 (Bellitto, 2009; Tanner, 2013). *Frequens* required the new pope to summon another council five years after Constance, to be followed by another one seven years later, and then after, every ten years (Kelly, 2009, p. 111; Tanner, 2013, p. 67). Importantly, *Frequens* spelled out the imperative for the holding of frequent general councils: that is, apart from building up the Church, the frequent holding of ecumenical councils “roots out the briars, thorns and thistles of heresies, errors and schisms, corrects deviations, reforms what is deformed and produces a richly fertile crop for the Lord’s vineyard” (Tanner, 2013, p. 67).
Apart from seeking to end the schism, Constance also attended to the problem of heresy in Europe. It accordingly examined the allegations of heresy levelled against John Hus, a Czech priest, who was found guilty as charged, defrocked, and later burned at the stake on 6 July 1415 (Bellitto, 2002, p. 86). Thus, effectively, Constance was able to achieve two of its set objectives, being unable to attend to the third, namely, church reform (Bellitto, 2002; Kerry, 2009).

The Council of Constance, undoubtedly, was a major moment in the history of the Catholic Church when rebranding or renewal became a categorical imperative. In this case, the exigencies necessitating the rhetorical performance of sanitizing the ecclesial community consisted in the lack of a legitimate leader, the existence of heresies, and major deviations from the apostolic traditions of the Church. Constance convened in hopes of giving the Church a new lease on life by addressing these existential challenges. Although it failed to address the question of Church reform in head and members, Constance importantly managed to unite the Church under one visible leader, a leader accepted by all.

5.3.9. The Seventeenth Ecumenical Council (The Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence-Rome, 1431-1443)

Martin V originally called a general council to meet at Basel in 1431, but before that event could open, he died in February of 1431 and was succeeded by Eugenius V, who initially decided to stick to his predecessor’s plan (Kerry, 2009, p. 114; see also Bellitto, 2002, pp. 89-90). Soon after the opening of the Council, however, poor attendance made the Pope decide to dissolve it, a decision which the fathers of the Council protested. In view of the protest, Eugenius rescinded his decision to call off the Basel; however, on 18 September 1437, as part of his efforts to unite the Catholic Churches of the East and West, Eugenius once again ordered that the
Council relocate to Ferrara. While the Council president and a few other delegates obeyed the Pope, a majority of the Council fathers decided to stay at Basel to continue what they had begun. The Basel group, insisting on the legitimacy of their decision to ignore the Papal directive, claimed that a general council was superior to a pope, adding that such a view was a dogma, the rejection of which made one guilty of heresy, punishable by excommunication (Kelly, 2009, p. 117). When Eugenius denounced such a position, the Basel group went on to excommunicate and depose him on 25 June 1439. Following the deposition of the Pope, the group elected a new pope on 5 November 1439, a cardinal who took the name Felix V, thus effectively creating another schism within the Church (Kelly, 2009, p. 117).

Meanwhile, the papal council relocated to Ferrara, opening on 9 April, 1439. However, as Pope Eugenius became fiscally challenged in meeting the needs of the Council of Ferrara, he decided to yet again move the gathering to another locale, this time to Florence, where a generous donor had offered to foot the bill incurred by the Council (Kelly, 2009, p. 118). On 16 January 1439, Florence opened with its main agenda being Church unity. Within a considerably short period of time, the Council managed to secure the reunion of Armenian Christians and the Monophysites in Egypt with Rome (Kelly, 2009, p. 119).

In February 1443, Pope Eugenius once more moved his council, this time to Rome where he managed to reunite with other Eastern Catholics such as the Chaldeans and Maronites. Eugenius thus managed to achieve what his predecessors had failed to accomplish, namely reunion with some Eastern Catholics, even if he could not bring all of them back to Rome (Kerry, 2009, p. 119). In spite of this achievement, though, the Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence-Rome, like that of Constance, failed to address the following pressing problems at the time: “worldliness, simony, greed, ambition, pluralism and absenteeism, poor clerical training,
and bishops interested in everything except shepherding their diocese,” all because the Council fathers spent most of their time fighting each other for political advantage (Bellitto, 2002, p. 94; see also Tanner, 2013).

Compared to earlier ecumenical councils, therefore, the Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence-Rome did not appear to have achieved a lot, but one thing could not be denied: it had a specific agenda, namely, Church reform. Moreover, it managed to secure unity between the Roman Church and some groups belonging to the Eastern Catholic Tradition. Thus, despite its under-performance, Basel-Ferrara-Florence-Rome could still be said to represent an attempt by the Catholic Church to reinvent its phenomenologico-ontological reality.

5.3.10. The Eighteenth Ecumenical Council (Lateran V, 1512-1517)

The last of the general councils of the Middle Ages, Lateran V, was called in 1512 by Pope Julius II to counter an earlier council convoked by some disgruntled cardinals with the support of the kings of France and Germany (Bellitto, 2002; Kerry, 2009; Tanner, 2013). The earlier council which met in Pisa from 1511 to 1512 had suspended the Pope and asserted again the supremacy of council over the Vicar of Christ (Bellitto, 2002, p. 97; Tanner, 2013, p. 74). Determined to assert papal authority over conciliarism, Julius began Lateran V with a stinging denunciation of Pisa, denominating it as a “quasi-council” and “counterfeit,” and describing its participants as “schismatics and heretics” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 97; Tanner, 2013, p. 74). Also, Julius fought off a document known as the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, which, dating back to 1438, supported conciliarism (Bellitto, 2002). Criticizing the papal prerogative to appoint bishops, abbots, and other prelates, the Pragmatic proposed that “such officials should be elected by those over whom the official would have power” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 97). Not surprisingly,
Julius condemned the document as anti-papal and accordingly decreed that all copies be destroyed.

In February 1513, Pope Julius died and was succeeded by Pope Leo X, who decided that Lateran V continue its work (Bellitto, 2002). In a papal bull titled *Pastor Aeternus*, Leo provided the legal parameters for general councils: they “must meet and act only under papal approval and with great respect for the papacy” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 98). Though Lateran V did not achieve a lot in terms of major reforms, it did manage to proscribe “simony, concubinage, usury,” as well as the “lay control of church money, property, and rights” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 98). Besides, Lateran V called on cardinals to be modest in their lifestyles, and “warned against false preachers, fake miracles, sorcery, and blasphemy” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 98). Finally, the fathers of the Council warned against the spread of false teachings that appeared in books and pamphlets, requiring bishops and other Church leaders to regulate printed material in general (Bellitto, 2002).

Lateran V, thus, adds to available evidence that renewal and reform have always been part and parcel of the life of the Catholic Church (Bellitto, 2001; see also Dwyer, 1985). As a general council, Lateran V was convoked at a time when the Church was challenged morally and administratively. By calling such a council, Pope Julius II hoped to confront the crisis within the Church and ultimately steer it on the right path (see Bireley, 2009). In this way, Lateran V was no different than the other nine general councils of the Middle Ages. As the gatherings of the leaders of the Church, the medieval ecumenical councils sought to give the ecclesial community a new image and a new direction.
5.4. The Three Councils of the Modern Period: Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II

The modern period witnessed the convocation of three general councils within the Catholic Church: Trent (1545-1563), Vatican I (1869-1870), and Vatican II (1962-1965) (Bellitto, 2002; Kerry, 2009; Tanner, 2013; see also Bireley, 2009). Each of these councils sought to address what the Church perceived to be critical challenges facing it at the particular time it was convoked. Thus, while Trent was called to respond to the challenges posed by the Protestant Reformation, Vatican I sought to define papal infallibility at a time modernist ideologies were questioning the role of religion in the life of human beings, with Vatican II seeking to update the Church in a spirit of dialogic engagement with the modern world (Bellitto, 2002).

5.4.1. The Nineteenth Ecumenical Council (The Council of Trent, 1545-1563)

The first of the Catholic Church’s modern general councils, Trent was summoned by Pope Paul III in 1545 to address the Protestant challenge spearheaded by Martin Luther and John Calvin (see Bireley, 2009). But even before the revolt of Luther, internal voices within the Church had called for important reforms particularly in its governance structure; however, these voices were largely ignored (Bellitto, 2002, p. 100; Bireley, 2009, pp. 236-237). It would take Martin Luther’s famous Ninety-Five Thesis to get the Church to heed the numerous calls for reform. At that critical historical moment, well-meaning Catholics had become disillusioned by the growing general religious apathy and blatant corruption that characterized the Christian life. As Bellitto (2002) observes, “It was as if people wondered anew just what the Christian church was, what she believed, and how her members practiced their faith” (p. 100). Emerging from the
challenge posed by the Reformers were the following foundational questions, which needed immediate answers:

- What are the sources of authority: scripture, and/or tradition? And what is tradition: the writings of the fathers and/or general councils and/or papal decrees? How many sacraments are there, what do they mean, and what do they do? Who decides these matters and on what grounds do these base their explanations? How should the church run herself and celebrate her beliefs liturgically? (Bellitto, 2002, pp. 100-101)

Such foundational questions about authority, tradition, and sacraments struck at the heart of the very identity of the Catholic Church, hence requiring an immediate, full, and effective response.

Opening on 13 December 1545, Trent met in three periods: 1545-1548; 1551-1552; 1562-1563 (Bellitto, 2002, p. 101; Kelly, 2009, p. 132). The fathers at the end of their deliberations in the first period, issued a document on divine revelation, which they asserted was “contained in the written Scriptures and in unwritten traditions,” thereby responding to the question regarding the source of the Church’s authority (Kelly, 2009, p. 134; see also Bellitto, 2002, p. 103; Tanner, 2013, pp. 78-79). In other words, Trent responded to the question regarding the source of the Church’s authority by asserting that it received its authority from the Bible, Church fathers, and earlier general councils, three sources in which the Council grounded its documents and doctrinal statements. The fathers also took up the issue of original sin and justification. Responding to the Reformer teaching that the human being is by nature depraved, Trent taught that, through Baptism original sin is “not just erased,” but “remitted” or completely forgiven (Tanner, 2013, p. 80). Besides, while Trent agreed with the Reformers that justification was an act of divine grace, it still differentiated Catholic position from that of Protestantism by positing that “we have a role in ‘giving free assent to and cooperating with’ God’s grace
(Tanner, 2013, p. 80). The first period of Trent also saw deliberations and official conciliar positions on the sacraments, which the fathers insisted were seven and instituted by Christ, thus contradicting the Reformer position of two sacraments, namely, Baptism and the Eucharist (Tanner, 2013, p. 81).

Finally, the first phase of Trent sought to reform the Catholic Church by addressing the problems of absenteeism and pluralism, twin abuses committed by most bishops and pastors at the time, as well as, other immoralities like “simony, concubinage, nepotism, and hereditary benefices” (Bellitto, 2002, pp. 107-108; Tanner, 2013). While absenteeism was the phenomenon of bishops not being present in the dioceses they headed, pluralism was the practice where bishops could head several dioceses at the same time. These twin practices were abused as bishops took the financial benefits due to the offices they headed without doing the work required. The result was that a majority of the faithful suffered spiritual neglect. Trent ruled that “governing a diocese was ‘a burden formidable even to the shoulders of angels,’” and therefore only persons with admirable moral conduct could head it “in order ‘to restore a very much collapsed ecclesiastical discipline and to reform the depraved morals of the clergy and people’” (Kelly, 2009, p. 135). To ensure clerical discipline, the fathers decreed the setting up of seminaries to train future priests for the Church (Tanner, 2013, p. 83; Bireley, 2009, p. 237).

During the second period of Trent, the bishops developed the theology of the sacrament of the Eucharist by “defend[ing] the real presence (denied by some Protestants) and g[iving] conciliar approval to the scholastic term ‘transubstantiation’ to explain how the Eucharistic bread [and wine] can become the body [and blood] of Christ” (Kelley, 2009, p. 137). In other words, by transubstantiation, the fathers meant that, during consecration at Mass, the bread and wine change in substance into the substance of the body and blood of Jesus respectively.
In the third period of the Council, the fathers of Trent issued a decree “that defended and clarified Catholic teaching on images, purgatory, relics, and veneration of the saints” in order to stop abuses associated with them” (Kelly, 2009, p. 145). Regarding images, the bishops taught that they were “material objects pointing to the spiritual reality beyond them, that is, an image of Jesus reminds believers of the Savior” (Kelly, 2009, p. 145). On the question of the veneration of saints, the view of Trent was that such respect was shown to saints because they lived holy lives and that, in honoring such men and women, the Church honored God their maker. Besides, Trent boldly addressed the question of indulgences, which had initially triggered Luther’s protest, urging that they be reformed (Bellitto, 2002, p. 107; Kelly, 2009, 145).

Ultimately, as Kerry (2009) asserts, the Council of Trent was largely successful, as it “clarified Catholic teaching, responded to the Protestants, and established a program of reform and organization that would carry long into the future” (p. 146; see Bireley, 2009). Agreeing with Kerry, Bellitto (2002) asserts that Trent’s clarification of Church doctrine came through its ability to connect disparate teachings and organize them into a coherent whole (p. 110). He writes, “One of Trent’s achievements was its overall success in stating just what the Roman church taught about the essential items of Christian faith and Catholic practice more conclusively, systematically, and precisely than ever before” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 110). In the view of Tanner (2013), Trent was critical in repositioning the Catholic Church as it gave it “a platform and confidence, ending the years of defensiveness in the face of the Reformation” (p. 86).

Following the conclusion of the Council, the prelates of the Church were sent back to their dioceses to implement the decisions they had taken.

The Council of Trent was thus arguably one of the most important events in the life of the Roman Catholic Church, being convoked in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, a
revolutionary moment that questioned the very foundations upon which the Petrine See stood. In convoking Trent, the Church, as Bireley (2009) puts it, once again reaffirmed its “regular need to accommodate to a changing world,” ultimately refashioning and positioning itself to begin a new historical phase in its existence (p. 220). Importantly, Trent “clarified Catholic doctrine on many controversial issues, and from it delivered the Tridentine Profession of Faith to which subsequent bishops, pastors, and professors of theology were required to subscribe” (Bireley, 2009, p. 237). The emergence of diocesan seminaries to train priests was part of Trent’s answer to the need to reform the Church in both head and members. For better or worse, Trent also created a militant Catholic Church, one that aggressively rebutted Protestant anti-Catholic rhetoric.

5.4.2. The Twentieth Ecumenical Council (Vatican Council I, 1869-1870)

Convoked in 1867 by Pope Pius IX, Vatican I opened in 1869, over three hundred years after Trent. The goal of Vatican I as articulated in the document *Aeterni Patri*, issued by the Pope on 29 June 1868, was as follows:

- to restate the faith in certain matters where it had been attacked or misunderstood, to review the whole matter of clerical life and its needs, to provide new safeguards for Christian marriage and the Christian education of youth, and to take up in this new age problems of the relation of Church and State and provide appropriate guidance, so as to promote peace and prosperity in national life everywhere. (as cited Kelly, 2009, p. 165)

In other words, the major concerns of the Pope, if *Aeterni Patri* was any indication, were four:

1. a restatement of the Catholic faith in the face of modern challenges,
2. a review of the clerical state,
3. the strengthening of Christian marriage and education,
4. the question of church-state relations.

Before summoning Vatican I, Pius IX had issued in 1864 the Papal Bull
Syllabus of Errors, condemning such modernist and enlightenment ideas as secularism, rationalism, nationalism, individualism, and the different manifestations of liberalism in politics, economics, and society in general (Bellitto, 2002, 117; Kelly, 2009; Tanner, 2013). Two political events, scholars claim, could explain such Papal antagonism toward modernism: the French Revolution and the Italian annexation of the Papal States (Bellitto, 2002; Kelly, 2009). These events, which took place toward the end of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century respectively, were influenced by the spirit of the enlightenment and modernist ideals. Kelly (2009) notes that in France, for example, the enlightenment influence engendered anti-Christian sentiments, derogating Christianity as superstitious and dismissing its claims of miracles by a divine power. It was in an attempt to provide a fitting response to this hostile social, cultural, intellectual, and political climate that Pius IX summoned Vatican I, hoping it would “speak clearly about the authority of the Church, especially the role of the papacy and its infallibility” (Tanner, 2013, p. 88).

Vatican I opened on 8 December 1869, with about seven hundred bishops in attendance (Kelly, 2009, p. 165; Tanner, 2013, p. 95). Unfortunately, less than a year after its official opening, Vatican I was suspended. The reason for this abrupt suspension on 20 September 1870 was the entrance of Italian troops into Rome. Vatican I, was therefore, able to issue only two documents, namely Dei Filius and Pastor Aeternus, the former dealing with the threat of modernism and the intersect of faith and reason in the economy of salvation, the latter defining papal primacy and infallibility (Kelly, 2013, p. 165). More specifically, the four chapters of Dei Filius examined God as the creator of all things, revelation, faith, and the complementarity of faith and reason (Tanner, 2013, p. 88). Pure rationalism, that is one not anchored to revelation and the supernatural, the document asserted, only led to the evils of materialism and atheism.
(Bellitto, 2002, p. 119). For the fathers, in spite of the fact that faith was superior to reason, “there can never be any real disagreement between faith and reason, since it is the same God who reveals the mysteries and infuses faith, and who has endowed the human mind with the light of reason” (Tanner, 2013, p. 88).

Addressing the issue of papal primacy and infallibility, *Pastor Aeternus* argued that, in the Apostle Peter, Christ Jesus intended to preserve “a certain primacy among the apostles and over the church,” a privilege that “remains with the popes down to the present” (Tanner, 2013, p. 90). This infallibility, the document explained, was enjoyed by the pope when he communicated as the successor of Peter in a solemn manner on matters of faith and morals. Specifically, it stated,

> Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, to the glory of God our saviour, for the exaltation of the catholic religion and for the salvation of the Christian people, with the approval of the sacred council, we teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the church, irreformable. So then, should anyone, which God forbid, have the temerity to reject this definition of ours: let him be anathema. (as cited in Tanner, 2013, p. 91)
As Tanner (2013) comments, the pope’s infallibility has its limitations, being applicable only to solemn pronouncements on matters of faith and morals, and that the matters must be held as important by the Church, that the pronouncements must be made within the context of the Church, as well as that the pope must have the intention of glorifying God by his solemn teaching (pp. 92-93).

Significantly, Vatican I gave legitimation to papal authority within the Catholic Church by endowing the pope’s communication with greater powers than before. In doing so, Vatican I further strengthened the structure of the Catholic Church as a hierarchical organization with a visible leader endowed with all legitimate ecclesiastical powers to determine the direction of the Church. Henceforth, papal infallibility and primacy would be critical in setting the Church apart from other Christian denominations.

