<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDITORIAL</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marian de Souza</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious education – Issues for reflection and action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Jan Grajczonek and Dr Brendan Hyde</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vale to Sofia Cavalletti (1917-2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Renehan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School patronage, religion and education in the Irish Republic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Swedene</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Pamphilus matters: Religious education in Hume’s ‘Dialogues concerning natural religion’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avi I. Mintz and Graham P. McDonough</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith-based schools and common schools in America: Reflections on the charge that faith-based schools are a threat to social cohesion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Dowling</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious leaders lead... or do they? An examination of the leadership role of the REC in Australian Catholic Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Grajczonek</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The construction of ‘child’ and ‘childhood’ in official church educational documents Part 2: Implications for early childhood religious educators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Mudge</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative catholic pedagogy – A teacher inservice and evaluation program in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes (Part Two)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEAS FOR PRACTITIONERS</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Partington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections on pride</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOOK REVIEWS</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Rymarz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Hoven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As I sit down to write the final editorial for the year, I reflect on the fact that 2011 has been a year when religious education in public schools has received much attention in the Australian media, stirred up by the debate in New South Wales (NSW) over the Special Religious Instruction classes offered in State schools by volunteers from various religious traditions. These classes, usually delivered once a week and attended by children who are withdrawn from the classroom with their parents’ consent, have been criticized by some parents for a variety of reasons – content, delivery, structure, impact on other children and so on. One of the criticisms has been that the classes were dominated by Christian education classes (and given the fact that the last Census statistics (ABS) indicate that over 60% of the population claim to be Christian, this is hardly surprising). However, in Melbourne, for instance, SRI is provided by Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Bahá’í, Greek Orthodox, Islam, and Hindu faith providers, which a distinct feature of the multi-faith context of contemporary Australia, but this aspect has not always been recognized in the debate.

What is interesting about the whole debate is the fact that religion and religious education are now receiving attention in the wider public sphere and this is significant given the development of the new national curriculum. There has been a submission made to the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA) from the Australian Association for Religious Education (AARE) which proposes a distinct strand in the Citizenship study that focuses on a study of the different religious and spiritual beliefs and practices in Australia which would have a historical, sociological, theological and psychological basis. As well, another submission from the newly formed Religious and Ethics Education Network, Australia (REENA) has proposed a General Religious and Ethics Education program (GREE) to be incorporated across the curriculum. In other words, some recognition is being given to the need for all children in multicultural societies to have some form of religious education. At another level it is also interesting to note that similar discussions are occurring in other western countries and part of this is reflected in some of the articles contained in this issue.

Caroline Renehan writes about the debate in Irish education where attempts are being made to address the country’s increasingly diverse political, social, philosophical religious and non-religious perspectives, particularly at primary school level. She offers a concise discussion of related issues, including human rights linked to religious education. Avi Mintz and Graham McDonough examine the challenge that faces faith-based schools in the United States where there are some perceptions that faith based schools are a threat to social cohesion in a multicultural society. Jason Swedene discusses Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and its implications for the intellectual and moral responsibilities of religious educators when they instruct the young. On a different note, Liz Dowling reports on research related to leadership in religious education in Australian Catholic schools. This has continued to be a topic that generates both interest and tension so relevant research is necessary to inform future directions. The other three contributors follow up their previous writings in this journal. Jan Grajczonek continues her analysis of Church documents in relation to childhood and outlines the implications for Religious Education in Early Childhood. Peter Mudge describes the application of a Transformative Catholic Pedagogical approach to Professional Development programs in schools and Gerard Stoyles and Peter Caputi report on their investigation into the beliefs of children and their parents about the influences on children’s spirituality. These articles offer much for religious educators to reflect upon. As well, they identify further avenues for research and action in future years.

Marian de Souza
Editor
On the 23 August 2011, we mourned the death of a well loved and learned leading figure in children’s religious education, Sofia Cavalletti who died at the age of 94 years. Sofia needs no introduction to religious educators across Australia who are more than familiar with her work, *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. Her distinct approach made a significant contribution to religious education and it is important to reflect on and appreciate Sofia’s gifts to our discipline as well as to childhood.