5.4.3. The Twenty-First Ecumenical Council (Vatican Council II, 1962-1965)

Pope John XXIII summoned Vatican Council II on 25 January 1959, three months after assuming the reins of the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope, in making the announcement, “spoke of wishing to open the windows of the Church in order to let in fresh air; he also said that the purpose of the council was to strengthen doctrine and improve ecclesiastical discipline” (Tanner, 2013, p. 97). Clarifying his intentions for Vatican II in his *Humanae Salutis*, a letter inviting the Catholic bishops of the world, John XXIII stated the following three aims: “the better internal ordering of the Church, unity among Christians, and the promotion of peace throughout the world” (as cited in Tanner, 2013, p. 97). Apart from the bishops of the Church, John XXIII also invited observers from other Christian traditions to the council, which opened on 11 October 1962.
In his opening address titled *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (*Mother Church Rejoices*), the Pope called upon the Council fathers to explore how the Catholic Church could reinvent itself as an open community, friendly to the secular world. Denouncing the “prophets of doom” with their negative attitude toward the modern world, John urged the Church to recognize the good that the world could offer and use it to its advantage (Kelly, 2009, p. 165). Besides, while insisting that the Church should remain faithful to the deposit of faith, John XXIII argued that, in doing so, it must ensure that the faith is “elaborated and presented according to the forms of inquiry and literary expression proper to modern thought” (as cited in Kelly, 2009, p. 165). In the view of the Pope, the Catholic Church as a generous mother wishes to “use the medicine of mercy rather than the weapons of severity” in the communication of her message, “wishes to show herself to be the most loving mother of all, kind, patient, and moved by mercy and goodness towards her separated children,” and desires that her children “promote concord, a just peace, and fraternal unity among all” (John XXIII, 1962, ## 16-17; see also Mcbrien, 2008, p. 159). As a pastoral council, Vatican II, the Pope urged, must be “open to all Christians, open to all the faithful of every religion, and open to all people of goodwill” (Kelly, 2009, p. 165). Ultimately, John XXIII urged the Catholic Church to adopt a new paradigm, which came to be known as aggiornamento, meaning “updating” or “to-day-ing,” a reference to an ongoing process (Bellitto, 2002, p. 131; Kelly, 2009, p. 165; O’Malley, 2008).

With the optimistic tone set by the Pope, the Council fathers began their work of reshaping the Catholic Church to make it more responsive to modern challenges. At the end of its two sessions, Vatican II issued the following documents: four constitutions (namely, *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy*, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, and *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*), nine decrees
(namely, *Decree on Communications*, *Decree on Ecumenism*, *Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches*, *Decree on the Bishops’ Pastoral Office*, *Decree on Priestly Formation*, *Decree on Apostolate of the Laity*, *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, *Decree on Missionary Activity*, and *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life*), and three declarations (namely, *Declaration on Christian Education*, *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christians*, and *Declaration on Religious Freedom*) (see Flannery, 1995). All sixteen documents reflected the Church’s paradigm shift, from a negative view to “a positive view of the modern world and culture,” and from an attitude of non-engagement and condemnation to “an outreach to other religions (Christians and non-Christians), to nonbelievers, and indeed to all humanity (Bellitto, 2002, p. 134). This paradigm shift can be seen, for example, in the way the Council conceptualized the Church, that is, as a sacrament, the people of God, a communion, an ecumenical community, and as an eschatological community (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Lumen Gentium*; McBrien, 2008). Moreover, in *Gaudium et Spes*, the fathers of Vatican II reconceptualized the Church’s relation with the secular world as being one of dialogic engagement characterized by mutual respect and trust. For O’Malley (2008), *Gaudium et Spes* articulates the Church’s new relationship with the world in the metaphors of “mutuality, friendship, partnership, cooperation—and dialogue” (p. 201).

7 That the Church is a sacrament means that it is called to be holy and be a sign of the union between God and humanity on the one hand and the sign of the union of all humanity on the other (Vatican II, 1965/1996; McBrien, 2008).

8 The conceptualization of the Church as the people of God means that it succeeds the old Israel and has a covenant relationship with God (Vatican II, 1965/1996; McBrien, 2008).

9 The Church is also a communion because it is a composite of all the local churches in the world (McBrien, 2008).

10 As an ecumenical community, the Catholic Church is understood to be “one of many Christian communities with which it must seek dialogue and bilateral relations” (McBrien, 2008, p. 175).

11 As an eschatological community, the Church’s ultimate goal is the Kingdom of God (McBrien, 2008).
5.5. Conclusion

The Catholic Church has been in existence for over 2000 years. In the course of its long history, it has had to deal with immense challenges that threatened its very survival through general councils (Bellitto, 2002, p. 151). These councils “provided opportunities to gather together from diverse places to address common problems from a variety of perspectives and experiences” (Bellitto, 2002, p. 151). While it must be admitted that not every one of the councils was able to resolve the challenges for which it was called, the ecumenical councils were still able to shape and sustain the Church throughout its history. In the view of Tanner (2013), “Somehow the Holy Spirit has preserved the Church through these councils and many other local ones, enabling Christians to remain in contact with their roots and at the same time to grow, develop, and adapt through history,” thereby ensuring that Christianity remained “a living and vital force” in society (p. 114). Bellitto (2002) is thus right to claim that “the history of the twenty-one councils is the history of the Church’s responses to challenges” (p. 151).

Arguably, the history of the Catholic Church shows that any human organization is bound to face challenges and crises at one time or another. The reason for this situation is lack of agreement on what constitutes the organization’s core values or how those values should be embodied and expressed. It could also be due to leadership failure or internal wrangling among stakeholders. When faced with a crisis, an organization must come together and address it head on by bringing key stakeholders together to deliberate possible ways to meet the challenges it is facing. At the table of discussion, participants must be allowed to articulate their views on the nature of the problem and the best way to resolve it. Once final decisions are made, all stakeholders must come together to ensure their full implementation. Thus was largely the approach the Catholic Church took at its ecumenical councils.
Over and over again, decisions at ecumenical councils were mediated by the Church’s understanding of its identity and lived experience. Guided by these important coordinates, the Church was able to survive every challenge that came its way. Undoubtedly, the Catholic Church could not survive without ecumenical councils, branding and rebranding moments that addressed existential challenges, anchored the Church to its foundational values, provided a forum for self-criticism, and gave it new fuel to relaunch.
Chapter 6
Rebranding the American Catholic Church from an Isocratean Perspective

6.1. Introduction

The clergy sexual abuse extensively reported by *The Boston Globe* beginning from January 2002 created a brand crisis for the Catholic Church in America. In response to this problem that clobbered the Church like a tsunami, the 195 dioceses and eparchies making up the Catholic Church in the United States sought to redeem the brand image of the Church through the adoption and implementation of the Dallas *Charter* and the *Essential Norms for Clergy*, overhaul of the training of future priests, introduction of background checks of Church employees, setting up of a review board at both national and diocesan levels, training of Church employees on sexual abuse, and making clergy and Church employees mandatory sexual-abuse reporters (USCCB, 2011). Moreover, through the liturgical celebration of reconciliation services and the payment of compensations to assuage the suffering of victims, the Church has sought to demonstrate to its stakeholders, including the Catholic faithful, clergy, victims, media, and civil authorities, and activist groups that it has learned from the dark episode of the abuse scandals and is willing not only to create a safe environment for children and other vulnerable members entrusted to its care, but also to be a caring, charitable, and inclusive religious organization.

While it is a documented fact that the Catholic Church in America has kept to its commitment to protect its children from sexual predators within its walls (see Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection (SCYP), NRB, & USCCB, 2013, 2014, 2015), the perception that
Catholic priests are sexually abusive and that bishops help to cover up the abuse continues to persist. Such a perception is further deepened by the recent revelations in the Archdioceses of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, as well as, the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, that years after The Globe revelations, some Church officials continue to shield abusive priests and fail to follow thoroughly and comprehensively the Charter and Norms (USCCB, 2006; 2011; Hurdle & Eckholm, July 24, 2012; Goodstein, Sept. 7, 2012; Kim, Powers, & Ryan, Jan. 21, 2013; Smith & Goodstein, Jun. 15, 2015). It thus came as no surprise when in an NPR (2012) interview on the tenth anniversary of the sexual abuse crisis, the interviewee, one who had served as chair of the NRB, asserted that the Catholic bishops of the United States had still not changed the way they handled abuse cases. Such a sentiment would be re-echoed by a SNAP (2013) report to the United Nations that the Catholic Church had not made good its promise to root out abusive priests and criminally negligent bishops who protected them. In view of such persistent negativity hanging over the head of the U.S. Catholic Church, a rebrand of its image becomes a categorical imperative.

This chapter is an attempt to reimagine the Catholic Church in America as a caring, charitable, inclusive, and responsible religious organization, whose major preoccupation is the salvation of humanity. As an “expert in humanity,” (Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, 2003, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, #61), the Catholic Church, this dissertation argues, can rebrand itself by synchronizing its communicative acts with authentic moral choices. In other words, for this dissertation, the Church’s re-imagination of itself as a caring, charitable, inclusive, and responsible religious organization can only be located at the nexus of its communicative intentionality and moral performativity.
The new brand of the American Catholic Church being proposed can be actualized through Isocrates’ model of rebranding, which emerges from his theory of self-defense and self-characterization. This Isocratean rebranding model consists in four phases, namely, (1) rebranding objective, (2) articulation of problem, (3) design and implementation of rebranding strategy, and (4) evaluation of the brand process and the new brand. This chapter argues that, for the Catholic Church to rebrand itself as a caring, charitable, and inclusive religious organization, it must align its communicative acts with moral choices. In order to prove this argument, what is left of this chapter begins with a description of the four phases of the Isocratean rebranding model, followed by a treatment of how the model can be applied to the specific situation of the Catholic Church in America, and then finally a conclusion.

6.2. The Isocratean Rebranding Model

Based on Isocrates’ theory of self-defense and self-representation/characterization (see Chapter 3), one can construct an Isocratean rebranding model consisting in four phases:

a) Setting Rebranding objective

b) Articulation of problem

c) Designing and implementing of rebranding strategy

d) Evaluation of new brand and rebranding process

6.2.1. Setting Rebranding Objective

The first phase of the rebranding process is the setting of an objective. This objective must be clear, focused, and context-specific. Essentially, the rebranding objective must be oriented toward the clarification and articulation of the image and identity of the threatened
brand (see Isocrates, 353 B.C./2000, 15.7). Thus, the rebranding objective answers the question: What do I want to achieve?

6.2.2. Articulation of Problem

The question that the second phase of the Isocratean rebranding model seeks to answer is: What is happening to me? The answer to this question is an articulation of the problem creating the brand-image crisis. In other words, the second phase provides the rationale for the rebranding process. The problem which threatens the existential reality of a brand may be a human being making damaging accusations (such as the sycophant Lysimachus in the Antidosis), a scandal (as in the case of the sexual abuse scandals in the American Catholic Church), or a brand’s inability to fulfill its promise to stakeholders. Depending on the nature of the problem facing a brand, an appropriate response is constructed and deployed to save and give it a new appearance, and hence, a new lease on life.

6.2.3. Designing and Implementing the Rebranding Strategy

The third phase of the Isocratean rebranding model answers two key questions: Who am I? How do I defend who I am? These two questions are answered in four steps, that is, (1) articulation of identity through an appeal to biography, (2) differentiation and dissociation, (3) establishment of goodwill with stakeholders, and (4) making moral choices that give advantage. At the first step of phase three of the rebranding process, the brand facing a crisis situation begins to reinvent itself by defining what it is through the narrative of its life. Through this process of narrativity, the identity of a brand in crisis is articulated and reinforced in hopes of winning back the support of stakeholders.
Next, through the tactic of differentiation and dissociation, the credible identity articulated in the first step is then contrasted with the identity of the source of the problem threatening the brand. Here at the second step, an organization like the Catholic Church in the United States, for instance, must demonstrate how the moral choices of predator priests and their episcopal supporters that caused the current crisis deviate from its core values. Accordingly, it must differentiate and dissociate itself from the perpetrators of such an immoral conduct.

The third step of phase three consists in the expression of goodwill toward the stakeholders of the brand in crisis. This expression of goodwill must be channeled through concrete actions that enhance the well-being of key stakeholders. Finally, at the fourth step of the third phase of the rebranding process, a struggling brand seeking to revitalize must make moral choices that give it advantage in the eyes of stakeholders. In other words, the brand must make ethical choices that bolster its reputation in the eyes of publics. Such choices are critical, as they help position the struggling brand as ethically responsible and a model citizen in the public sphere.

6.2.4. Evaluation of the Rebranding Process and the New Brand

The evaluation phase measures the rebranding process on one hand and the new brand itself on the other in order to determine their success in terms of the attainment of the objective set at the beginning. It is a phase that invites the critical views of stakeholders regarding their satisfaction or otherwise with the efforts of the struggling brand to reimagine itself. In other words, the phase of evaluation seeks to answer the question: How successful have I been in solving the problem causing the brand crisis and meeting the expectations of my stakeholders? Because the views of stakeholders or brand audience are critical in the determination of the
success of the rebranding process, it is important that an organization dealing with a brand crisis be transparent to its target publics by allowing them unimpeded access to all activities and information relating to the rebranding process.

6.3. Rebranding the Catholic Church in America

The rebuilding the Catholic brand in America, using the Isocratean model of rebranding, must be accomplished in four phases: (1) objective of rebranding the American Catholic Church (2) articulation of the problem facing the American Catholic Church, (3) designing and implementing a rebranding strategy for the American Catholic Church, and (4) evaluation of the process of rebranding and the new Catholic brand.

6.3.1. Phase One: Setting the Objective for Rebuilding the American Catholic Brand

*Per* the Isocratean model of rebranding, the objective of rebuilding the American Catholic brand may be stated as follows: To construct the image of the American Catholic Church as a caring, charitable, inclusive, and responsible religious community, one that is human-centric and a model institutional citizen. In other words, the purpose of rebranding the American Catholic Church must be located in its identity and core values, pillars which have been fractured as a result the sexual abuse scandals. Such an objective is consistent with what non-profit branding scholars say about powerful non-profit brands (see Dixit, 2010; Laidler-Kylander, 2012; Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014). Laidler-Kylander (2012), for example, contends that to be powerful, a nonprofit brand must align its “values and mission” with its “identity” on one hand, and its “internal identity” and “external identity” on the other (p. 169). For the Catholic Church, which regards itself as an expert in humanity (Pontifical Council of
Justice and Peace, 2003, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* #61), the “primary route [through which it] must travel in fulfilling her mission” (cited in John Paul II, 1991, #), aligning values and mission, as well as synchronizing internal and external identities means fearlessly recommitting to protecting and nurturing its children and vulnerable members. Thus, ultimately, the rebranding itself depends on the American Catholic Church’s success in reclaiming its moral credibility fractured by the clergy sexual abuse and official cover-ups to avoid civil suits, criminal prosecutions, and ultimately public embarrassment.

6.3.2. Phase Two: Articulation of the Problem Facing the American Catholic Brand

The problem threatening the Catholic brand in the United States over a decade after the tsunami of the clergy sexual abuse scandals is a “crisis of trust and faith” (NRB, 2004, p. 10; see also Greyser, 2009). This view is captured powerfully in the NRB’s (2004) description of the nature of the crisis confronting the American Catholic Church:

Narrowly defined, the nature of the current crisis is twofold: It consists both of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy and the failure of many Church leaders to respond appropriately to that abuse. But the crisis has a spiritual dimension, for, as is with all sinful conduct, it represents a failure to comport with divine law and the teaching of the Church. Unless all aspects of the crisis are addressed forthrightly, any steps to remedy it will bear only the patina of reform and renewal. (p. 7)

From this description, one can conclude that the brand crisis of the Catholic Church in America emanates from the immoral choices of two key constituencies that embody the face of the institutional brand: priests and bishops, as well as, the failure of the religious organization to deal with the abuse in an honest and forthright a way as possible. By their immoral choices, bishops
and their priests not only tarnished the image of the Catholic brand but they also disobeyed both divine and ecclesiastical laws.

As well documented, the current crisis confronting the American Catholic brand originates from the January 2002 *Boston Globe* report on clergy sexual misconduct and inadequate official response in the Archdiocese of Boston then headed by Cardinal Bernard Law. From archdiocesan official records, which a court had ordered the previous November (that is, November of 2001) to be released in order to give the public more information about the case of a pedophile priest, Father Geoghan, it emerged that for decades the Boston Catholic Archdiocesan bishops and other Church officials had covered up instances of clergy sexual abuse of minors (ISTBG, 2002; Belluck & Bruni, 2002; Henley, 2010).

Father Geoghan, whose case initially triggered the interest of *The Globe* to investigate the incidence of clergy sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of Boston, was tried and convicted of the sexual abuse of 130 boys lasting over three decades (Belluck & Bruni, 2002; ISTBG, 2002). Following the successful prosecution of Geoghan, several victims came forward to reveal how they too had been abused as children. Writing about the scandal that hit the Archdiocese of Boston, Belluck and Bruni (2002) reveal that

In all, nearly 100 priests have been accused of sexually abusing children and adolescents in the last 40 years, and documents show that the church officials allowed many to stay in ministry. About $50 million has been paid to settle lawsuits since 1992. Some 450 lawsuits are pending, with claims totaling roughly $100 million. (see also *The Boston Globe* Investigative Team (TBGIT), 2002; Henley, 2010)

The initial *Boston Globe* exposé triggered a tsunami of similar revelations in almost all the 195 Catholic dioceses/eparchies and religious communities across the country (NRB; JJCJ, 2011;
Office of the Attorney General of Massachusetts, 2003; Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury, 2005). As noted by the Office of the Attorney General of Massachusetts (2003), the clergy abuse was a nationwide phenomenon “with some reports indicating that more than 300 priests were removed from ministry in 2002,” and a total of 1,200 priests abusing over 4,000 children (p. 16).

Apart from the tragedy of so many innocent children being raped and sexually assaulted by rapacious men of the cloth, the socio-economic status of these victims highlights the callous opportunism of these so-called men of God. According to Rezendes (2004), most of the abused victims were from “large, lower-income families with absent fathers and overburdened mothers grateful for the help and attention of a Catholic priest” (p. 7; see also Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury I, 2005, pp. 12-14). Rezendes (2004) cites the case of Patrick McSorley, an abused victim of the serial abusive priest Geoghan as a case in point. At the time the abuse happened, McSorley, living in an apartment in a public housing project, was dealing with the loss of a father. The situation of McSorley and of many others, in the view of Rezendes (2004), shows that abusive priests usually targeted “lower-income, fatherless boys” who yearned for a “father’s attention” (p. 7; see also Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury, 2005). Besides, victims became easy prey because they came from poor families that would normally be reluctant to expose the abuse.