Influenced by the work of Maria Montessori and tapping into her own scholarship in scripture, Sofia Cavalletti designed a program in catechesis that introduced children not only to the scriptures, but also to liturgy and prayer in ways that captured the essence of childhood. Her unique approach to catechesis was not based on doctrine or experience but rather on *kerygma*, proclamation of the Word (Searle, 1992). To proclaim the gospel, to provide a place of encounter with Christ both in word and action, was central to Sofia’s work with young children.

However, at the same time, Sofia did not simply rely on the ‘told’ story. She provided children with concrete materials with which to play; she used the art of storytelling to draw them into the sacred texts; she enabled them to wonder, to contemplate, to reflect, indeed to appreciate mystery. The two key words in contemporary early childhood education ‘agency’ and ‘voice’ were realities in Sofia’s classroom. She acknowledged the *child*, paid attention to the *child*, and actively involved the *child*.

The influence of Sofia Cavalletti’s work today is extensive, and can be found in many liturgical traditions, including Anglican, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic. It has grown and spread to at least 19 countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Japan, and Tanzania, to name but a few. It is also to be found here in Australia, where some parishes have established Atriums in which young children between the ages of three and six work with a range of materials that represent the essential proclamations of the Christian story.

It was, of course, her influence on Jerome W. Berryman which eventually led him to carry forward the project of Montessori religious education in what would eventually become known as Godly Play. Berryman met Cavalletti while studying at the Centre for Advanced Montessori Studies in Bergamo, Italy in the early 1970s, and their friendship and collegiality grew over the years. However, without the foundational influence of Sofia Cavalletti, Berryman’s project would have not have come to fruition.

Whether or not one agrees with her approach and thesis, there can be no denying the impact of Sofia Cavalletti’s work on religious education in early childhood, especially in catechetical settings. Her insights and practices have stood the test of time as we continue to be influenced by her work and implement her approaches and strategies. Although her death marks a great loss for the community of religious educators, Sofia Cavalletti’s work continues to live in all who, in some way, draw upon and are influenced by her work.

May she rest in peace.

References
SCHOOL PATRONAGE, RELIGION AND EDUCATION IN THE IRISH REPUBLIC

Abstract

Primary schooling in Ireland is undergoing a considerable period of transition in response to educational, cultural, demographic, legal, theological and constitutional change. As a result of increasing plurality, evolving management structures, patterns of religiosity and non-religiosity among parents, children and teachers, the Department of Education and Skills, under the remit of the Irish Government, recognises the need for more diverse forms of school patronage than currently pertains. With respect to religious affiliation, the Nation’s Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2007) figures show that 86.8% of the population is Catholic and its Constitution is not a secular one where Article 6 acknowledges God as the source of its authority (Irish Government Publications, 2004). This article considers the way in which the Irish Education state system, denominationally and multi-denominationally funded, is attempting to take account of the country’s increasingly diverse political, social, philosophical religious and non-religious perspectives particularly at primary school level. The key areas in the debate considered below include, (i) Respecting parental choice in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society (ii) Religion as part of an integrated curriculum (Short Term/Medium Term) (iii) Religion as part of an integrated curriculum (Longer Term) (iv) Religious Education and Religious Practice in Schools and (v) Implications for Enrolment Policies.