Moreover, predator priests preyed on children from deeply religious Catholic families who held the clergy in great respect, regarding them “as God’s representatives on Earth” (Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury I, 2005, p. 14). Instead of reciprocating this devotion from their faithful, these predator priests rather manipulated and exploited them to ensure that the victims and their families did not expose their sinful and criminal behavior.
Describing the various methods employed by the abusive priests to ensure that they were not exposed, the Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury (2005) reports:

Some of the priests whose cases we examined told their victims that God had sanctioned the sexual relationship and would punish them if they revealed it. Others told children that they loved them, and that the sexual abuse should be their little secret. Still others told their prey that they, the victims, were responsible for the abuse, and that no one would believe them if they told them. (pp. 14-15; see also The Globe Spotlight Team, 2002)

The image such a report creates is that of unconscionable, manipulative, perverted men of God who have no business working in the Catholic Church, a religious community that prides itself on being a mother to all its members. With no sense of guilt, these rapacious predator-priests raped and molested “children in rectory bedrooms, in church sacristies, in parked cars, in swimming pools,” seminary grounds, vacation houses, schools, and even in victims’ own homes (Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury, 2005, p. 12).

But if the perpetration of the sexual abuse and molestation of innocent and vulnerable children was callous, evil, and criminal, then the handling of the tragedy of that crime by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in America was mostly cynical, immoral, and inhuman. The Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury (2005), for example, found that although Cardinals Bevilacqua and Krol of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia knew about the clergy abuses going on, they failed to report the matter to law enforcement. “Instead, they consistently chose to conceal the abuse rather than to end it. They chose to protect themselves from scandal and liability rather than protect children from the priests’ crimes” (p. 30). Similarly, the Office of the
Attorney General of Massachusetts (2003) in its investigative report, following the exposé of *The Boston Globe* in January 2002, was condemnatory of the hierarchy of the Archdiocese of Boston:

…the conduct of the Archdiocese and its senior managers was undeniably wrong. For decades, Cardinals, Bishops and others in positions of authority within the Archdiocese chose to protect the image and reputation of their institution rather than the safety and well-being of children. They acted with a misguided devotion to secrecy and a mistaken belief that they were accountable only to themselves. (pp. 2-3; see also *The Globe Spotlight Team*, 2002; Belluck, 2002; Belluck & Bruni, 2002; Plante 2004; Henley, 2010; Salveson, 2013)

These scathing and damning remarks portray the leadership of the Catholic Church in America as narcissistic, secretive, insensitive, and lawless, a leadership that has no interest in the welfare of a key constituency of its stakeholders, that is, innocent children. Added to the image of a heartless religious community is that of the picture of a criminal organization that shields its lawless lieutenants from the full rigors of the law by forgiving them their criminal behaviors instead of handing them over to law enforcement. As the NRB (2004) sees it, such a response from Church leaders effectively immunized rather than punished a “conduct that violated both canon and civil law” (p. 107).

The NRB, established by the USCCB in the wake of the abuse scandals, was also harsh in its hermeneutic of the handling of the clergy sexual abuse by the Church’s hierarchy. For the NRB (2004), both the abuse itself and its handling by the bishops and religious leaders in the American Catholic Church were failings of monstrous proportions:

This is a failing not simply on the part of the priests who sexually abused minors but also on the part of bishops and other Church leaders who did not act effectively to preclude
that abuse in the first instance or respond appropriately when it occurred. These leadership failings have been shameful to the Church as both a central institution in the lives of the faithful and a moral force in the secular world, and have aggravated the harm suffered by victims and their families. (p. 5)

Thus, for the NRB (2004), the two key losers, following the abusive behaviors of the clergy, are the institutional Church as a body on one hand, and the group of victims together with their families on the other.

As clear from media reports and grand jury investigations across the country, bishops and Church leaders, when confronted with allegations of the clergy sexual abuse in their dioceses and religious communities, approached the issue from only moral and psychological angles, saying it was a sin to be overcome by prayer on the one hand, and a psychological problem to be resolved by psychotherapy on the other. Accordingly, instead of being handed over to law enforcement for prosecution, accused priests were sent off to designated facilities for rehabilitation for a period of time once they admitted to the accusation of sexual molestation. Having gone through the rehab program and returned to his diocese, an abusive priest was then reassigned in most cases to parishes where parishioners had no knowledge of his history, thereby opening up the possibility of another incident of abuse, which usually was the case (Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury I, 2005, pp. 55-57). The Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury (2005) was thus right when it claimed, “When they withheld from parents’ knowledge of their child’s abuse, they sentenced that child to years of lonely suffering. By not reporting the crimes to law enforcement, they frustrated safeguards designed to protect children in society at large” (p. 55). For the Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury (2005), the Philadelphia Archdiocese’s practice of not reporting clergy sexual abuse to civil authorities was not just a
mere administrative lapse but also a purposeful, well-calculated procedure replicated in most dioceses across the nation (pp. 55-58). The NRB (2004) agrees with this view of the Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury (2005), noting that the bishops’ treatment of the clergy sexual abuse as “a moral failing and psychological disorder” was responsible for the crisis that hit the American Catholic Church (p. 94). By failing to comprehensively address the abuse in a way that would have precluded any future occurrence, the bishops had effectively “compromised the ability of the Church to play a leadership role with respect to important contemporary moral issues” (NRB, 2004, p. 94).

Worse still, by the time The Boston Globe exposed the systematic clergy sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable members of the Church, as well as official cover-ups of these criminal acts, most of the abusers could not be prosecuted because of the expiration of the statuses of limitations in most states. Such an unfortunate situation that allowed perpetrators of the child sexual abuse to go unpunished, in the view of the Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury (2005), was carefully engineered by an unconscionable hierarchy. As the Pennsylvania County Investigating Grand Jury (2005) observes,

Tragedies such as tidal waves…are outside human control. What we found were not acts of God, but of men who acted in His name and defiled it. But the biggest crime of all is this: it worked. The abuser priests, by choosing children as targets, and trafficking on their trust, were able to prevent or delay reports of their sexual assaults, to the point where applicable statutes of limitations expired. And Archdiocese officials, by burying those reports they did receive and covering up the conduct, similarly managed to outlast any statuses of limitation. As a result, these priests and officials will necessarily escape criminal prosecution. (p.1)
The escape of abusive priests and Church officials from criminal prosecution, however, did not help the image and reputation of the Catholic Church in America, as it drew the ire of Catholics and non-Catholics alike toward the institutional Church. In the view of a majority of Americans, the Catholic Church was morally bankrupt and unaccountable to anyone in the country.

The Church’s moral standing was further dealt a serious blow when media reports and grand-jury investigations revealed that bishops were usually more concerned with the well-being of accused priests than with that of victims. In other words, whereas bishops were lenient toward abusive priests, whom they usually were willing to help and return to ministry, they were not so understanding and compassionate toward abuse victims and their families. The NRB (2004) eloquently summarizes the consequences of the poor treatment of victims and their families as follows:

In sum, failure to meet with victims and their families prevented bishops from comprehending the nature and the scope of the problem. More importantly, those Church leaders who did not meet with victims and their families, and did not endeavor to bring healing to them, failed in their pastoral duties. This failure of the Catholic clergy to attend to the pain of its parishioners is all the more egregious inasmuch as the underlying injury was inflicted by a member of the clergy itself. (p. 107)

By failing to show understanding, fellow-feeling, sympathy, and compassion to its most vulnerable members in their moment of need, the Church, in the eyes of these victims and their families, had abandoned its core identity as a caring, charitable, inclusive, and responsible religious community. Quite naturally, most of these victims and their families left the Church (NRB, 2004).
Clearly, if the clergy sexual abuse fractured the American Catholic brand, then the inadequate and ineffectual response by the bishops and other Church leaders sent it into comatose. As described by the NRB (2004), their response could at best be “characterized by moral laxity, excessive leniency, insensitivity, secrecy, and neglect” (p. 92). Ultimately, the Church’s brand crisis reached a crescendo in virtue of the following episcopal lapses:

(i) inadequately dealing with victims of clergy sexual abuse, both pastorally and legally;  
(ii) allowing offending priests to remain in positions of risk; (iii) transferring offending priests to new parishes or other dioceses without informing other of their histories; (iv) failing to report instances of criminal conduct by priests to secular law enforcement authorities, whether such a report was required by law or not; and (v) declining to take steps to laicize priests who clearly had violated canon law. (NRB, 2004, p. 92)

These lapses undoubtedly destroyed the trust that the Church’s members had in it, leading to some leaving it all together, withholding donations, or calling for heads to role.

Realizing the harm their failed leadership had caused, the members of the USCCB sought to redeem the image of the American Catholic brand by calling for a number of crisis meetings. The result was the promulgation of the Charter and the Essential Norms, as well as the establishment of a National Review Board made up of distinguished professional lay members of the Church. With the implementation of a safe environment programs in all the 195 dioceses and eparchies as required by the Charter and Norms, as well as the annual auditing of the NRB, it was hoped that the Catholic Church would finally reinvent itself as a caring, charitable, inclusive, and law-abiding institutional citizen.

However, recent revelations have dampened this hope, thereby perpetuating the image of a religious organization that is dangerous to children, sexually abusive, secretive, and criminally
negligent. In 2011, for instance, the Pennsylvania Grand Jury XXXIII found that, almost a decade after the Charter and Norms had been implemented in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the culture of clergy sexual abuse and official cover-ups still persisted. Moreover, official documents of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, which were ordered to be released to the public, showed that indeed for years Cardinal Mahony protected abusive priests from criminal prosecution and either moved them around the Archdiocese without warning parishioners or sent them out of the country (Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Los Angeles, 2011). Such revelations contradicted the impression created by the Cardinal’s report to the faithful of his diocese published in 2004. In that report, the Cardinal claimed to have always acted in the best interest of the Church’s children and vulnerable members (Archdiocese of Los Angeles, 2004). The recent revelations, giving the lie to the Cardinal’s claims, have therefore impacted the image restoration efforts of Church. No wonder, in a 2012 NPR Talk of the Nation program, a former chair of the NRB claimed that the clergy sexual abuse continued to reverberate across the nation a decade after The Globe revelations. For the interviewee, the Church had not emerged from its culture of secrecy, as it still failed to be transparent in terms of how it handled the abuse scandal within its walls. Importantly, the interviewee went on to claim that, while many abusive priests had either been successfully prosecuted or laicized, bishops cited for criminal negligence were not held accountable. This perception seems to be shared by activist groups like SNAP, VOTF, and Link-Up. In 2013, SNAP, for example, appealed to the United Nations Human Rights to rein in the leadership of the Catholic Church by holding it accountable for crimes against humanity. Finally, the recent episodes of child sexual abuse in Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese and the Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis make it hard for the Catholic Church in America to shirk the negative tag it has been carrying since 2002 (Hurdle
In summary, the problem that has fractured the Catholic brand in America can be stated as follows: (1) the sexual abuse of children and vulnerable members of the Church by clergy; (2) the episcopal cover-ups of clergy sexual abuse; (3) the lack of criminal prosecutions of abusive priests and criminally negligent bishops and other officials of the Church because of the expiration of statuses of limitation; (4) the failure of the Church to provide pastoral care to abuse victims and their families; (5) the loss of trust in the Catholic Church as a caring, charitable, inclusive, and ethically responsible religious organization. This problem has created, in the words of Mannion (2007), “a crisis of legitimation for [the Church’s] principles and moral guidance,” thereby raising questions about the Church’s moral authority and “its relevance in today’s world” (p. 20; emphasis in original). Therefore, the ultimate goal of any attempt to rebuild the American Catholic brand must be to make it once again an authentic moral force and relevant in the lives of people.

6.3.3. Phase Three: Designing and Implementing the New American Catholic Brand Strategy

For the Catholic Church in America to rebuild its brand in view of the clergy sexual abuse and its cover-up by some of the Church’s hierarchy, it must answer two important questions: (1) Who am I as religious community? (2) How do I defend who I am? In other words, the American Catholic brand must rearticulate its brand identity, noting how that brand has been lived throughout its existence in the United States. Besides, the Church must demonstrate what it says it is by undertaking concrete and effective actions that not only respond to the crisis of the clergy sexual abuse but also serve as a compass on its journey into the future.
Having articulated its identity, it must then demonstrate that it is different from those who perpetrated the abuse and those who covered it up, and accordingly dissociate itself from them. Then, the Church must move on to demonstrate goodwill toward its key stakeholders, especially victims and their families, members of the Church, the media, the government, activist groups and non-Catholic Americans. Finally, the Catholic Church in the United States must make important moral choices that position it as an ethically responsible religious organization and a model institutional citizen.

6.3.3.1. Step One: Articulation of the Identity of the American Catholic Brand

The first step of phase three consists in a clear articulation of the identity of the American Catholic Church reflected in its communication with stakeholders. Thus, on the websites of the USCCB, dioceses, and all other Catholic institutions, the brand identity of the Catholic Church must be clearly stated. Such a move in the rebranding process is consistent with the approach Isocrates (353 B.C./2000) took in his self-defense and self-representation/characterization in the Antidosis. Moreover, according to Kasper (2015), a cardinal and theologian of the Roman Catholic Church, in order for the Catholic Church to continue to play a significant role in the lives of individuals and society in general, it must be “certain of its own identity” (p. 37). Kasper (2015) writes, “The Church can only have relevance and future if it is distinctive, if it has identity in itself and knows who and what it is as Church” (p. 335). In other words, for Kasper (2015), the Catholic Church cannot just be like any other church; rather, it must recognize its distinctiveness and leverage it in its communicative encounters with stakeholders (see also Dulles, 1982). For the present dissertation, the American Catholic Church’s identity emerges from its understanding of itself, anthropology, and its life and public communication.
The Catholic Church’s understanding of itself. The Catholic Church sees itself as a “community of faith, hope, and charity,” established by Christ to “communicate truth and grace to everyone” (Vatican II, 1995, Lumen Gentium #8; Inter Mirifica, #3; see also Hellwig, 1984; Tillard, 1992; Kasper, 2015). This faith community, missionary in nature, that is, called and sent, is “a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and the unity of the entire human race” (Vatican II, 1965/1995, Lumen Gentium #1; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, #775, #767; see also Dulles, 1982; Tavard, 1992; McBrien, 2008, p. 3; Kasper, 2015, pp. 78-81). As a sacrament, the Catholic Church is called to be a sign of the union between God and human beings on one hand, and the sign of the union of the diverse peoples of the world on the other (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, #775; Dulles, 1982; Kasper, 2015). In other words, being a sacrament, the Catholic Church, by its existential reality, must provide a space where all people feel welcome regardless of status, gender, race, and age. For this reason, the Catholic Church is accordingly described in the metaphors of “the reign of Christ already present in mystery,” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, #763), “the spotless spouse” of Christ,” and “mother” (Vatican II, 1965/1995, Lumen Gentium #6; #16; Gaudium et Spes, #43). Being the reign of Christ on earth, this religious institution “shines out before men [and women] in the world, in the works and in the presence of Christ” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, #764). As the bride of Christ, the Church constitutes the body of Christ, whose face it must reflect to humanity. And as a mother, the Church not only “by its proclamation of the Gospel…draws its hearers to faith and the profession of faith,” but it also “prepares them for Baptism, snatches them from servitude to error, and incorporates them into Christ so that by love they may grow to full maturity in him” (Lumen Gentium, #17; see also Ratzinger, 1985; McBrien, 2008; Kasper, 2015).
Ultimately, as a community of faith, as a kingdom, as a spouse, and as a mother, the Catholic Church is sent “to communicate the fruits of salvation to humanity” as Christ her founder did (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Lumen Gentium*, #8; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, #768; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2003, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, #50; #55; see also #60; Tillard, 1992). The communication of its message of salvation, Vatican II (1965/1995) teaches, is to be carried out by the example of the Church’s own life, as well as its “humility and self-denial” (*Lumen Gentium*, #8). Hence, rather than ignoring the weak and poor in society, the Church in its evangelizing mission is compassionate and understanding toward them. As *Lumen Gentium* #8 says, “the [C]hurch encompasses with its love all those who are afflicted by human infirmity and it recognizes in those who are poor and who suffer, the likeness of its poor and suffering founder” (Vatican II, 1965/1995; Pope Francis, 2014). Of course, for the Catholic Church, its concern is not only for the poor and weak but also for the totality of all humanity. For this reason, John Paul II (1991) can say in his *Centesimus Annus* that the Church’s “sole purpose has been care and responsibility for man [and woman]” (#53). In the view of McBrien (2008), the care and responsibility that the Church must show to humanity is legitimated in service, evident when the Church “exercise[s] courage and take[s] serious courage on behalf of the poor and the oppressed” and acts as an “advocate and agent of justice, human rights, and peace” (p. 169; see also USCCB, 1983; 1986; Kasper, 2015). Such a perspective reechoes that of the fathers of Vatican II (1965/1995) that “the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish” of modern humanity, especially those living on the margins of society such as the poor and downtrodden, “are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find echo in
their heart” (Gaudium et Spes, #1). Undoubtedly, then, the identity of the Catholic Church consists in its self-understanding as a religious community sent to serve humanity.

**Catholic anthropology.** Catholic anthropology is grounded in one fundamental principle: that the human person, consisting of male and female species, endowed with a rational soul, was created in the image and likeness of God and “saved in Jesus Christ” (Vatican II, 1965/1995, Gaudium et Spes, #29; Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, 2003, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, #35; #108; #105; #36; #144; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, #1934; Gen 1:27; see also USCCB, 1986). Accordingly, for the Catholic Church, all men and women are equal in dignity. Clarifying this view, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) says that by being created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the one Lord Jesus Christ, all human beings “are called to participate in the same divine beatitude” and hence “enjoy an equal dignity” (#1934). As noted in the Church’s Social Doctrine,

*Since something of the glory of God shines on the face of every person, the dignity of every person before God is the basis of the dignity of man before other men.* Moreover, this is the ultimate foundation of the radical equality and brotherhood among all people, regardless of their race, nation, origin, or class. (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2003, #144; emphasis in original).

Communicating in this way about the human person, the Catholic Church challenges the very foundation upon which social hierarchy is grounded, noting “Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights in the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God’s
design” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, #1935). Thus willed by the Creator, the reality of human dignity is independent of society and its norms and customs.

Additionally, the Church asserts that of all creatures, only the human person was willed by God the creator for its own sake (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Gaudium et Spes*, #24). As such, human dignity is “sublime,” “universal,” and “inviolable” (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Gaudium et Spes*, #26), a reality justified by the incarnation of Jesus, the God-Man, who died to redeem all of humanity. John Paul II (1979), elaborates humanity’s exalted status in the redemptive mystery of Jesus by stating,

> Man as ‘willed’ by God, as ‘chosen’ by him from eternity and called, destined for grace and glory—this ‘each’ man, ‘the most concrete’ man, ‘the more real’; this man is in all the fullness of the mystery in which he has become a sharer in Jesus Christ, the mystery in which each one of the four thousand million human beings living on our planet has become a sharer from the moment he is conceived beneath the heart of his mother. (#13)

This phenomenologico-Christian anthropology implicitly denounces any conception of humanity as a mass. In other words, Catholic anthropology recognizes the importance of every single individual human being as unique and unrepeatable (John Paull II, 1979, #14).

In the view of the Catholic Church, because human beings derive their dignity from that of God their creator, who created them in his image, human dignity must be respected. This respect is realized when each human person acknowledges the other person “as another self, bearing in mind their neighbor’s life and the means needed for a dignified way of life” (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Gaudium et Spes*, #27; see also Buber, 1937). This respect which human beings owe to each other, according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), is a categorical imperative, being ordered by God the creator of all humanity (#1929; see also Kant, 1785/1993).
Importantly, this respect for the human person consists in the recognition of the fundamental human rights of the individual. For the Church, the rights of the human person are the basis of the moral legitimacy of any human authority, adding “by flouting them, or refusing to recognize them in its positive legislations, a society undermines its own legitimacy” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, #1930; see USCCB, 1986).

The Church teaches that disrespect toward human dignity constitutes a crime against life itself. Among the crimes against life include the following:

…murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and willful suicide, all violations of the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, physical and mental torture, undue psychological pressures; all offenses against human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, degrading working conditions where people are treated as mere tools for profit rather than free and responsible persons; all these and the like are criminal: they poison civilization; and they debase the perpetrators more than the victims and militate against the honor of the creator. (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Gaudium et Spes*, #27; see also USCCB, 1986)

Clearly, for the Catholic Church, the objectification of the human person in anyway is morally evil. Such a perspective has correspondence with Kant’s (1785/1993) maxim, which states that one should treat the human person whether in oneself or in another always as a subject and never as an object (p. 43). Moreover, it has resonance with both United States and international laws on the treatment of the human being (UNHCHR, 2006; 18 US C. pars. 2241-2244, 2012). For instance, Article 3 of the UNHCHR (2006) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states, “No
one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms."

Further, the fact that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God calls for solidarity among them. This human solidarity, in the view of the Catholic Church, can be conceptualized as “friendship or social charity” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, #1339). Without the various expressions of this human solidarity, the people of the world cannot solve its problems. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994) asserts,

Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of worker among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and people. International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this. (#1941)

Implicit in the Church’s understanding of human solidarity or social charity or friendship is the reality of common origins (created by the same God), diversity (rich and poor), and plurality of human beings. In other words, our common origins, diversity, and plurality impose on us the imperative to work together to achieve our needs. Arguably, the Catholic Church’s view of human solidarity shares commonalty with Levinas’ (1969) construct of the face of the Other. For Levinas (1969; 1985; 1998), my neighbor appears before me as the face of the Other in all his or her vulnerabilities, commanding me to do him or her no harm, but rather take responsibility for him or her. This command is an ethical one which I must obey without asking for anything in return. Understood in this way, Levinas’ construct of ethical responsibility for the Other is not radically different from the Catholic view of human solidarity since both seem to be oriented
toward the same goal, human flourishing. For the Church, all human beings are under divine obligation to take care of each other.

As referenced above, the Catholic Church considers humanity as its sole concern and purpose; therefore, its existence and mission are only legitimized to the extent that it makes humanity and its problems the focus of its lived experience. Out of the concern that the Church has for the well-being of humanity, it is consistently willing “to place herself as a bulwark against every totalitarian temptation, as she shows man his integral and definitive vocation” (Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, 2003, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, #51; USCCB, 1983; 1986). Through its proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, the grace that its sacraments offer, and its sense of solidarity with humanity, the Church seeks to raise “the dignity of the human person,” even as it “consolidates society and endows the daily activity of men [and women] with a deeper sense and meaning” (Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, 2003, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, #51).

Convinced that it knows humanity in its totality, the Catholic Church regards itself as “an expert in humanity,” that is, as a religious community that has the capacity “to understand man in his vocation and aspirations, in his limits and misgivings, in his rights and duties, and to speak a word of life that reverberates in the historical and social circumstances of human existence” (Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, 2003, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, #61; see USCCB, 1983; 1986). This anthropological expertise is demonstrated in the Church’s proclamation of its social gospel to humanity in its social ethos, thereby affecting human life and “enriching and permeating society itself with the Gospel” (Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, 2003, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, #62). In other words, while the Catholic Church is attentive to the concrete individuality of every human
person, it cannot ignore the reality of society as a composite of individual human beings whose lives are affected by social events. In this regard, the *Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* states: “For this reason, the Church is not indifferent to what is decided, brought about or experienced in society; she is attentive to the moral quality—that is, the authentically human and humanizing aspects—of social life” (Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, 2003, #62). Since the social realities of politics, the economy, work, law, and culture have spiritual implications because they affect human existence, the Church is convinced that it has a duty to speak to these social issues. As pointed out in the *Social Doctrine*, “Society in fact, with all that is accomplished within it, concerns man. Society is made up of men and women, who are “the primary and fundamental way for the Church” (#62).

As the primary and fundamental way of the Catholic Church, men and women with their “joys and hopes…grief and anguish” (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Gaudium et Spes*, #1) serve as the interpretive frame for the Church’s understanding of its ecclesial reality, that is, its life and mission. In other words, human beings and their concerns provide both the content and ultimate goal of the Church’s communicative intentionality and moral choices. Naturally then, the *Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* can claim,

Nothing that concerns the community of men and women—situations and problems regarding justice, freedom, development, relations between peoples, peace—is foreign to evangelization, and evangelization would be incomplete if it did not take into account the mutual demands continually made by the Gospel and by the concrete, personal and social life of man. Profound links exist between evangelization and human promotion.

Ultimately, as an expert in humanity, the Church exists to serve the needs of the human person, promote the dignity of the human person, and guide it to its final goal, God himself, by proclaiming a message that takes cognizance of the human person’s quotidian concerns.

**The life and communication of the American Catholic Church.** Rebuilding the American Catholic brand must involve not only a restatement of the Church’s identity and mission but also an archeology of its historical past in terms of its ecclesial life and communicative acts in the country. Beginning as a small religious community in St. Augustine, Florida, in the sixteenth century and being treated as a pariah and subversive sect until the election of J. F. Kennedy in 1960, the Catholic Church has become the single most dominant Christian denomination in the United States with a population of 75.4 million, that is, about 24.3 percent of the U.S. population (Pew, 2013). As a leading brand with compelling brand equity, the Catholic Church took several centuries to construct an appealing image in the socio-cultural milieu of the United States.

Historically, activities involved in the branding process of the Catholic Church included building parochial schools, universities and colleges, hospitals, orphanages, soup kitchens, and shelters for the homeless, as well as inculcating a spirit of patriotism in members and participating in the civil rights protests and other social movements in the United States (USCCB, 1990/1998; O’Toole, 2008; see also, Dolan, 2002; Carey, 2004). Through these activities, the American Catholic Church demonstrated that the human being was its sole purpose and concern. In other words, the U.S. Catholic Church overtime gave concrete reality to its rhetoric of Christian anthropology by the various activities it engaged in, activities that created a space for immigrants, minorities, the poor, orphan, children, and homeless to find meaning in life.
and realize the American dream (USCCB, 1990/1998, p. 215). Conceptualizing these activities as a social ministry, the USCCB (1990/1998) writes:

> Across this country and around the world, the Church’s social ministry is a story of growing vitality and strength, of remarkable compassion, courage, and creativity. It is the everyday reality of providing homeless and hungry people with decent shelter and needed help, of giving pregnant women and their unborn children life-giving alternatives, of offering refugees welcome, and so much more. It is believers advocating in the public arena for human life wherever it is threatened, for the rights of workers and for economic justice, for peace and freedom around the world, and for ‘liberty and justice for all here at home.’ It is empowering and helping poor and vulnerable people to realize their dignity in inner cities, in rural communities, and in lands far away. It is the everyday commitment of countless people, parishes and programs, local networks and national structures—a tradition of caring service, effective advocacy, and creative action. ("A Century of Social Teaching," p. 215)

This tradition of care service, effective advocacy, and creative action, according to the history of the American Catholic Church, was directed toward the human person, the fundamental way of the Catholic Church (John Paul II, 1979, # 14; USCCB, 1986). Human-centric in its orientation, the social doctrine of the Church in the United States articulated by the bishops consists of the following themes: respect for the life and dignity of the human person, the rights and responsibilities of the human person, the call to participate in family and community life, the dignity of workers, solidarity with fellow human beings, and preferential option for the poor.

To further strengthen the Catholic brand in America, the United States Catholic bishops have since 1840 periodically issued pastoral letters that clearly communicate the Church’s
understanding of the human person in the earthly city (USCCB, 1995, “Faithful for Life,” p. 681). Through these pastoral letters, the hierarchy has given communicative expressions to the Church’s efforts at promoting human dignity and progress in the country. For example, in the USCCB (1983) pastoral letter titled *The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response*, the bishops argue against nuclear proliferation because of the danger such a phenomenon could pose to human life. They note that fundamental to the question of the justification of the mass production of nuclear armament is the principle of just war, which, as a moral principle, binds all Christians. The just war principle imposes on all human beings the imperative to “do no harm to our neighbors” (USCCB, 1983, #79). Implicit in this ethical imperative to do no harm to others, the bishops contend, is the logical reality that “how we treat our enemy is the key test to whether we love our neighbor, and the possibility of killing even one human being is a prospect we should consider in fear and trembling” (USCCB, 1983, #79). The danger of the mass production of nuclear armament is that it opens up the possibility to use violence on a major scale, a situation that places every human being, the “clearest reflection of God’s presence in the world,” (#15) in constant danger. Therefore, the USCCB (1983) urges a culture of peace instead of violence, contending

No society can live in peace with itself, or with the world, without a full awareness of the worth and dignity of every human person, and of the sacredness of all human life….

When we accept violence in any form as commonplace, our sensitivities become dulled. When we accept violence, war itself can be taken for granted. Violence has many faces: oppression of the poor, deprivation of basic human rights, economic exploitation, sexual exploitation and pornography, neglect or abuse of the aged and the helpless, innumerable other acts of inhumanity. (#285)
Clearly, the making of nuclear warheads poses a danger to humanity, and thus raises moral questions: questions about respect for the dignity of the human person, questions about the sacredness of human life, questions about violence and its many manifestations, and questions about the imperative to be each other’s keeper.

Similarly, the pastoral letter titled *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*, issued in 1986, saw the bishops’ grounding their argument for fair economic policies in the principle of the dignity of the human person. For the bishops, their call for economic fairness is informed by the opening lines of Vatican II’s (1965/1995) *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*: “the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers if Christ” (cited in USCCB, 1986, #1). The persistence of these anxieties in the country, to the bishops, are indications that the promise of the American dream, conceptualized as “freedom for all persons to develop their God-given talents to the full” is yet to be fully realized in America (USCCB, 1986, #14). Such a situation, which threatens the very survival of millions of human beings even as it demeans their dignity, the leaders of the Catholic Church insist, raises a lot of concern for both civil and religious leaders like themselves. There is therefore the moral imperative for governments to respond appropriately, a response that must always address the special needs of the poor. As they write,

Decisions must be judged in light of what they do for the poor, what they do to the poor, and what they enable the poor to do for themselves. The fundamental moral criterion for all economic decisions, policies, and institutions is this: They must be at the service of all people, especially the poor. (USCCB, 1986, #24; emphasis in original)
The bishops in this letter, then, make concern for the well-being and progress of the human person the very foundation of all questions regarding economic, political, social, religious, and scientific policies. Such policies must always serve human needs, and not the other way around.

The well-being and progress of the human person must be the determining factors shaping all policies because of the sacredness of human life, a reality which makes human beings subjects and ends, and never objects or means. In fact, the sacredness of human life invites a religious reverence on the part of individuals and governments in their dealings with human beings. The bishops write: “When we deal with each other, we should do so with the sense of awe that arises in the presence of something holy and sacred” (USCCB, 1986, #28). Similarly, governments must use economic policies to “support the bonds of community and solidarity that are essential to the dignity of persons. Wherever our economic arrangements fail to conform to the demands of human dignity lived in community, they must be questioned and transformed” (USCCB, 1986, #28).

In arguing that economic policies should be evaluated on the basis of how they respond to the existential needs of the poor in society, the USCCB (1986) appeals to the principle of biblical justice. The bishops explain that, for the Bible, the “justice of a community is measured by its treatment of the powerless in society, most often described as the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger” (non-Israelite) in the land” (#38). Such people, the bishops contend, enjoy the special concern of the Bible because of “their vulnerability and lack of power” (USCCB, 1986, #38). Therefore, they deserve to be treated justly, that is, with reverence and respect since they are created in the image and likeness of God. In the words of the bishops, “Every human person is created as an image of God, and the denial of dignity to a person is a blot on this image” (USCCB, 1986, #40). To act justly is to be blessed, the bishops aver; and it
means in concrete terms “fe[eding] the hungry, g[iving] a drink to the thirsty, welcom[ing] the stranger, cloth[ing] the naked, and visit[ing] the sick and the imprisoned” (USCCB, 1986, #43; see Matt. 25:31-46). Ultimately, national economic policies must be guided by three basic ethical principles: “love of neighbor, the basic requirements of justice, and the obligations to those who are poor or vulnerable” (USCCB, 1986, #62).

Furthermore, the USCCB has specifically addressed violence against children in the United States and around the world. In “Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World,” for example, the USCCB (1991/1998) communicates its concern about children, victims of a dangerously hostile world, and pledges its unflinching support for their protection and well-being. They assert,

As pastors in a community deeply committed to serving children and their families, and as teachers of faith that celebrates the gift of children, we seek to call attention to this crisis and to fashion a response that builds on the values of our faith, the experience of our community, and the love and compassion of our people. We seek to shape a society—and a world—with a clear priority for families and children in need and to contribute to the development of policies that help families protect their children’s lives and overcome the moral, social, and economic forces that threaten their future. (p. 366)

The bishops make this commitment to children and their families because they consider themselves as experts on family issues, having “been deeply involved in meeting human, pastoral, and educational needs of children and their families” for centuries (USCCB, 1991/1998, p. 375). As experts, they, more than anyone else, are better equipped to address such violence against children and women. Importantly, they note, “A society must act to protect children and women from family violence and sexual abuse,” adding “Physical and sexual abuse of children
constitute a terrible betrayal of trust, a threat to their emotional and physical health, and a challenge for every institution that serves children” (USCCB, 1991/1998, p. 394).

Four years after the pastoral letter on children and family, the USCCB (1995/1998c) in “Walk in the Light: A Pastoral Response to Child Abuse” poignantly took on the tragedy of clergy sexual abuse in order to inform people about the nature of the problem “and to offer the spiritual, sacramental, and social resources of the Church so that healing may begin” (p. 743). Beginning with an admission of the reality of child sexual abuse by the clergy, religious, and other Church employees, the bishops pledged to deal with the problem “responsibly and in all humility” (USCCB, 1995/1998, p. 742). Importantly, they acknowledged the destructive effects of the sexual abuse of children and the vulnerable as follows:

Sexual abuse may result in physical harm such as cuts, disfigurement, and deformity.
Mental harm may include a poor self-image; pervasive feelings of guilt; feelings of isolation that lead to social withdrawal; inability to trust or to maintain friendships; inappropriate sexual behavior; inability to relate sexually with spouses; and symptoms of posttraumatic stress syndrome, such as flashbacks, addiction to alcohol or drugs, and depression. (USCCB, 1995/1998, p. 745; see also Doyle, 2011)

Besides, because children’s idea of God is based upon their experience with important adults like parents, older relatives, and pastors in their lives, sexual abuse raptures any relationship they may have with God even as it turns them against the Church (USCCB, 1995, p. 745; see Doyle, 2011). And long after they have managed to overcome the trauma, the scars of the abuse manifested in anger, betrayal, and guilt make any kind of spiritual progress among victim survivors almost impossible. Therefore, in the opinion of the bishops, while forgiveness is an
integral part of the healing process of abuse victims, the perpetrators of the crime against the Church’s innocent and vulnerable members must be held accountable.


Thus, to the question, “Who am I as a religious organization?” the Catholic Church in America must answer that it is a community with divine origins, sent to bring the good news of salvation to humanity, the fundamental and principal focus of its mission. To the Church, all
human beings are created in the divine image and are therefore equal. Created in the image of God, human beings must be respected. Therefore, throughout its existence in the United States, both in action and communication, the Catholic Church, as a corporate organization, has worked to promote human progress and dignity. Besides, the Church in America, influenced by the American sense of patriotism has not only been committed to the country’s cultural ideals and values but it has also encouraged its members to make the ultimate sacrifice by taking part in all the major wars of the country and respecting its laws. Arguably, then, what the American Catholic Church is can be located at the confluence of its ecclesiology and lived experience. In other words, as Mead (1934) suggests, one’s self identity is the product of one’s membership of an organization, also referred to as “the generalized other” (p. 154). Since the American Catholic Church is a member of both the society of the global Catholic Church and the society of the United States, its identity can be located at the nexus of both realities (see Mead, 1934; Casanova, 1992).

6.3.3.2. Step Two: Differentiating and Dissociating the Catholic Church from Abusive Clergy and Irresponsible Church Leaders

Step two of the third phase of the Isocratean rebranding model involves the process of differentiating and dissociating a person or organization seeking to rebuild its image and reputation from persons, objects, and ideas that are the source of the problems it is dealing with. In the case of the American Catholic Church, the clergy sexual abuse and its official cover-up, which led to further child endangerment, are the source of the crisis it is facing. Accordingly, in an Isocratean fashion, the Catholic Church in America must seek to demonstrate that predator priests and their episcopal supporters are not emblematic of what it is and stands for, thereby
differentiating and dissociating itself from them. To accomplish this second step, the Catholic Church in America at both the diocesan and parish levels, and indeed, in all of its institutions, including schools, hospitals, shelters, and soup kitchens, must first communicate the expectations it has of its clergy, expectations located in its ordination rites.