Introduction

Following the overthrow of Iran’s monarchy and its replacement with an Islamic republic under the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the US public inquired as to why the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had failed to anticipate the Iranian (Islamic) Revolution of 1979. According to James Heft (2004, p.2), the bewildered response from their Director General Admiral Stansfield Turner was to exclaim, ‘The only thing we paid no attention to was religion because it has no power in the modern world’. Stansfield claimed that the CIA had monitored Iranian markets, demographics and publications but they apparently had little concept of the impact of the significance of religion good and bad in cultures and in societies. In addition, the USA, particularly in the wake of 9/11, like so many other countries in centuries past and in recent decades present, has learned, to their regret, the unfortunate relevance of either misunderstanding or ignoring the reality of religion particularly in multicultural contexts. Dermot Lane (2008, p.17) explains that multiculturalism has multiple meanings which include, ‘the recognition of peoples from different cultural backgrounds seeking to occupy the same social space’. However, government policies to resolve the occupation of the ‘social space’ in the UK and France, for example, have proved relatively unsuccessful. In the UK, it can be argued that multiculturalism has resulted in the ‘ghettoisation’ of the different ethnic groups. Following the London bombings of 7/7 in 2005, the Secretary of State of the day Ruth Kelly launched a ‘Government Commission on Integration and Cohesion’ (2006). Here questions were raised which included the uniform consensus on the values of multiculturalism and whether multiculturalism was encouraging separateness. In the same year in the UK, the Muslim scholar Mona Siddiqui (2006, p.111) described multiculturalism as the ‘failed experiment of the past and the impasse of the present ... because multiculturalism has meant nothing and everything at one and the same time’. Whereas in France their philosophical policy of laïcité with ‘assimilation’ as its nucleus places explicit pressure on immigrants to adopt quintessentially French behaviour and traditions (Williams, 2006). The outcome here is all too well known, culminating in civil unrest in Paris, its environs and across the country with the French government declaring a State of Emergency in 2005. In light of that, Nicolas Sarkozy, the President of France, during his presidential campaign pledged to reopen an enquiry between the Republic of France and religious, specifically Muslim, communities (Todd, 2011).
The Republic of Ireland is also experiencing a changing cultural landscape and might learn from the lessons of countries such as the UK and France but integral to understanding that landscape is the role of religion in the country. However, the question as to whose responsibility it is to steer Ireland from its one time almost exclusively Catholic culture to an increasingly diverse cultural and religious topography is a complex one. Ultimately a number of statutory and voluntary agencies must be responsible. The former Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern (2007) began the process of a structured dialogue with the churches, faith communities and new confessional bodies and more recently the current Minister for Education and Skills Ruairi Quinn (2011) appointed a Forum (2011, p.1) to oversee the matter of patronage and pluralism in the primary school sector. The basic tenet of this directive with reference to religion and education is the recognition that Irish society is becoming ever more diverse in its make-up both in its culture and in its religious and secular affiliations (‘secular’ in this paper is employed in its narrowest sense, that is, ‘devoid of religious consideration’).

As the Forum states:

> Arising from the historical development of Irish primary education 96% of education provision at primary level is denominational, largely under the patronage of the Catholic Church (89.6%). Significant demographic and societal changes have taken place in Ireland in recent years which mean there is increased demand for new forms of multi-denominational and non-denominational schooling … The Catholic Church has indicated a willingness to undertake such transfer/divesting of patronage in some of its schools and this represents one potential solution. Discussions between the Department of Education and Skills and representatives from the Catholic Church on this topic are already underway.

It is clear that the Irish Education system must reflect the true nature of the country’s diversity in its provision of educating its citizens regardless of their political, social, philosophical, religious or non-religious background. Given the variety, breadth and complexity of the terms of reference raised by the directive from the Minister, five key areas to this debate will be considered below. These are:

i) ‘How can parental choice be respected in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society?’

ii) Religion as part of an integrated curriculum (Short Term/Medium Term);

iii) Religion as part of an integrated curriculum (Longer Term);

iv) Religious Education and Religious Practice in a School;

v) Implications for Enrolment Policies.

‘How can parental choice be respected in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society’?

The measure of diversity in Ireland revolves around a number of different positions jostling for recognition two of which are (1) parental rights to rear their children according to their own specific philosophies and (2) the requirements of a pluralistic, liberal society to promote essential values such as equality, tolerance, liberty and respect for differing forms, beliefs and ways of life. Before proceeding, an important distinction must be made in reference to the adjective ‘pluralistic’ above in relation to its noun ‘pluralist’ and the term ‘pluralism’. Authors such as Geir Skeie (1995) and Robert Jackson (2004) deliberate on this intricate terminology. Skeie’s (1995, p.84) account will suffice for this paper:

> A distinction is suggested between plurality and pluralism. Plurality [is] used in a descriptive sense, referring both to the religious plurality which is typical of many modern societies, and to the plurality of modernity itself. The latter expression [is] used to describe the range of lifestyles, cultural and political stances and so on which form the social context within which religious plurality is situated. These descriptions [are] distinguished from pluralism, which [is] used in a normative sense, indicating the various values, attitudes, ethical implications and so on which arise in response to plurality.
According to Lars Naeslund (2009, p.227), ‘the conditions and possibilities to realise [plurality] successfully probably depend on several circumstances, e.g. the maturity and motivation of pupils and the ethnic composition of the school’. For these reasons, any change in educational policy needs to be thought through carefully and over a reasonable period of time regardless of whether that relates to patronage, religion and education or any other set of ideologies bound by democratic principles. If time is not taken, attitudes that are already polarised will become aggravated probably resulting in very stark and diverse difficulties for the citizens of the country the USA, the UK and France each in their own ways being a case in point (Grace, 2002).