In the United States, there are 195 Catholic arch/dioceses and eparchies, each of which is further divided into parishes. While an arch/diocese is run by a bishop, a parish is ordinarily administered by a priest who acts as its proper pastor (Coriden et al., 1985, Canons 369, 515). Apart from priests and bishops, there are also deacons who are supposed to function as helpers of the first two orders of priesthood, that is, priests and bishops. In other words, in the Catholic Church, there are three orders of priesthood, namely, the diaconate, the episcopate, and the presbyterate, with bishops (or members of the episcopate) enjoying the fullness of priesthood.

As a religious institution, which regards itself as the bride of Christ, the Catholic Church has specific expectations of its clergy, namely, bishops, priests, and deacons, in terms of how they must conduct themselves and serve the people of God. Vatican II’s (1965/1995) *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (*Lumen Gentium*), for example, states that as ministers, bishops, priests, and deacons must serve the members of the Church in order to assist them attain salvation (#18). Besides, they must so act that they become effective representatives of Christ among men and women (#21). *Lumen Gentium* (#18), specifically requires bishops to “be shepherds in [the Church of Christ] until the end of the world” (Vatican II, 1965/1995). Finally, it is the view of *Lumen Gentium* (#26) that, to be effective ministers, bishops, priests, and deacons must “by the example of their way of life…exercise a powerful influence for the good of those on whom they are placed, by abstaining from all wrongdoing in their conduct, and doing their utmost…to make their conduct admirable” (Vatican II, 1965/1995).
Re-echoing the words of *Lumen Gentium* #26, Vatican II’s (1965/1995) *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* points out that, as leaders of the Church, bishops and priests not only must encourage the laity by the conduct of their lives, but they also must realize that “by their daily behavior and concerns they are presenting the face of the church to the world and that people judge from that the power and truth of the Christian message” (#43). Moreover, together with the religious and the generality of the people of God, that is, the entirety of the members of the Church, bishops and priests by the contours of their moral choices must give a compelling testimony to the Catholic Church as the wellspring of all virtues in the modern world (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Gaudium et Spes*, #43).

Apart from *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, *Decree on the Pastoral Office of the Bishop in the Church (Christus Dominus)* and *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (Presbyterorum Ordinis)* respectively give further elaborations to the Church’s expectations of its bishops and priests (Vatican II, 1965/1995). Regarding the Church’s expectations of bishops, *Christus Dominus* (#11) states: “Individual bishops to whose charge particular dioceses are committed, under the authority of the supreme pontiff, care for their flocks in the name of God, as their proper, ordinary and immediate pastors, teaching, sanctifying and governing them” (Vatican II, 1965/1995). In other words, as the chief executive officers of the Catholic Church, bishops in their dioceses perform the threefold function of teacher, sanctifier, and leader/administrator. As teachers and prophets, bishops proclaim the message of Christ, consisting in summoning their audiences to believe in God by their messages, messages that promote the dignity of the human person, individual liberty, family life and the education of children, as well as social progress in general (Vatican II, 1965/1995, *Christus Dominus*, #12). Bishops also play the role of sanctifiers through a life of “charity, humility and simplicity” in
their various dioceses in ways that “the ethos of the universal church of Christ may be fully reflected in them” (Vatican II, 1965-1995, *Christus Dominus*, #15). Thus, for the Catholic Church, its very identity must be reflected in the moral choices and lifestyles of bishops. Ultimately, the Church expects its hierarchy to “promot[e] social and civil progress and prosperity” by influencing the members of the Church entrusted to their care (Vatican II, 1965-1995, *Christus Dominus*, #19). To this end, bishops must work closely with public authorities by they themselves respecting and obeying laws and secular authorities and encouraging the flock entrusted to their care to do the same. As their close collaborators, priests share in all threefold functions of bishops (Vatican II, 1965-1995, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, #1). Hence, in their formation, priests are expected to be “formed as true pastors of souls, following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd” (Vatican II, 1965-1995, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, #1).

The ordination rites of the three priestly orders, that is, the diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopate, reiterate and reinforce the image of the priesthood one encounters in official Church documents. For example, during the ordination rite of deacons, the candidate is told that, following his ordination, he, as “a servant of all,” will assist both bishop and priest in the ministries of word, altar, and charity” (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Deacon,” #14). As a minister of the word and altar, the deacon performs the following functions in the Church: proclaims the Gospel, prepares the altar of sacrifice for the priest or bishop, and administers the Eucharist to the people of God; preaches to both believer and unbeliever; leads public prayer sessions; celebrates the Sacraments of Baptism and Marriage; gives viaticum to the dying and buries the dead (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Deacon,” #14). The deacon must perform all these
functions as a faithful and authentic servant of Christ, doing the will of God and serving all of humanity with “love and joy” (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Deacon,” #14). Importantly, as a doer of the Word of God that he preaches, the deacon “should be a man of good reputation, filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit,” even as he must be “above every suspicion” before God and humanity (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Deacon,” #14). Ultimately, the Church expects the deacon to be a good model to others: “By your life and character you will give witness to your brothers and sisters in faith” (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Deacon,” #14).

In the prayer of consecration following the laying of hands over the deacon, the Church, through the ordaining bishop, demonstrates its desire and hope that the deacon will be an authentic minister of Christ. Part of the prayer reads as follows:

Lord,

look with favor on this servant of yours,

whom we now dedicate to the office of deacon,

to minister at your holy altar.

Lord,

send forth upon him the Holy Spirit,

that he may be strengthened

by the gift of your sevenfold grace

to carry out faithfully the work of the ministry.

May he excel in every virtue:

in love that is sincere,
in concern for the sick and the poor,
in unassuming authority,
in self-discipline,
and in holiness of life.
May his conduct exemplify your commandments
and lead your people to imitate his purity of life.
May he remain strong and steadfast in Christ,
giving to the world the witness of a pure conscience.
May he in this life imitate your Son, who came, not to be served but to serve,
The following key points emerge from the prayer of consecration: (1) that the deacon should be strengthened by the sevenfold gift of the Spirit; (2) that the deacon must be excellent in the virtue of love, “concern for the sick and the poor,” “unassuming authority,” self-control, and a holy life; and (3) that he must be a model for others (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Deacon,” #21). These key points, emerging from a prayer by the Church on behalf of the person being ordained a deacon, provide a compelling proof that the Church envisions for its minister one whose life will be a living example of the Gospel he preaches and the Church he represents. In other words, the deacon will be like Christ, who “came, not to be served, but to serve and to lay down his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45 [New American Bible]).

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12 According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are “wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord” (# 1831).
Just like the deacon, the Catholic priest is expected to be a man of exemplary moral conduct. Reiterating Vatican II’s (1965/1995) expectations of the priest, the homily in the rite of priestly ordination says: “[As a priest], [h]e is to serve Christ the Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd in his ministry which is to make his own body, the Church, grow into the people of God, a holy temple” (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Priest, #14). In other words, the priest at his ordination is told to model his life on the Founder of the Church, Christ, in order to take up the roles of teacher, priest, and shepherd that the Church believes Christ played while on earth. As a teacher, the priest must preach the Word of God by word of mouth and by the conduct of his life. Hence, he is told by the homilist, “Let the example of your life attract the followers of Christ, so that by word and action you may build up the house which is God’s Church” (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Priest, #14). In addition, the priest will fulfill his role as one who sanctifies by the celebration of the sacraments of the Church, including the Eucharist by which he re-enacts the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, Baptism by which people are born into the Church, Penance by which people’s sins are forgiven in the name of Christ, and Anointing in which the sick are relieved and consoled. As one chosen from among the people to represent them before God, the Catholic priest as a sanctifier is called upon to perform his functions with “genuine joy and love” (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Priest,” # 14). Then, as a shepherd or leader of the community of Christ’s faithful, the priest, working in collaboration with his bishop, must unite the people of God as one family. Desiring that its priests embrace the idea of servant leadership, the Church concludes the homily by calling upon the candidate for priestly ordination to "Always remember the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and to seek out and rescue those who were lost” (International Commission
on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Priest,” #14). As in the case of diaconal ordination, the Church’s expectations of the priest articulated in the rhetorical act of preaching are further emphasized during the prayer of consecration over the priest. Here, the ordaining bishop beseeches God to grant that the priest will be an effective co-worker of the bishops in preaching in order to win people for Christ.

Finally, the ordination rite of the Catholic bishop also imagines one who will represent Christ to the people of God and the world both by word of mouth and the example of his life. Though a bishop is considered to possess the fullness of priesthood, the Catholic Church makes it clear that “The title of bishop is one not of honor but of function [or service], and therefore a bishop should strive to serve rather than to rule” (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Bishop,” #18). The bishop is expected to serve the people of God as a father, guided by divine wisdom and prudence. Besides, he is to be their prophet, sanctifier, and shepherd, thereby physically representing Christ to God’s people. In playing these roles, the bishop is required to “Pray and offer sacrifice for the people committed to your care and so draw every kind of grace for them from the overflowing holiness of Christ,” to guard and care for the people entrusted to his care as Jesus the Good Shepherd did, and “As a father and brother, to love all those whom God places in your care,” especially the poor and infirm, strangers and the homeless, as well as the vulnerable, and children (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 1991, “Ordination of a Bishop, #3). These expectations are further emphasized, as in the case of priestly and diaconal ordinations, in the prayer of consecration in which the principal consecrator articulates the Church’s express wish by asking God to make the new bishop compassionate and blameless in his ministry. That these wishes follow the examination of the candidate to be ordained as to whether he understands, embraces, and wills to embody them in
his episcopal ministry is a clear manifestation of what the Catholic Church expects of its hierarchy.

From both its teachings and liturgical life, then, the Catholic Church is explicit in its communicative intentionality for its ministers, that is, that they must live their lives in the service of humanity with particular concern for the poor, underprivileged, homeless, vulnerable, and children. Such communicative intentionality flows from the Church’s sense of its identity. In rebuilding its brand image and reputation, therefore, the Catholic Church in the United States must through its communicative acts demonstrate that both the men who abused the children and the ones who covered up the criminal act, thereby endangering the lives of so many others, are not emblematic of what it is and what it represents as a religious organization. Indeed, the actions of the abusive priests and their episcopal protectors run counter to the Catholic Church’s self-understanding and lived experience. As a religious organization, the Church considers the human person its fundamental and major concern. Such a basic ecclesial vision was what the abusive priests rejected when they exploited the trust of innocent children and sexually molested them. Worse still, as observed by Cozzens (2000), a former vicar general who dealt with abuse cases, most of the abusive priests showed concern, not for the victims, but their own future. And if they were remorseful at all, it was because they were caught (p. 123). Clearly, such men cannot be authentic witnesses of the Church of Christ. Their actions violated the human dignity of the victims, and hence, contrary to Church teaching. Thus, the abusive priests and bishops who supported them are everything the Catholic is not. Therefore, the Catholic Church, like Isocrates, must differentiate itself from the abusive priests and their protectors by stressing the many ways it works to protect the weak and vulnerable in society. As Vatican II (1965/1995) states,
Similarly, the Church encompasses with love all who are afflicted with human suffering and in the poor and afflicted sees the image of its poor and suffering Founder. It does all it can to relieve their need and in them strives to serve Christ. (*Lumen Gentium*, #8)

If serving the poor and vulnerable is the raison d’etre of the phenomenologico-ontological reality of the Catholic Church, then those who used vulnerable children as sexual objects and those, who, by their acts of commission and omission, supported them, cannot be said to be authentic representatives of the Church. The abuse of children in the Church is without a doubt gross injustice, which wounds the body of Christ, and since these children, members of the Church, have a special place in the heart of the Lord, their sufferings are also the sufferings of the Divine Redeemer, the Founder of the Church.

Moreover, the American Catholic Church must dissociate itself from the abusive men and their episcopal supporters by purging them from the ranks of its clergy and withdrawing their privileges. The next two steps of the Design and Implementation Phase should give concrete reality to the Church’s efforts to differentiate and dissociate itself from those who have caused damage to the American Catholic Brand by their moral choices. In the meantime, though, the Church must point to the heroic men and women, clergy and religious, who have sought to embody its core values and brand identity in their ministries. In every diocese and eparchy across the country, these men and women abound, whether in parish ministry, health ministry, educational ministry, or ministry to the poor and homeless. As revealed by the John Jay report (2011), the abusive clergy constituted about 4 percent of the total number of priests in the country during the period that the abuse occurred. This finding means that the Church has a solid number of clergy that it can rely on to authentically represent it. These men must be touted as
faithful and committed priests who truly embody the Catholic brand promise to care for all people, especially the poor, homeless, vulnerable, children, and the sick.

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the clergy who engaged in the criminal acts that destroyed the lives of so many children did not represent the Catholic Church in the United States, the fact still remains that these men worked for the Church and carried themselves out as its representatives. Therefore, the American Catholic Church is arguably implicated in the clergy sexual abuse, a view that not only Isocrates (353 B.C./2000) but also scholars like Bacon (2003) and McPhail (1994) will agree with. McPhail (1994), for example, argues that the issue of racism in America implicates all Americans “materially, ideologically, and spiritually” because they are all connected to each other (p. ix). Hence, in rebranding through the Isocratean model, the Catholic Church must take responsibility for the crimes and wrongs the errant men perpetrated against their innocent victims. This is because, in his defensive communication to restore his fractured image, Isocrates (353 B. C./2000) expressed his willingness to accept the harshest of punishments Athens would mete out to him if it could be proved that any of his students was guilty of the allegations made by his detractors. Thus, while in the case of Isocrates there was no proof that the students who had passed through his hands had become social liabilities, the same cannot be said of the Catholic Church in America. Indeed, for the Catholic Church, there is compelling evidence that a number of priests and other Church employees abused children, and that bishops and other Church officials, in an effort to protect the image and reputation of the Church, covered up the abuse (NRB, 2004). In light of the evidence, the Church must take responsibility for what happened to the innocent children. As the USCCB (1986) said in its introduction to Economic Justice for All,
The Church cannot redeem the world from the deadening effects of sin and injustice unless it is working to remove sin and injustice in its own life and institutions. All of us must help the Church to practice in its own life what it preaches to others…. (#24)

In other words, the views of the American bishops are no different than those expressed by the Synod of Bishops (1971) that, “While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes” (Justice for the World, #44). To be credible as a moral voice in the United States, therefore, the Catholic Church must be what it preaches by both speaking and fighting for the poor, the vulnerable, the powerless, children, women, and those on the margins of society.

6.3.3.3. Step Three: Demonstrating Goodwill toward Stakeholders

Step three of the third phase of the rebranding process should involve activities that demonstrate the goodwill of the American Catholic Church to its stakeholders, especially victims and their families, the generality of the laity, civil authorities, media, activist groups, and members of the general public, including non-Catholic Americans. Activities to be undertaken in every diocese or eparchy across the country should include the setting up of monuments to memorialize victims, the holding of annual events where victims are allowed to tell their story, holding offenders accountable, inviting public investigators to examine diocesan/eparchial archives, and organizing frequent press conferences to update publics as part of efforts to demonstrate transparency in the handling of issues relating to clergy sexual abuse. Also, the Church must not only rigorously follow the new guidelines for the formation of future priests, but it must also expand the role that the laity can play in the formation process (see USCCB, 2006, Program of Priestly Formation).
For Isocrates, one cannot win over one’s audience in any public communication without demonstrating goodwill toward them. Hence, rebuilding the Catholic brand in America must necessarily involve activities and communicative acts that display without any shadow of ambiguity the Church’s goodwill toward its stakeholders. For this dissertation, one effective way for the Catholic Church in America to demonstrate goodwill toward victims of the clergy sexual abuse is the constructing of monuments at Catholic centers in dioceses or eparchies across the nation to memorialize and publicly acknowledge the tragedy of the abuse. Scholars have acknowledged the important role that public memorials as a form of discourse play in society. Defining memorials, Veil, Sellnow, and Heald (2011) write that they are purposed “to celebrate or honor the memory of a person or event” (p. 166). Similarly, Marschall (2006) conceptualizes memorials as “places where memories converge, condense, conflict and define relationships” (p. 146). Tumolo (2015) also asserts that, through their critical role of channeling historical knowledge, public memorials ensure that people do “not forget a past they had neither experienced, known, nor remembered in the first place” (p. 1; see also Wright, 2005; Vivian, 2012; Murray, 2013, “Makeshift Memorials: Marking Time with Vernacular Remembrance”; “The Power of Collective Memory”; Denton, 2014). Simply put, public memorials “serve to preserve memories, whether of individuals, groups of people, or events” (Wolschke-Bulmahn, 2001, p. 1).

Besides, in the view of Blair and Michael (2001), public memorials are rhetorical and as such “are broadly partisan, meaningful, and influential discourses” (p. 188; see also Veil et al., 2011, p. 166). Being rhetorical, public memorials resonate with audience when they “reflect and inflect” communal and individual identities (Blair & Michael, 2001, p. 188). Importantly, not only do public memorials foreground communal and individual values, but they also “focus,
shape, and amplify particular values in many ways, forming and advocating specific constructions of the community and the individual” (Blair & Michael, 2001, p. 189). Apart from reflecting and inflecting identity, public memorials also invite critical engagement from their audiences, calling upon them “to think, to pose questions, to examine our experiences” as they relate to them as forms of discourse (Blair & Michael, 2001, p. 189; see also Blair & Michael, 2000; 2011). Agreeing with Blair and Michael (2001), Veil et al. (2011) assert that public memorials function as “renewal discourses” that aim to engender healing, reconnect audiences with societal core values, and ultimately bring about learning (p. 171). Similarly, Gallagher and LaWare (2010) write that the rhetoricity of public memorials consists in their ability to arouse memory “by referencing significant individuals, events, and experiences in a community’s history” (p. 89). Concluding from all these scholarly perspectives, this dissertation asserts that public memorials are therefore epideictic rhetorical enactments that not only make present past events but also foreground and celebrate communal values, thereby strengthening and deepening a sense of identity for both present and future generations.

Thus, arguably the construction of memorials for the victims of the clergy sexual abuse will give credence to the American Catholic Church’s rhetoric of remorse and serve not only to repair the harm done to victims but will also constitute an effort by the religious organization to publicly acknowledge their sufferings and honor them (see Janssen, 2013). As epideictic rhetorical acts, the memorials will constitute the Church’s public acknowledgement and ownership of the abuse, constitute an effort to honor and restore the stolen humanity of the victims, and constitute an unshakable ecclesiastical commitment to never again destroy the life and future of innocent children. Hence, the setting up of monuments to memorialize the victims of the clergy sex abuse will be playing the same function as the one put up by Volkswagen in
Germany (see Janssen, 2013). According to Janssen (2013), in its efforts to communicate a new image as an organization with a dark past, Volkswagen constructed a memorial for those who worked for the company as slave laborers during the Second World War. Such organizational performative rhetoric together with the publication of victims’ memoirs helped to persuade activist groups about Volkswagen’s willingness accept responsibility for the past injustices. Commenting on the company’s effort to institutionalize a culture of remembrance and the purification of memory, Janssen (2013) writes, “The efforts to remember the past are presented to show respect for victims as well as to preserve the memory of forced labor and the Holocaust for present and future generations. ‘The Place of Remembrance,’ would ‘ensure that the company’s history is remembered’” (p. 76). For the Catholic Church in America, constructing a memorial in every diocese or eparchy for the victims of the clergy sexual abuse will not only serve as a public acknowledgement of wrongdoing, but, per the Isocratean model of rebranding, it will also demonstrate the Church’s effort to identify with the victims in terms of sharing in the burden of their emotional and physical scars and wounds.

Importantly, in memorializing the sufferings of the abuse victims, the Catholic Church in America will be engaging in rhetorical performativity that is consistent with its phenomenologico-ontological reality as a religious community that never forgets the sufferings of its innocent members. Indeed, the case of the abuse victims should be no different from that of the babies killed on the orders of Herod on learning about the birth of Jesus as the future King of Israel (Matthew 2:16-18). The Catholic Church celebrates those infants, also known as the Holy Innocents, as martyrs on December 28 in the octave of Christmas on the understanding that they died in place of Jesus and in the process witnessed to him by the shedding of their blood (see John Paul, 1994; Vigil, 2000). Such honor the universal Church shows the Holy Innocents every
year is consistent with its doctrine of the Christian martyrs. According to Catholic doctrine, martyrs were holy people who paid the ultimate price for their faith in Jesus Christ. The Church honors these men and women through annual liturgical acts and/or turning important places that have connections with them into pilgrimage sites. Hence, by memorializing the victims of the clergy sexual abuse and their sufferings at the hands of the priests and other Church employees, the American Catholic Church will be putting the victims on par with recognized martyrs honored for making the ultimate sacrifice. These children suffered the loss of their human dignity, with some literally and/or metaphorically losing their lives not because they did anything wrong, but because they trusted the men the Church had put in their lives as their priests and spiritual fathers (USCCB, 1995/1998; Doyle, 2011). By the symbolico-rhetorical act of memorializing them, the Catholic Church in America will be honoring and identifying with the victims, thereby choosing to stand with them.

In addition to the construction of the victim memorials, an organizational action that the American Catholic Church can undertake to demonstrate goodwill toward victims of the clergy abuse is the organization of annual events at diocesan and parochial levels to allow victims to tell their stories and share their experiences with fellow members of the Church and the general public. Often because victims are treated as adversaries rather than members who suffered abuse and injustice at the hands of abusive priests and the hierarchy, they are not given the space by the institutional Church to tell their own stories (see Grimes, 2006). To demonstrate that it is interested in the welfare of victims, the Church must provide communicative spaces for victims to tell the world what happened to them and how their lives have been affected. In allowing these victims to tell their stories at special annual events organized in their honor, the American Catholic Church will be taking a leaf out of the book of Volkswagen, which, as Janssen (2013)
reports, sponsored scholars to publish on the company’s use of slave labor during the Second World War, and survivors who worked for the company as slave laborers to write their memoirs. Commenting on how such a move helped authenticate victims’ suffering and set the record straight, Janssen (2013) writes,

By publishing personal memoirs and academic work devoted to forced labor, Volkswagen creates accountability for its past and engages in a reconciliatory form of acknowledgement that includes diverse voices and experiences. It accounts for the emotional and immediate dimension of victims’ memory, as it sets the public record straight, affirms, and adds authority to the victims’ experiences by making them publicly available. (p. 75)

For the victims of the clergy sexual abuse, being allowed to tell their stories will be a compelling gesture by the Church that it respects their voice as authentic and worthy to be heard. Accordingly, the gesture will signal to the survivors of the abuse that the Catholic Church has their interest at heart and is determined to assist them to heal and move on with their lives. As Grimes (2006) argues, the reason most victims took the Church to court was that there was no avenue for them to talk to its officials. Therefore, by organizing annual events at which victims are provided the communicative space to share their experiences, bitter as they are, the Church will be showing victims in a powerful way that it acknowledges the veracity and facticity of what happened to them.

Another rebranding move the American Catholic Church can make to win the goodwill of the innocent victims of the clergy sexual abuse and other stakeholders will be to hold predator priests and their accomplices in the episcopacy accountable. Such a course of action should be a moral imperative and consistent with the prescriptions of the Church’s Code of Canon Law.
What makes the sanctions the Church must impose on the predators and their supporters imperative is that most of these men could not be successfully prosecuted as a result of the expiration of the statutes of limitations in most of the states where the crimes of child sexual molestation and cover-up had occurred; hence, although there was overwhelming evidence for wrong doing, state prosecutors could not get the law to punish the perpetrators of the abuse (Pennsylvania Grand Jury I, 2005). Such a let-off has deepened the perception among a majority of Americans that the Catholic Church is a corporate organizational person that can flout the laws of the country with impunity. Because the lack of prosecutions of the perpetrators has cast the Church in a negative light, giving it a bad name and a bad image, the only option left to it as a corporate entity is to hold the abusive priests and their bishop supporters accountable by imposing on them appropriate canonical sanctions. By imposing punitive canonical sanctions on the abusive priests and their episcopal supporters, the American Catholic Church will be dissociating itself from them in the manner of Isocrates and hopefully re-legitimizing itself as a responsible institutional citizen (see Hearit, 1995).

Each of the Catholic dioceses and eparchies where official cover-ups of clergy sexual abuse took place should immediately invoke Canon 1389, par. 2, which states: “One who through culpable negligence illegitimately places or omits an act of ecclesiastical power, ministry or function which damages another person is to be punished with a just penalty” (Coriden, Green, & Heintschel, 1985). The invocation of such a canon becomes even more crucial when one considers the fact that scholars like Doyle (2011), the NRB (2004), and the USCCB (1991; 1995) itself have acknowledged the permanent psycho-social damage sexual abuse causes victims. For the present dissertation, the just punishment that canon 1389 stipulates must be meted out to ecclesiastical authorities guilty of the negligence that resulted in serious or
permanent damages should include but not be limited to forced resignation, withdrawal of ecclesiastical courtesies, prohibition from presiding over public liturgical acts, and official publication of the names of guilty bishops on the websites of dioceses where abuses took place.\textsuperscript{13}

By taking such punitive measures against members of the hierarchy whose acts of omission and commission jeopardized the lives of so many innocent children and young people, vulnerable members of the Church and future leaders of the United States of America, the Catholic Church in this country will be aligning its actions with its communication, thereby effectively persuading its stakeholders of its determination and willingness to change. To the victims of the abuse, in particular, this singular act will provide compelling evidence that the Church has their interest at heart and is willing to identify with them. The result is that the Catholic brand in America will begin to discover the moral voice it lost because of the abuse and cover-ups.

With regard to the predator priests themselves, the Catholic Church in America can apply the following canonical sanction: “If a cleric has otherwise committed an offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue with force or threats or publicly or with a minor…the cleric is to be punished with just penalties, including dismissal from the clerical state…” (Coriden, \textit{et al.}, 1985, Canon 1395, par. 2). In order for the Church to prove to victims and indeed the generality of Americans that it is outraged by the horrendous crime of sexual abuse and that it shares in their pain and suffering, it must apply this canonical sanction to any member of its clergy, living or dead, found guilty. In the case of abusive priests who are dead, the Church, in an effort to rebuild its brand as a caring, charitable, inclusive, law-abiding, and responsible corporate citizen, must publish on the websites of their respective dioceses their criminal and immoral acts. Then for those who are still alive, whether they are serving jail terms

\textsuperscript{13} This dissertation thus welcomes Pope Francis’ creation of a tribunal to try Church officials whose actions and inactions facilitated the culture of child abuse in the Church (see Povoledo, & Goodstein, 2015).
or not, they must be expelled from the priesthood, and communication to that effective relayed to the general public.

Also, transparency on the part of the American Catholic Church can go a long way to secure the goodwill of American society toward it. The Church continues to suffer credibility deficit because of the perennial perception of being secretive and economical with the truth as regards the sexual abuse by clergy and its official cover-up. One can cite the case of the Archdioceses of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and St. Paul-Minneapolis, where, in spite of assurances from officials that the welfare of children and young people were a priority, recent revelations have shown that the handling of alleged pedophilia cases was unacceptable (Pennsylvania Grand Jury II, 2011; Hurdle & Eckholm, July 24, 2012; Goodstein, Sept. 7, 2012; Kim, Powers, & Ryan, Jan. 21, 2013; Smith & Goodstein, Jun. 15, 2015). It is the strong view of this dissertation that the Church can help rebuild its brand as a credible moral voice and a caring religious organization at that by being proactively transparent in terms of allowing independent investigators to go through files of priests and Church officials accused of the crime of sexual abuse and institutional cover-ups. Besides, at least four times a year, every diocese and eparchy can call a press conference where the general public through the media is updated on the specific efforts the Church is making to root out sexual abuse by its clergy. Such openness will signal a complete turnaround in terms of the organizational culture of dealing with sexual abuse, hopefully building up trust between the Church and its stakeholders.

Finally, the Catholic Church can win back the trust of its key publics and thus gain “social legitimacy” (Hearit, 1995, p. 2) if it reviews its formation program for future priests by allowing lay people to play an active role in the way seminarians are trained. Indeed, a look at the document, *Program of Priestly Formation* (USCCB, 2006), which gives directions for
priestly formation, reveals a very minimal involvement of the laity in priestly formation in the Catholic Church. This limited lay involvement consists in their only serving on seminary boards (see USCCB, 2006, *Program of Priestly Formation*, # 300), which play merely advisory roles in the priestly formation process. Yet for the Church to win back the trust of the laity in regard to the quality of the men sent to serve them, it must ensure that the people of God are allowed to be deeply involved in the four main pillars of the priestly formation program, namely, “human formation,” “spiritual formation,” “intellectual formation,” and “pastoral formation” (USCCB, 2006). To this end, it is the view of this dissertation that, apart from the recommendation of the local parish priest in the admission process, the views of at least three respectable people in a candidate’s parish must also be sought. In other words, during the selection process, the local ordinary and seminary faculty should seek not only the views of a candidate’s local pastor but also those of some lay members of the parish community. Also, opportunities should be created for selected members of the people of God to share their experiences and expectations with those in formation. Hopefully by engaging the seminarians in such formal fora, the laity will be able to give them a sense of what awaits them in their future ministry.

Moreover, during the summer when seminarians are assigned to various parishes for the opportunity to have a foretaste of parish life, they should be guided by a committee made up of the priests and some selected members of the parish. This committee, chaired by the local pastor, will guide the seminarian(s) assigned to them in terms of how to professionally and pastorally interact with the faithful, particularly children and young people. At the end of the internship period, the seminarian should be evaluated by all members of the committee. Thus, ultimately, the promotion of a seminarian in formation from one stage of the process to another should be based on the evaluative views of both clergy and laity. This dissertation hopes that the
collaborative efforts of both clergy and laity in the priestly formation process will help seminarians develop an effective “communicative ethic of care” as professionals, who in ministry, will “protect and promote the good” of the Church (Fritz, 2013; see also Taylor, 1998).

Finally, this dissertation is of the view that the psychological evaluation of candidates and seminarians must be complemented with annual sexual assault training. Such training will expose them to the legal implications of sexual harassment and assault and the legal course of action they invite. It is the hope of this project that by undergoing the training throughout their formation period, future priests will become sensitive to the harm that sexual assault in all its manifestations has on victims, and, accordingly, not only stay away from it but also protect children and vulnerable people from it. In other words, continual sexual assault training has the potential to secure the future priests’ identification with and commitment to the Church as a caring, charitable, inclusive, and ethically responsible organization (see Burke, 1969; Cheney & Tompkins, 1987).

6.3.3.4. Step Four: Making Moral Choices to Gain Advantage with Stakeholders

The fourth step in phase three of the brand rebuilding process should involve making moral choices that give the Catholic brand an advantage in the eyes of its stakeholders. In other words, the Catholic Church in the United States must make critical ethical decisions relative to the sexual abuse scandal and official cover-ups that enhance its public image as a caring, charitable, and responsible religious organization. One effective moral choice the Church can make is to engage in the communicative act of public confession and reconciliation to demonstrate its remorse for the abuse. This act of public confession and reconciliation in the
brand rebuilding process can draw on the Catholic Church’s own understanding of confession and penance.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), “confession” has two senses, that is, the disclosure of one’s sins to a priest, and “acknowledgement and praise—of the holiness of God and his mercy toward sinful” humanity (#1424). As a process, the act of confession and reconciliation begins with “the conversion of the heart, interior conversion” which is then manifested in “visible signs, gestures and works of penance” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, #1430). Interior conversion, according to the *Catechism* (1994), “is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed” (#1431; Hellwig, 1984). Conceptualized as a return to God, internal conversion then, in the view of Hellwig (1984), goes beyond the Greek idea of *metanoia*, usually translated as repentance (p. 14). Instead, internal conversion is much more fully captured by the Hebrew word *shuv*, literally meaning “again,” but which nevertheless in a concrete way conveys the “physical sense of returning, retracing one’s steps, reversing one’s direction” (Hellwig, 1984, p. 14). If internal conversion involves a retracing of one’s steps, then to sin is to make a wrong turn away from one’s ultimate goal, that is, God (see Hellwig, 1984, p. 14). Converting internally, thus involves “the desire and resolution to change one’s life, with hope in God’s mercy and trust in the help of his grace” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, #1431).

To return to God in the process of repentance or confession, not only involves disclosure of one’s sins but also true contrition or sorrow for sins and the acceptance of the punishment due to the sins committed. As the *Catechism* (1994) puts it, “Contrition is ‘sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again’” (#1450). True
confession, thus, must be accompanied by authentic actions of breaking with one’s wayward past and repairing the damage done. Understood in this way, confession of sins, even when stripped of its deep spiritual meaning, has significance for human relationships. According to the Catechism (1994), confession “frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission man looks squarely at the sins he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens himself again to God and communion with the Church” (#1455). To confess in Catholic sense, then, is to take ownership of one’s wrongful moral choices, show remorse for them, and accept the consequences for the wrongs done, all in an effort to return to the good graces of God and those directly affected. John Paul II (1984) acknowledges the correlation between confession and reconciliation when he asserts that “In the concrete circumstances of sinful humanity, in which there can be no conversion without the acknowledgement of one’s own sin, the [C]hurch’s ministry of reconciliation intervenes in each individual case with a precise penitential purpose” (Penance and Reconciliation, #13; Morrill, 2014). Thus, reconciliation, whether between God and a human being or between two human beings, must of necessity be preceded by the offending party openly naming the wrongful act, asking for forgiveness, and being willing to accept responsibility for the wrongful or sinful act.

Accepting the consequences of wrongful moral choices means in Catholic sense making “satisfaction” for the sins committed, particularly where one’s choices directly affected others (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, # 1459). In this light, “One must do what is possible in order to repair the harm (e.g., return goods, restore the reputation of someone slandered, pay compensation for injuries). Simple justice requires as much” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, #1459). This view means that confession and its anticipation of forgiveness do not proscribe justice (see Chaplin, 2013; see Niebuhr, 1957). This idea that justice and forgiveness

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are not mutually exclusive is argued by John Paul II (1980) in his *Dives in Misericordia*, where he writes,

> In no passage of the Gospel message does forgiveness, or mercy as its source, mean indulgence towards evil, towards scandals, towards injury or insult. In any case, reparation for evil and scandal, compensation for injury, and satisfaction for insult are conditions for forgiveness. (# 14; see also Niebuhr, 1957; NRB, 2004).

Benedict XVI (2009) appropriates this idea of the close connection between justice and mercy by arguing that justice is implicated in mercy or the act of love, as one cannot love or freely give that which belongs to one to the other without first being willing to give to the other that which truly belongs to him or her (#6; see Niebuhr, 1957). In the view of John Paul II (1980), “Fulfillment of the conditions of justice is especially indispensable in order that love may reveal its own nature” (#14). Therefore, the purpose of the confession being proposed in the process of rebranding the Catholic Church in America is not to insulate the perpetrators of the crimes of clergy sexual abuse and official cover-ups from the full rigors of the law. Rather, as justice by its nature serves as the bulwark of forgiveness even as forgiveness “has the power to confer justice a new content,” the objective of the public communicative act of confession is to secure genuine reconciliation between the Church and abuse victims on one hand, and the Church and society at large on the other (John Paul II, 1980, #14; Niebuhr, 1957).

Indeed, the Catholic Church believes that the God it serves is a “God of justice…who loves justice…and delights in it” (USCCB, 1986, *Economic Justice for All*, # 38). This God of justice not only requires that all peoples embrace justice but he also goes the extra mile to ensure justice for those living on the margins of society, that is, the poor and powerless. As the USCCB (1986) has noted, “the justice of a community is measured by its treatment of the powerless in
society, most often described as the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger” (#21). This understanding is an iteration of the teaching of the *Catechism* (1994) which says, “Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation” (#1928). Justice, in the view of the Catholic Church, does not only suggest a fair balance but also “what is right or what should happen” (USCCB, 1986, #22). Thus, a just person is someone who has the right kind of relationship with God and his or her neighbor.

Besides being a God of justice, God is a God of mercy, a reality which stands out in great relief in the Bible (John Paul II, 1980, *Dives in Misericordia*). God expresses his mercy in the face of human suffering by showering his love on sinful humanity and thereby restoring to it its lost dignity caused by wrongful moral choices (see Luke 15:14-32). The Catholic Church, the universal sacrament of salvation, the spouse of Christ, believes that it is its mission to proclaim the mercy of God by “professing it…as a salvific truth of faith and as necessary for life in harmony with faith,” as well as by “seeking to introduce it and to make it incarnate in the lives both of her faithful and as far as possible in the lives of all people of good will” (John Paul II, 1980, #12). For John Paul II (1980), by preaching God’s mercy and leading people to it, the Church gives credence to its phenomenologico-ontological reality as the bride of Christ (#13). Founded on the mercy of God, the Church not only teaches human beings to ask for and receive God’s mercy in Jesus Christ, but she also enjoins all its children to practice mercy (John Paul II, 1986, #14).