In respect of religion in particular, the Council of Europe’s (2008, p.10) White Paper statement is worth noting:

Religious Practice is part of contemporary human life, and it therefore cannot and should not be outside the sphere of interest of public authorities, although the state must preserve its role as the neutral and impartial organiser of the exercise of various religions, faiths and beliefs.

The Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn, is all too aware that Irish society is becoming more pluralist in its make-up and therefore, the Irish education system must make provision for such diversity. A one size fits all educational structure with respect to schooling, regardless of denominational or non-denominational ethos is not adequate to meet the needs of contemporary Irish society. Equally, a mindset which holds that denominational schooling results in social segregation or educational apartheid is incorrect and highly suspect. Pluralism demands respect for different ways of life whether they be religious or non-religious but even pluralism of itself does not supply the answer. As philosopher of education Walter Feinberg (2006, p.18) puts it, ‘once a child is placed in one religious tradition rather than a different one, or for that matter in a nonreligious tradition, perspectives are set, horizons shaped, understanding circumscribed, boundaries constructed, roles marked off, and a collective identity stamped’. Indeed, there will always be a certain tension between people of faith and non-faith traditions which are healthy, provided the holders of each set of values do not retreat into a fundamentalist ghetto of their own making. As we are reminded by the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC, 2010), it is, therefore, incumbent on the State to recognise that children must be educated in accordance with their parents ‘religious and philosophical convictions’ and that these rights are ‘linked to the State’s responsibility ... [in] the provision of education’.

Human rights is a complex term, therefore, it is timely, to account for its meaning as intended in this paper. Ethna Regan (2010, p.13) lays out a useful definition in claiming, ‘human rights language is a dialectical language that holds in tension the universal and the particular, the religious and the secular, the abstract and the concrete’. In this sense, it is worth noting that there are different interpretations of human rights codes on the rights of parents and children in different national situations. Rather than attempt to delve into the specifics of the many and varied statutory and non-statutory regulations of international practices on human rights, schooling and religious education, it is more economic to say simply that all countries face common challenges as they are expressed in their different environments. Every country has much to learn from each other and be prepared also to review their policies in dialogue with their respective stakeholders. In respect of parental rights in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) sought the assistance of the European Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to draw up a document entitled the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs (2007). This document points out that there is an increasing consensus among educators that knowledge about religions and beliefs is an important factor for quality of education. The ODIHR uphold this principle in the context of the fostering of democratic citizenship, mutual respect, the enhancement of support for religious freedom and the desire to promote an understanding of societal diversity. Furthermore, they advise that educational systems would be unwise to ignore the part played by religions and beliefs in history and culture. The basis of their advice emanates from their fear that ignorance of religions and beliefs creates negative stereotypes, intolerance and permits hostility, conflict and ultimately violence to prevail permitting potential threats to peace and security.
Based on this premise, therefore, before parental choice can be fully respected and patronage of a school is deliberated upon, Boards of Management must take account of their own ethos or characteristic spirit. In this sense, ‘patronage self-awareness ethos’ is of the essence but sometimes such self-awareness founders on the false assumption that organisations are capable of neutrality. One example of this presumption is found in the IHRC (2010, p.9) Discussion Paper (designed to encourage debate on religion and education from a human rights perspective). Although it was a most laudable undertaking, they state that the ‘IHRC is uniquely placed to open a debate on human rights and religious education because it does so without adopting definitive stances, at this stage, on most of the issues canvassed by this paper’. Such a statement must be contested. The IHRC document is replete with legal terminology, legal Acts of States, legal case histories, legal complaints mechanisms, protocols, international covenants on civil and political rights and rulings from the European Court of Human Rights and Supreme Court interpretations of the Irish Constitution. Although it would be expected in a human rights discussion paper, that such research would be undertaken, none of the above are neutral stances. In fact, the entire paper appears to weigh considerably against the teaching of religion in schools through reference to legal documents, acts and case histories. The IHRC erroneously tends towards freedom ‘from’ religious influence and this is emphasised more than freedom ‘for’ religion thus ignoring the educational value of religion in the curriculum.

In its analysis, the IHRC correctly make the point that parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education but states that this right may be thwarted where religion ‘may informally permeate the school day’ (in a denominational school setting). The portrayal is that children are to be ‘insulated’ and ‘protected’ from religion and the word ‘indoctrination’ is frequently used all of which gives the impression that religious world views are inherently irrational and less creditable than non-religious worldviews. There is no neutral theory of education, there is no neutral theory of religion and there is no such thing as a completely neutral stance, not by any organisation religious or otherwise and not by any government body. Boards of Management and other relevant organisations in their deliberations around patronage would do well to analyse their own biases prior to publishing their respective deliberations. The ODIHR (2007, p.69) in its broad experience of dealing with contentious issues state that, ‘[In] a strict sense, no course – whether on religion or on any other subject – is absolutely neutral or objective: rather there is in fact a spectrum of possibilities’.

Every education system and every school, denominational or not, if it is doing its job properly, attempts to serve society to the best of its ability. The educational value of religious education is well attested to (Kieran & Hession, 2005; Lane, 2008; Sullivan, 2010) and certain assumptions can be made about the relationship between the two. For example, education regardless of the culture or context, religious or otherwise, is about the capacities of human nature, emotions, conscience, wonder, energy, intelligence, memory, will and hope and how these are developed and orientated. The practice of education will inevitably be influenced by one’s own view, society and how individuals learn. In this respect, education and education in religion attempts to offer answers to the great metaphysical questions about the meaning of life such as creation, the nature of humankind, moral responsibility and human sexuality. There is nothing by way of divergence on such questions either from an education or a religious education perspective. Unless this is understood, Irish education will end up in a polarised system of education, not serving well the children of its country.

Religion as part of an integrated curriculum (Short/Medium Term)

However, difficulties for parents (and older children) arise with the very sensitive place of religion in the curriculum. This is a debate that cannot be addressed in a brief submission because education in religion is a complex endeavour where a distinction needs to be made between the (1) practical and the (2) theoretical dimensions of religious education. The particular practical implications for religious education and religious practice in a school are that which is sometimes described as education in a particular faith. This would include convictions, attitudes, emotions and such like manifested in acts of worship, prayer or moral commitments through home, school and parish (or church community) all of which are inter-linked with each other to a greater or lesser extent. The theoretical dimension is less likely to brook such
affiliation. Sometimes this is called simply ‘religious studies’. This dimension focuses on an approach that seeks to provide teaching about different religions and beliefs which is not devotionally or denominationally oriented. Here the aim is to educate students in awareness of religious and non-religious views of life but caution is advised as it would be an inaccuracy to think that either religious or non-religious views of life are value free. Each in its own educative process takes serious account of sound scholarship in the essential precondition of the education of the young.

One difficulty with respect to education in religion is the simplistic way that it generally tends to be portrayed in the media and social settings without due reference to the complexity and diversity of its nature. Partially this is due to the range of terms employed that treat of discourse in religion often contributing to popular misconceptions and apprehension around its nature thus threatening to prejudice the entire debate. Terms for education in religion commonly used would include religious knowledge, religious education, religious studies, doctrine, faith formation and development, spirituality education and even, albeit unacceptably incorrectly, indoctrination. According to Patrick Devitt (2008, p.170), the terms ‘catechesis’ and ‘Religious Education’ enjoy relatively common usage in religion-education discourse. Catechesis is handing on or sharing Christian faith and it presupposes some basic faith on the part of the hearer. Religious Education is largely about clarifying the meaning of religion and may or may not involve handing on a faith tradition’. Before any serious debate has the potential to become effective, such terms require some fundamental understanding even if final agreement in consistency of use is not ultimately arrived at. Otherwise the implications of belief for general values education, knowledge about religions and beliefs and, according to Kevin Williams (2005, p.61) ‘the full personal development of young people’ in the area of education in religion, is tantamount to neglect.