As a profound expression of divine love, mercy or forgiveness in the human realm benefits both the giver and the receiver, a view expressed by John Paul II (1980) thus: “An act of merciful love is only really such when we are deeply convinced at the moment that we perform it
that we are at the same time receiving mercy from the people who are accepting it from us” (#14; see Benedict XVI, 2009). This is because the interpersonal communicative space opened by the offer and acceptance of mercy allows both giver and recipient to come face to face with their human value and dignity and embrace them, a reality that human justice alone cannot offer since it is “limited to the realm of objective and extrinsic goods” (John Paul II, #14; see Benedict XVI, 2009). John Paul II (1980) elaborates the significance of mercy in human relationships this way:

Thus, mercy becomes an indispensable element for shaping mutual relationships between people, in a spirit of deepest respect for what is human, and a spirit of mutual brotherhood. It is impossible to establish this bond between people, if they wish to regulate their mutual relationships solely according to the measure of justice…. Let us remember, furthermore, that merciful love also means the cordial tenderness and sensitivity so eloquently spoken of in the parable of the prodigal son. (John Paul, 1980, #14)

As an act of love, mercy humanizes our social existence and deepens our “interpersonal and social relationships” (John Paul II, 1980, #14).

Convinced that mercy is indispensable to the flourishing of all relationships, the Catholic Church makes the proclamation of “the truth of God’s mercy” an integral part of its mission on earth (John Paul, 1980, #15). In addition, the Church endeavors to live this mercy it talks about by “practic[ing it] towards people through people, considering it “an indispensable condition for solicitude for a better and “more human world, today and tomorrow” (John Paul II, 1980, #15; see Tillard, 1992).

Having examined the Church’s understanding of confession, reconciliation, justice, and mercy, and their importance in its life and that of humanity in general, I now address the
justification for proposing a communal confession as part of the rebranding process, considering the fact that as the spouse of Christ, the Church is holy and, therefore, does not sin (Kasper, 2015). The question is, if only 4 percent of the total number Catholic clergy were involved in the clergy sexual abuse and that not every bishop participated in the cover up (see NRB, 2004; John Jay College, 2011), then what is the justification for a communal act of confession on the part of every Catholic diocese in the country? This question can be answered by drawing on the documents Reconciliation and Penance (John Paul II, 1984), Incarnationis Mysterium/Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 (John Paul II, 1998), and Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past (International Theological Commission, 1999).

In the post-synodal apostolic exhortation Reconciliation and Penance, John Paul II (1984), calling on all Catholics to embrace the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of their commitment to the Catholic faith, observes that while all sinful acts are personal, they do have social implications in view of the reality of human solidarity (see also Hinze, 2000). The fact of human solidarity brings to the fore the indubitability of social sin. Explaining the facticity of social sin, John Paul II (1984) writes,

To speak of social sin means in the first place to recognize that, by virtue of human solidarity which is as mysterious and intangible as it is real and concrete, each individual’s sin in some way affects others…. Consequently, one can speak of communion of sin, whereby a soul that lowers itself through sin drags down with itself the church and, in some way, the whole world. In other words, there is no sin, not even the most intimate and secret one, the most strictly individual one, that exclusively concerns the person committing it. (#16)
Besides, John Paul II (1984) believes that sinful acts, that is sins directed against one’s neighbor, including “every sin against justice in interpersonal relationships,” and sins against the fundamental rights of fellow human beings such as the right to life, the right to the free exercise of religion, the right to be respected as a human being, and the right to participate in the common good can be properly conceived as social sins (#16). From this perspective, then, it can be logically asserted that the Catholic Church in America bears responsibility for the crimes committed by a section of its clergy. This view of the communal dimension of sin is consistent with that of Hellwig (1984), who argues that “To sin is always to damage the fabric of the community and cause rifts that call for reconciliation within the community” (p. 65).

John Paul II (1998), issuing the bull declaring the Great Jubilee of 2000, expounds on his understanding of the construct of social sin. The Pontiff on that occasion noted that, although the Church is holy, being populated by both myriads of saints, living and dead, it is still a sinful human community in virtue of the sins committed by some of its children (John Paul II, 1998, #11; see Vatican II, 1965/1995, Lumen Gentium, #8; Kasper, 2015). These sinful children of the Catholic Church, history proves, were responsible for “events which constitute a counter-testimony to Christianity” (John Paul II, 1998, #11). Fully ensconced in the bosom of the Church, these sinful children are an integral part of the ecclesial community, and hence by their bond with other members within the Body of Christ, their sins affect everyone else. As John Paul II (1998) puts it,

    Because of the bond which unites us to one another in the Mystical Body, all of us, though not personally responsible and without encroaching on the judgment of God who alone knows every heart, bear the burden of the errors and faults of those who have gone
before us. Yet we too, sons and daughters of the Church, have sinned and have hindered
the Bride of Christ from shining forth in all her beauty. (#11)

Thus, that just as we share in the merits of the saints, so do we bear responsibility for sins
committed by children of the Church, living and dead; hence, the Church is both a communion of
saints and a communion of sinners. Commenting on John Paul II’s (notion of communal or social
sins, Kasper (2015), writes that, because the Church is made up of human beings, it is capable of
making mistakes and “get[ting] stuck in behaviours, structures and mentalities which are
expressions of being entangled and caught in sin” (p. 171). As a communion of sinners,
therefore, the Church, as noted by Vatican II (1965/1995), is in need of constant renewal
(Gaudium et Spes, #43; Ratzinger, 1985). In fact, for Kasper (2015), the very logic of the
Church’s holiness necessitates constant renewal and reform in order to guarantee it credibility in
the world (p. 173).

The notion of shared responsibility for the sins was taken up and given further
articulation by the International Theological Commission in 1999 following the negative reaction
that Cardinal Baum’s 1998 “Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000,” in which he
called for a purification of memory for the sins of the past, received from a section of the
Catholic Church. Affirming John Paul II (1994) and Baum’s (1998) main argument of the
logicality of social sin with regard to the Church, the Commission states,

The Church, which embraces her sons and daughters of the past and then of the present,
in a real and profound communion, is the sole Mother of Grace who takes upon herself
also the weight of past faults in order to purify memory and to love the renewal of heart
and life according to the will of the Lord. (International Theological Commission, 1999,
Introduction; see also John Paul II, 1984, # 33)
Using Biblical analogy, the Commission goes on to argue that, within the Church as a corporate entity, one witnesses “the good grain always remains inextricably mixed with the chaff; holiness stands side by side with infidelity and sin” (International Theological Commission, 1999, #1.4). These sinners, the Commission argues, are also true children of the Catholic, by virtue of their Baptism, a sacrament by which new members are incorporated into the Church (International Theological Commission, #3). In the view of Hellwig (1984), just as all the members of the Catholic community bear responsibility for the sins of fellow members, so are they all required to participate in all efforts toward repentance and reconciliation. As she writes, “The work of repentance and reconciliation is the work of the whole community,” and therefore, confronted with the clergy sexual abuse and official cover-up, every member of the Church “must pray and mourn and fast for the sins that break the fabric of the community and all must mediate the possibilities of repentance and conversions for one another” (pp. 65-66; also see Bruce, 2014).

Thus far, it is clear that proposing a public communicative act of confession and reconciliation as part of the brand-rebuilding process is not inconsistent with authentic Catholic doctrine. In fact, for the Church, confession and reconciliation are part and parcel of her pilgrimage journey to its final goal. Confession, it can be argued, is a kairotic moment for the Church to take ownership of the scandals caused by its children, leaders who should have known better, but who by their moral choices have given counter-testimony to the authentic identity of the Church (see Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, 1998, “We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah,” #1; John Paul II, 1994). In making the painful moral choice to confess publicly the tragedy of the clergy sexual abuse and official cover-ups, the Church not only takes ownership of the crimes committed, but it willingly makes itself “vulnerable to the humanity” of the abused victims and other stakeholders (see Rodriguez & Chawla, 2010, p. xxi).
committing to atoning for the wrongs of the past, the American Catholic Church will be making her own the words the words of John Paul II (1994):

We would risk causing the victims of the most atrocious deaths to die again if we do not have an ardent desire for justice, if we do not commit ourselves to ensure that evil does not prevail over good as it did for millions of the children of the Jewish people. (#3)

As an ecclesial community whose existential reality is grounded in concern for the human person, especially the poor, powerless, and oppressed, no sacrifice is too great to make in order to compensate for the tragedy of the clergy sexual abuse. Scholars have pointed out the danger for organizations dealing with crisis to acknowledge wrongdoing, as such a public communicative act exposes them to “legal liability” (Tyler, 1997). For this dissertation, though, painful and risky as the public communicative act of confession and reconciliation may be, it has the potential to secure genuine reconciliation between the Church and victims of the abuse, a view Ormerod and Ormerod (1995; see also Rosenblatt, 2004; Grimes, 2006) agree to. These authors have observed that a majority of abuse victims are interested, not in monetary gain, but in the Church’s honest acknowledgement of their sufferings at the hands of the abusive priests and holding them accountable (Ormerod & Ormerod, 1995, p. 77). Moreover, they point out that while court litigations over the clergy abuse cause further psychological trauma to victims and deepen their pain, alternative dispute resolution approaches such as the one being proposed here have the capacity to restore victims’ mental health and sense of worth, even as they create opportunities for the offenders to atone for wrongful acts (Rosenblatt, 2004; Grimes, 2006). How should this proposed public confession be organized?

This dissertation suggests that the public act of confession should be preceded by a private meeting among the officials of every diocese or eparchy where the abuse and official
cover-ups occurred, abuse victims, lay members of the Church involved in the process of victim healing, law enforcement, and any other individuals with a stake in the matter. At this preliminary meeting, discussions should be about the role that all important actors in the drama of the clergy abuse will play during the public event. Importantly, this preliminary meeting (as well as the public event itself) must be framed by a spirit of dialogue which allows all participants to engage each other on an equal footing (see Buber, 1937; Habermas, 1984; Dean, 1996; Levinas, 1969; 1985; Bakhtin, 1981; Schrag, 1997; 2013). In Isocratean terms, dialogic engagement consists in allowing one’s audience members the freedom to either accept or reject what one has to say at the table of discussion. In other words, no preconditions should be set for the communicative encounters between the Church and abuse victims as has been witnessed in some dioceses that adopted alternative dispute resolution approaches to handling the abuse cases (see Rosenblatt, 2004, pp. 13-14). Approaching this meeting with a dialogic spirit means that participants at the meeting are willing to embrace “otherness, polyphony, conflict, and diverse receptions” at the table of reconciliation, recognizing the views of each other as a “gift” (John Paul II, 1995, *Ut Unum Sint*, #28; Kasper, 2015, p. 56; see Doxtader, 2001; Hatch, 2006; Schrag, 2013; see also Rosenblatt, 2004; Grimes, 2006). As John Paul II (1995) beautifully puts it, “Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an ‘exchange of gifts’” (#28). Conceptualized as a gift, dialogue then becomes a process by which participants seek to realize their authentic selves in the act of self-giving (John Paul, 1995, #28). In seeking to reconcile with its children who suffered the abuse, the American Catholic Church must be reminded not only by the words of John Paul II (1995) but also those of Hatch (2006), who writes that reconciliation is not achieved through unilateral efforts but rather through “a dialogic process of respecting and responding to the Other amid the shared project of relational healing”
(see also Bakhtin, 1981; Buber, 1937). As both victimizer and victim engage in dialogic communication in the process of reconciliation, authentically sharing their stories in the tragedy of the abuse, they will hopefully be able to transcend the division that the sad incident created between them and gradually build a future relationship of trust (see Hatch, 2006; Jansen, 2012).

Crucially, too, during the preliminary meeting, participants should agree on a respected lay member of the Church to act as the mediator between victimizer and victim in the reconciliation process. Since the Church in the present circumstance is the offending party, the final decision on who should play the mediating role must be made by the abuse victims (see Koesten & Rowland, 2004, p. 73). According to Janssen (2012), victims of abuses rediscover their lost dignity and find healing when they participate in a reconciliation process from a position of strength. As she puts it,

[Reconciliation] is thus not simply a process in which one party redeems itself and makes up for the past and the other party forgives. Instead, discourses of reconciliation provide a space, in which victims and perpetrators negotiate the means to do so, while acknowledging the victims’ agency to demand what is necessary to reconcile and forgive the past. This approach is oriented towards restoring the dignity and honor of the Other, a recognition of interconnectedness and interrelation, and forgiveness based on repentance instead of guilt. (p. 22; see Hatch, 2006)

By agreeing to victims’ demands at the table to reconciliation, the Church as a powerful corporate entity will be creating a level-playing field for all parties and giving recognition to victims as rational agents with the ability to make important decisions for their wellbeing.

Following the private meeting, a public prayer session should be held, where representatives of the clergy and other church officials publicly confess to the sins of child
molestation and cover-ups and then ask victims and their families represented at the event for forgiveness. This act of publicly acknowledging responsibility for the clergy sexual abuse and episcopal cover-ups which further endangered the lives of many more children is critical in the reconciliation process. Like the abuse-victim memorials, the public communicative act of confession, as a process of atonement in which the Church recounts the wrongful act perpetrated against the innocent victims, acknowledges the harm caused, begs for forgiveness, and commits to making up for the sins of its officials, constitutes a rhetorical performance indicating the Church’s willingness and determination to renew its ways and work to mend the broken relationship between itself and the victims (see Koesten & Rowland, 2004). The act of confession together with the construction of the victim memorials, the holding of annual events to commemorate the abuses, the sanctioning of offending officials, the payment of compensation, and the offering of pastoral care will all combine to provide a compelling testimony to the Church’s willingness to reform (Koesten & Rowland, 2004, p. 74). As Koesten and Rowland (2004) put it, as an organization dealing with the sexual abuse crisis, the Catholic Church in America “can use words to demonstrate repentance and combine those words with substantive actions to prove commitment to atone for past actions” (p. 74). Moreover, because the public communicative act of confession consists in truth telling, it will authenticate victims’ abuse stories and put balm on their scarred and painful memories.

It is important that the lay mediator, already chosen at the preliminary meeting, not an ordained minister, preside at this event, as previous reconciliation services held as part of diocesan efforts to heal the wounds of the clergy abuse created emotional and psychological discomfort for some of the victims (see Grayland, 2004; Koesten & Rowland, 2004). To ensure that victims and their families feel comfortable and welcome, the public event of confession and
reconciliation, presided over by the lay mediator, can take the form of a prayer meeting or Bible service which begins with a greeting, appropriate scripture readings, exhortation by the presider, an invitation to the offender to speak, a response from the victims or their representative(s), an intervention by the presider and any other person or group as previously planned, a public gesture of reconciliation, a closing prayer, dismissal, and a meal. This model of public communicative act of confession and reconciliation, which draws on Hellwig’s (1984) idea of alternative communal penance service, may be modified to meet local needs. Hellwig (1984) notes that a penance service organized like a prayer or Bible group meeting that is not overseen by an authority figure can create an atmosphere of “friendship,” “trust and common faith” where “people are able to confide their unanswered questions, their anxieties, their frustrations and resentments and sufferings to one another” (Hellwig, 1984, p. 110). Authentic healing that comes from penance, in the view of Hellwig (1984), is not contingent on the presence of an ordained minister; rather, such healing “depends on charity, humility, honesty and welcome that the people involved express in their relationships with one another” (p. 113). While this work does not endorse Hellwig’s (1984) dismissive attitude toward sacramental confession, it nonetheless recognizes the important role community members play in helping each other deal with emotional, spiritual, and psychological challenges.

The public communicative act of penance and reconciliation at the diocesan level can be replicated in all the parishes and institutions of every diocese in a modified form. In a parish context, for example, this act of public confession consisting in the requesting and receiving of forgiveness can be incorporated into all weekend Masses if victims agree to it as a preferable option; otherwise, a separate event can be held in a manner similar to the one held at the diocesan level.
6.3.4. Phase IV: Evaluating the Rebranding Process and the New Catholic Brand

Phase four of the Isocratean model of rebranding involves the evaluation of both the process of rebranding itself and the new brand. Admittedly, this last phase is not directly derived from Isocrates’ self-defense and self-representation as found in the *Antidosis*. Nevertheless, the criticality of audience members’ judgment in the course of the rhetorical act of self-defense and self-representation cannot be denied in the Isocratean text. As noted in Chapter Three, at critical stages of his self-defense and self-representation, Isocrates invited his audience to judge his arguments and punish his adversaries accordingly. Implicit in this invitation is the recognition of the rational ability of audience members to pass judgment on the communicative competence of the speaker, as well as, the realization that communicative meaning is co-constructed and co-created. By measuring the success of its rebranding process and new brand on the basis of audience-member views, the Catholic Church in America will be able to get a sense of the position of its brand reputation and brand image in the imagination of its multiple audiences.