Uncertainty of terminology, for example, arises in the IHRC’s (2010, p.9) Discussion Paper in reference to Article 44.2.4 of the Irish Constitution which makes a distinction between ‘Religious Education’ and ‘Religious Instruction’. In its account of these terms, the IHRC refers to the former (including Moral Education) as being a ‘much wider’ and ‘all encompassing term’ whereas the latter is explained as a much ‘narrower statutory formulation of “instruction”’ (which is used as the basis of exemptions under the 1998 Education Act). Firstly, can it be stated that ‘Religious Education’ is an ‘all encompassing term’ if it does not include the term ‘Religious Instruction’? Secondly, although ‘Religious Instruction’ has often been employed to mean ‘Faith Formation and/or Faith Development’ it is not normally employed by scholarly or contemporary religious educators. Other citations and lack of analysis regarding terminology is found in the judgement on the Campaign to Separate Church and State v the Minister for Education by Justice John Costello (1996). He affirmed the constitutional rights of parents vis-à-vis the religious formation of their children within schooling funded by the State. His conclusions were later affirmed by the Supreme Court in a judgement delivered by Justice Ronan Keane (1998). In summary, these judgments found that parents have a right to have their children receive both religious instruction and religious formation (emphasis added) within schooling provided by the State. It is evident that the terms ‘religious instruction’ and ‘religious formation’ in these contexts imply fluid understandings.

Religion as part of an integrated curriculum (Longer Term)

Although parental choice must be upheld and respected for those who do not wish their children to take part in religious education classes or in philosophies counter to their convictions, religious education within the curriculum highlights the role of dialogue in promoting understanding among people from different faith communities and none. Finding ways of promoting active pupil participation in discussions as a means of enhancing inter-subjective understanding is a common concern for all but that comes with the important reminder that the teacher must be informed and skilful. Nonetheless, although a teacher may be both, s/he cannot replace the believing parent/visitor, neither can they replace a well educated, wise and discerning teacher. Hans-Georg Gadamer puts it well when he talks about the necessity of taking steps towards a fusion of horizons. Here he is not referring to a mishmash or motley assortment of teaching topics such as world religions, ethics or spirituality to children, rather he is claiming that knowledge alone is pedagogically untenable if that is all they are exposed to. This brings us back to what is actually meant by teaching and
learning in religious education. One of the most influential authors in this area is Michael Grimmit (1987, pp.225-226) whose classic statement of the terms learning about religion and learning from religion have remained in the debate for many years. Two explanatory paragraphs are well worth quoting to make the point:

When I speak about pupils learning about religion I am referring to what the pupils learn about beliefs, teachings and practices of the great religious traditions of the world. I am also referring to what pupils learn about the nature and demands of ultimate questions, about the nature of a ‘faith’ response to ultimate questions, about the normative views of the human condition and what it means to be human as expressed in and through Traditional Belief Systems or Stances for Living of a naturalistic kind.

When I speak about learning from religion I am referring to what pupils learn from their studies in religion about themselves – about discerning ultimate questions and ‘signals of transcendence’ in their own experience and considering how they might respond to them. The process of learning from religion involves, I suggest, engaging two though different types of evaluation. Impersonal evaluation involves being able to distinguish and make critical evaluations of truth claims, beliefs and practices of different religious traditions and of religion itself. Personal evaluation begins as an attempt to confront and evaluate religious beliefs and values [and] becomes a process of self-evaluation.

Certainly it would be overly simplistic to expect that Grimmit’s well rehearsed account of learning about religion and learning from religion might go some way to accommodating understanding of the place of religion in an integrated curriculum. However, it may provide, as Geoff Teece (2010, p.102) notes, an ‘explanatory framework that interprets religion as distinctive phenomenon with its overriding characteristic being its spiritual dimension as understood as human transformation ...’ It might be noted that a new multi-faith school model currently being piloted by the Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) in Dublin is to be highly applauded. (VEC’s are statutory education authorities which manage and operate certain colleges of further education, certain second level schools and are now piloting a small number of community primary schools in the Dublin area). This model may well be described as ‘unity in diversity’ because it permits children to retain ownership of their own respective faith traditions/beliefs while at the same time benefiting from being taught by qualified teachers within a timetabled formal structure during class time (rather than after school hours possibly by well intentioned but sometimes non-formally qualified personnel/people). The VEC model also has the added advantage of responding to accelerated immigration, secularisation and pluralism. In this latter respect, Anne Hession (2011) significantly claims that the removal of religious education from a child’s schooling teaches him/her that religion and religious commitment are not important and have no role in one’s public life in the world. A liberal democratic society would be discriminating against children if it precluded them from having an opportunity to understand what religious commitment might be about. It would be equally discriminatory if it imposed an indoctrinatory style of religious education on children, i.e. a style of religious education that did not allow for critical and creative thought.