As regards the evaluation of the stages of the rebranding process, there must be a pause at the end of every stage to answer the following questions: (1) What did I hope to achieve? (2) Have I achieved it? (3) What were the challenges? (4) What can we do better going forward? At the end of the third stage of the brand-building process, the Church must also evaluate through the input of stakeholders the new brand it has created. That is, using the views of clergy, abuse victims, law enforcement, the media, and activist groups, the Church should be able to answer the following questions: (1) What brand have I created? (2) How does it reflect my identity and core values as a caring, compassionate, responsible, and inclusive religious organizations? (3) What is people’s attitude toward this new brand? (4) How can this new brand be more attractive and powerful in the religious market? The feedback the Church receives from its multiple publics
should give it a sense of where it stands in the eyes of the American people. Regardless of the outcome of its evaluation of the rebranding process and the new brand, the American Catholic Church must continue to work to create a favorable brand identity, brand image, and brand reputation in within the country. The reality is that rebranding is a never-ending process.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to create a new brand for the American Catholic Church based on the Isocratean rebranding model. It began by describing in detail the content of each of the four stages of the Isocratean model. It then applied this model to the American Catholic Church suffering image crisis as a result of the sexual abuse of innocent children by priests and official cover-ups. For the present dissertation, in order for the American Catholic Church to re-imagine itself as a caring, charitable, inclusive, and responsible religious brand, one that is ethically responsible as an institutional citizen, it must have a clear objective, articulate the problem it is dealing with, clearly and persuasively communicate its identity, differentiate and dissociate itself from abusive priests and their episcopal accomplices, engage in performative rhetoric oriented toward the incarnation of stakeholders’ goodwill, and make responsible moral choices that give it an advantage in the eyes of audiences. This project believes that activities that can secure the goodwill of publics include the construction of monuments at the Catholic centers of all the 195 dioceses and eparchies in the country to memorialize abuse victims and organizing special events to honor them, holding abusive priests and their episcopal accomplices accountable, reviewing the process of priestly formation, and mandating that seminarians and priests undergo sexual abuse and assault training annually. Finally, through the public communicative act of confession and reconciliation, the American Catholic Church will be making a moral choice that gives it an
advantage in the eyes of its publics, as such an act will demonstrate its determination to confront its dark past, take responsibility for the abuse and cover-ups, and restore the dignity of victims and help them heal.
Chapter 7
Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions for Further Study

7.1. Introduction

This dissertation set out to rebuild the American Catholic brand, using the Isocratean rebranding model, a model constructed from Isocrates’ (353 B. C. /2000) theory of self-defense and self-representation/characterization. This idea to rebrand the American Catholic Church was necessitated by the clergy sexual abuse, which destroyed its credibility as a powerful moral voice and a caring, charitable, responsible, and inclusive religious organization. The present project believes that until the Church takes concrete steps to re-imagine itself as a credible moral voice, it can no longer influence the American society the way it did before the abuse revelations. This view is based on the realization that, in spite of the passage of time and all the efforts the Church has made to create a safe environment for children and vulnerable members within the Church, as well as review the formation program of its future priests, people continue to view it negatively. This negative perception has been further deepened by the recent revelations of more clergy sexual abuses and official cover-ups.

In proposing a new brand for the Catholic Church in America, the present dissertation takes time to examine the evolution of the said religious organization as a powerful brand and how it lost its credibility. In the course of the archaeological excavation of the life of the American Catholic Church, this study discovered that it began as a derogated religious community in the sixteenth century. Then gradually through sheer determination, the influx of immigrants, and conversions, the Church began to grow numerically, structurally, and geographically. A sanctuary for immigrants who upon arrival in their new country were greeted
with Puritan disdain and hostility, the Church was instrumental in helping its members integrate into American society. Through the provision of schools, hospitals, soup kitchens, and charitable institutions, the Church managed to support its immigrant communities, raise their social status, and inculcate in them a sense of patriotism to the United States on one hand and a deep commitment to their religion on the other. With many of its children fully integrated into American society, the Church gradually began to abandon its image as a ghetto religious community. Accordingly, by the time J. F. Kennedy was elected in 1960, the Catholic Church had become a powerful institution and a leading brand on the American religious landscape. This powerful brand, however, was to be mortally crushed following the 2002 Globe revelations of clergy sexual abuse scandals in the Archdiocese of Boston.

What is left of this chapter will begin with a discussion of the conclusions one can draw from the attempt being made to rebuild the Catholic brand in America. These conclusions are drawn from the Isocratean theory of self-defense and self-representation/characterization and the Isocratean rebranding model, the investigation into how ecumenical councils served as branding and rebranding moments within the Church, the discussion of the evolution of the American Catholic brand, and the construction of the new American Catholic brand. Next, this project examines the implications of this study for branding and rebranding, organization communication, corporate communication, rhetorical theory, crisis communication, and renewal rhetoric. The chapter then closes with suggestions for further research into how issues like same-sex marriage, admission of divorced and remarried Catholics, and women ordination can impact the Catholic brand in America.
7.2. Conclusions

One important conclusion this dissertation draws from Isocrates’s *Antidosis* is that self-defense rhetoric is a response to character or identity misrepresentation. Hence, the goal of self-defense rhetoric is to represent the self, or one’s character/identity to an intended audience in as real and truthful a way as possible. To achieve this goal, a speaker must first undermine the credibility of the source of the identity or character misrepresentation in order to bolster his or her own discursive defense of the self. Then, the speaker must engage in the archaeology of the history of his or her life to gather evidence to support his or her claim of authenticity. In other words, the speaker, drawing on his life story or biography, must demonstrate his or her virtues, patriotism, and commitment to his or her society represented by the intended audience. Ultimately, three elements are crucial for effective self-defense—virtue, goodwill, and past actions.

Besides, from the history of the evolution of the American Catholic brand, the present project can assert in agreement with scholars (e.g. Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009) that branding occurs over a long period, particularly in situations where the product or organization being branded faces competition or resistance. In the case of the American Catholic brand, it took over 400 hundred years for the brand to be firmly established and gain equity in the American society. However, the fracturing of this solid brand did not have to take that long. In other words, whereas branding is a long process, the same cannot be said of brand destruction; all that it takes is for stakeholders to find out that a brand is making choices that are inconsistent with its avowed values. For the Catholic Church, the priests’ sexual abuse and official cover-ups destroyed its moral voice, and hence credibility in the American imagination.
Also, this dissertation can claim that the branding of the Catholic Church did not occur in a formal setting, in other words, there was no purposeful, calculated efforts by the official Catholic Church to brand. Rather, the branding of the Church came through its efforts to establish in the country and meet the social, educational, emotional, spiritual, and human needs of its numerous members. These efforts were guided by a specific worldview, that is, the Catholic worldview. Guided by this worldview, the Catholic Church made choices and lived in a way that set it apart from other socio-religious realities. The result was that it grew in size and numbers, dominating the religious landscape of the country, ultimately becoming a powerful brand with high equity.

Furthermore, this dissertation can assert that branding and rebranding, in spite of their secular and business connotations, are not antithetical to Catholic doctrine. The history of general or ecumenical councils shows that the Catholic Church has always sought to renew, reform, and renovate. If this claim is true, then one can equally claim in business terms that the Church of Christ has always branded and rebranded in the face of challenges. Hence, the twenty-one ecumenical councils were *kairotic* branding and rebranding moments that afforded the Church an opportunity to articulate its core teachings, define doctrines, establish its structures, address existential challenges, and ultimately refocus. The ecumenical councils, that is, the Church’s branding and rebranding moments, therefore, have served as the fuel that has kept the ship of Church sailing steadily across the turbulent ocean of time and the glue that has kept it together.

Finally, this dissertation has established that rebuilding the Catholic brand in America must be oriented toward re-establishing it as caring, compassionate, inclusive, and responsible religious organization. As far as the Church is concerned, its main enemies were the predator
priests and their episcopal supporters. By their immoral choices, these men of God fractured the moral credibility of the Catholic Church in American society. Therefore, to rebrand, the Church, following Isocrates, must differentiate and dissociate itself from the perpetrators of the abuse and their supporters by articulating its identity as a Church founded by Christ with a specific mission, to unite God and humanity, reasserting its anthropology, which regards the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, as an end, whose dignity must be respected in all circumstances, and excavating its history to demonstrate how it has always conducted itself virtuously in word and deed, that is, as caring, compassionate, and inclusive.

Moreover, the Church’s rebranding efforts must include a discursive demonstration of the expectations it has for the men it ordains for ministry. Also, it is important that the Church demonstrate goodwill toward its multiple publics by undertaking the following activities: constructing memorials for abuse victims, organizing special events to create communicative space for victims to tell their stories, punishing priests and bishops who escaped criminal prosecution, expanding lay participation in priestly formation, organizing press conferences to inform multiple publics about efforts to ensure child safety within its walls, and requiring seminarians and priests to participate in sexual assault training annually or biennially. Such activities will reposition the Catholic Church as a religious brand sympathetic to the sufferings of the abuse victims, innocent and vulnerable members whose stories it believes. Also, while punishing predators and their accomplices will serve the cause of justice, allowing the lay faithful an expanded role in priestly formation, providing important information about the abuse, and requiring seminarians and priests to undergo sexual assault training will convince stakeholders of the Church’s determination to keep children and vulnerable children safe. Over
time it is hoped that these activities suggested here will help the Church win back the trust of stakeholders.

Apart from demonstrating goodwill toward audience members, the Church must also make the moral choice of communicating publicly to victims and other key stakeholders its complicity in the sexual abuse of children and official cover-ups and beg for forgiveness. By adopting such a vulnerable posture, the Church will be expressing its desire to accept the consequences of the immoral choices of its clergy without any pre-conditions. Such a moral choice by the Church will be an attempt to humble itself before victims instead of using its exalted position to intimidate them. This moral choice of the Church will therefore give it some moral advantage in the eyes of its multiple stakeholders, thereby making the ecclesial community attractive to them once more.

7.3. Implications

This dissertation believes that using the Isocratean rebranding model to rebuild the Catholic brand in America has implications for scholarship on the following: (1) branding and rebranding, (2) brand crisis, (3) marketing communication, (4) crisis communication, (5) corporate and organization communication, (6) rhetorical theory, and (7) renewal rhetoric.

7.3.1. Branding and Rebranding

This work has shown that branding is a collaborative effort involving members of an organization on the one hand and organization and its external stakeholders on the other. In the first place, branding is a collaborative effort of organizational members as it requires members to work together to articulate the identity, mission, and offerings of an organization. This
observation is borne out by the way the American Catholic brand evolved. In the course of its long evolutionary process, one sees both clergy and laity working together to articulate the identity of the Catholic Church in the United States. This identity was articulated not only in official Church communication, but in the informal communicative interactions among members. Besides, in the provision of schools, hospitals, soup kitchens, orphanages, and social welfare services, both clergy and lay faithful collaborated to build the Catholic brand in America.

Branding is also a collaborative effort between an organization and external stakeholders, as the product, service, or the identity of an organization is located at the nexus between the organization’s vision of itself and external stakeholders’ expectations. In other words, an organization like the Catholic Church was influenced in its branding efforts by the expectations of not only Catholic Americans but also non-Catholic Americans, including mortal enemies like the No-Nothing Movement, the KKK, and other anti-Catholic groups. As chapter four showed, it was particularly because of Protestant antipathy that the Catholic Church developed a parallel American society for its immigrant members. The result was that overtime the Catholic Church became known for its quality education, healthcare, and social services delivery.

Moreover, the history of the evolution of the American Catholic brand reveals that branding is a long process that takes years to materialize. This long process provides opportunities for the brand to win over followers and form groups of brand champions that communicate the values of the brand to prospects.

The present dissertation has also shown that rebranding is the engine of brands with long histories, as it serves as a *kairotic* moment that acknowledges existential problems, addresses them, and relaunches the brand. The Catholic Church, for example, is still alive with a substantial brand following in spite of its challenges because it has always confronted major
problems and resolved them through ecumenical councils. Moreover, like branding, rebranding is a process whose results take time to materialize. As a process, rebranding must be directed toward a specific problem, that is, the source of a brand crisis. Besides, to rebrand, an organization must have a specific goal and engage in specific activities that are consistent with the organization’s identity and mission. Ultimately, rebranding is about winning back stakeholders’ trust by recommitting to fulfilling a promise.

7.3.2. Brand Crisis

Brand crisis occurs when a brand is perceived by its publics to be unable to fulfill its promise or when a brand loses the trust of its stakeholders by engaging in a conduct inconsistent with its core values or identity. In other words, brand crisis occurs when a brand is believed to have broken the covenant relationship it has with its followers or champions through immoral choices that cause scandals. Usually, the magnitude of the crisis is contingent on the nature of the brand in question and extent of its claims. The American Catholic brand, for example, is in crisis, not simply because 4 percent of its priests sexually abused innocent children but especially because the Church has cast itself as a divinely established institution, a sacrament symbolizing the union between God and humanity on one hand and the union of all members of the human family on the other, and an expert in humanity. Therefore, although the Catholic Church is by no means the only institution where sexual abuse cases have been reported, it has nevertheless lost credibility in the eyes of its stakeholders following the media reports that priests sexually abused innocent children and were protected by their bishops.

Also, the life span of brand crisis depends on organizational response. For as long as stakeholders believe that the managers of a brand are not transparent, uncooperative with law
enforcement, and adopt unethical tactics in the handling of brand crisis, their negative view will persist. In other words, effective panacea to brand crisis is honest admission, transparency, and moral choices that honor victims and provide them justice. Once stakeholders witness victims receiving just, they are likely to reconsider their negative attitude over time. In other words, just as building a brand requires a long-term investment, so does dealing with brand crisis. A brand in crisis due to immoral choices must demonstrate a commitment to moral responsibility over a long period of time for it to return to the good graces of stakeholders.

7.3.3. Marketing Communication

The present project agrees with existing scholarship that marketing communication is a very organic and complex activity. Firstly, marketing communication has both internal and external dimensions. Internally, marketing communication is about selling organizational or brand ideals, values, and mission statement to employees and managers. Once they buy into the organizational values and mission, these employees and managers become champions of the brand. Such champions are not likely to betray the brand or organization by immoral choices. Externally, marketing communication is directed toward an external audience through organizational or brand communication and events. Usually, brand or organizational communication should be about identity, values, and mission; and marketing events should be packaged to reflect the identity of the organization or brand. Effective marketing communication is, thus, one that synchronizes organizational or brand values with moral choices.
7.3.4. Crisis Communication

This work has shown that no organization, not even one like the Catholic Church that lays claim to divine origins, is insulated from crisis. Every organization or brand is bound to be hit by one or another crisis because it is run by imperfect human beings. Hence, it is imperative that all organizations establish effective contingency plans for the handling of crisis. What is critical, though, is how the crisis is communicated to key publics when it occurs. These key publics might be victims, government officials, journalists, and activists. Each of these publics have specific questions that must be answered forthrightly. As clear from the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church, organizational crisis festers for years when it is not addressed honestly and transparently. Crisis communication must therefore be managed by people with high ethical standards, people who embody the values of the organization or brand that they work for. These crisis communicators must be guided by these words of Isocrates (353 B. C. /2000):

…those who wish to engage in public life and be well liked must choose the best and most useful deeds, and the truest and most just words; in addition, however, they must consider carefully how they can be seen by others to say and do everything graciously and benevolently, for those who give little thought to these matters appear to their fellow citizens to be rather difficult and intolerable. (15.132)

In other words, the pillars of successful crisis communication are high moral standards, consummate rhetorical ability, and sensitivity to audience. Crisis communicators must treat even the most severe critic “graciously and benevolently” in order to demonstrate to him or her that they have his or her interest at heart.

Besides, as a process, crisis communication requires that important pieces of information be offered unsolicited to key publics throughout the lifespan of an ongoing crisis. In other words,
apart from admitting to its publics the reality of a crisis situation, an organization or brand must communicate to them the cause, the effects, and measures being taken to address it. At the same time, the organization or brand must be willing to listen to the views of publics regarding the crisis. Such openness to audience views not only gives insight into the effects of the crisis on them but it also convinces them that the organization or brand cares about them.

7.3.5. Corporate and Organizational Communication

The present project believes that effective corporate and organizational communication is one that is mediated by organizational identity. In other words, for an organization to construct a positive image and reputation through its internal and external communication, both management and employees must embody the values that the organization espouses. Such a claim is supported by the current situation of the American Catholic Church. The reason for its brand crisis can be put down to the failure of some bishops, priests, and other employees to reflect in their communicative encounters the values of the Church as caring, charitable, inclusive, and ethically responsible. By such failure, these representatives of the Church caused corporate dissonance in the minds of stakeholders.

Accordingly, representatives of organizations and brands must be routinely well vetted to determine whether they have the moral values that make them a good fit for their organizations or brands. Once a person becomes a member of an organization, he or she should be given courses from time to time to help him or her embrace and embody the values of the organization and commit to it.

Moreover, corporate and organizational communication is dialogic and organic, involving multiple perspectives and interests. Effective corporate and organizational
communication is therefore dependent on organizations’ knowing who their publics are. Indeed, some of these publics might espouse views critical of the organization; nevertheless, they must not be simply treated as enemies, for sometimes harsh criticisms are not borne out of antipathy but a genuine frustration with what is perceived to be a failure on the part of an organization one is emotionally involved with to align its values with its communication.

7.3.6. Rhetorical Theory

This work has demonstrated that rhetorical theory must be based on concrete phenomenological experiences of human beings. The Antidosis, for example, did not emerge from a vacuum, but from the urgent need of Isocrates to set the record straight in regards to his life, thought, and career. Besides, rhetorical theory must be goal-oriented and responsive to context. As clear from the Isocratean text, one cannot defend the self without articulating one’s purpose and stating the warrant of such an endeavor. Moreover, the Antidosis demonstrates that persuasive communication is a dialogic endeavor, one located at the confluence of speaker communicative intentionality and audience members’ evaluative judgment. Finally, rhetorical theory must enjoy easy application in different communication contexts. In the present work, for instance, we see how Isocrates’ theory of self-defense and self-representation can be applied to the Catholic brand in the United States in the twenty-first century.

7.3.7. Renewal Rhetoric

Renewal rhetoric, this work has shown, can be a response to the breach of a covenant relationship as in the case of the priests’ sexual abuse of children in the American Catholic Church, an attempt to correct a perceived error as in the case of the false allegations levelled
against Isocrates, or an effort to return an organization to its core values as in the case of problems that necessitated the convocation of the ecumenical councils of the global Catholic Church. In all these different situations, one witnesses a clear determination to return to the right path or that which is authentic. Renewal rhetoric is thus an effort to change the status quo, to reinvent or reimagine the self, society, organization, or any entity for that matter.

Besides, renewal rhetoric draws its legitimacy and dynamism from community memory. Isocrates, for instance, sought to renew his image in the Athenian imagination by appealing to autobiographical details that his community clearly remembered and presenting himself as the embodiment of that which is quintessentially Athenian. Similarly, a look at the history of the ecumenical councils reveals a persistent appeal to community memory and the Church’s historical past. Significantly, then, renewal rhetoric is about reasserting communal values and holding them up for emulation by a present audience, an audience whose evaluative judgment of a speaker’s persuasive communication is crucial for the attainment of the new image being sought.

7.4. Suggestions for Further Research

This project recognizes that, besides the clergy sexual abuse, other issues like the Church’s position on same-sex marriage, civil divorce and remarriage, and women ordination can affect its brand. Therefore, providing an effective means to dealing with the abuse crisis might still not be enough to save the Catholic brand as a caring, charitable, and inclusive organization. Accordingly, this dissertation suggests further research into the following questions:
1) In what ways does the Catholic Church’s refusal to recognize same-sex marriage, civil divorce and remarriage, as well as women ordination affect its brand in the United States?

2) How does the Catholic Church’s public communication on social, political, and ethical issues affect its brand in the United States?

3) In spite of the scandal of the clergy sexual abuse and the resultant credibility deficit, the American Catholic brand continues to enjoy a large following. What accounts for this reality?
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