Hession goes on to say that the importance of religious education in the longer term is in respect to its contribution to the overall primary curriculum. She identifies religious education as an area which roots moral education and spiritual education in specific religious traditions. She deliberates on how moral education concerns not only the development of knowledge and reasoning but also the affective and motivational bases for moral action which for many Irish people stem from their religious faith. Spirituality, in turn, is all the richer by being rooted in a specific religious tradition. For example, in being invited to explore a distinct Christian spirituality, children are taught to develop respect for and responsibility to other people, the natural environment and God. They are also enabled to reflect on key questions of meaning and truth, to develop their own ideas on spiritual matters, and to engage with existential issues. Furthermore, children are alerted to the way their
attention can be diverted from what really matters to them by ‘material pursuit’ and the multiple pressures that require them to repress or deny the spiritual dimension of their being. Hession further notes that religious education enables children to appreciate the insights and heritage of differing Christian traditions and the importance of ecumenical dialogue and endeavours. It also develops multi-faith awareness in respect of inter-religious education. This involves children in a genuine engagement with other religious faiths and helps them to learn from these faiths while growing in appreciation of their own religious experience, commitments and beliefs in light of comparative experiences, commitments and beliefs of others. Skills of inter-religious literacy enable children to speak the public language of religion; to comprehend and appreciate the place of religious belief and practices in human life; to understand the need for dialogue among people of faith and to develop powers of empathy for and sensitivity towards people of other faiths. The capacity to speak with confidence about one’s own religious faith will be crucial for Irish citizens of the future who will be confident in taking the voice of religious faith to public debate and argument in the public square.

Religious Education and Religious Practice in a school

Regarding religious education and religious practice in a school, there are very real concerns to be expressed around the question of the indoctrination of children and rightly so. Certainly the question of indoctrination must be raised in relation to any topic or subject taught on a school curriculum. According to Tasos Kazepides (2010) there are few concepts which have been subjected to extensive and systematic philosophical scrutiny as has indoctrination. Nevertheless, serious disagreements about its exact nature and policy continue to cause serious apprehension. That which is not faced and challenged has the potential to corrupt and that is the genuine fear of all democratically and liberally minded proponents of the education process. True educators, whether they espouse or teach a particular faith tradition or not, whether they teach in a school with a dedicated ethos or not, are neither proselytisers nor indoctrinators. They teach and live a kind of Socratic version of the Hippocratic Oath. Parents of young children (and older students in second level denominational schools) who do not espouse a particular faith tradition have a right to withdraw from religious education classes but they do not have the right to dictate that the ethos of the school throughout the entire day be changed to suit their specific religious, secular, atheistic or agnostic preferences. It is vitally important to recognise that denominational schools do not indoctrinate; it is neither their purpose nor function. At the risk of being anecdotal, consideration might be given to Christina Murphy (1995, p. 9) of the Irish Times when she once wrote of the fear of indoctrination in Irish primary schools that, ‘known agnostics and atheists who have sent their kids to the local national school ... weren’t indoctrinated and they ended up with somewhat similar views to their parents’. Padraig Hogan (2003) advances this point when he says there has been an historic shift in Ireland from a custodial understanding of Christianity to one of more festive fellowship. All teachers, regardless of their own religious or non-religious affiliations, have to take account of their students whether they are from homogeneous or heterogeneous backgrounds.

Indoctrination is an inflammatory word which is often, wrongly, applied to religious education, faith formation and denominational religions. Denominational schools, not least, have been targeted for such censure. For example, there are pervasive historical myths and images of Catholic denominational schooling possibly emanating from a dictum attributed to the Jesuits, ‘Give me the child until he is seven, and I will give you the man’ leading external observers to believe that Catholic schooling is, in practice, an effective form of indoctrination. Astley (1994) points out that until the 20th Century indoctrination had the neutral meaning of teaching or instruction. It only acquired pejorative associations later. Given the large number of ‘lapsed Catholics’ in contemporary society he suggests that the idea of Catholic indoctrination is not true or if it is true it is certainly not very effective. Kazepides (2010, p.121) for his part has it that people who are indoctrinated are either unwilling or unable to subject their doctrinal beliefs to rational scrutiny. In that sense, many of them, nonetheless, desire that their doctrines should ‘function as regulative principles of the way of life of the whole society’. Indoctrination sets limits to the autonomous education and development of children and must be rejected out of hand as the undermining of human reason. Teachers who indoctrinate are not educating and indoctrinators who describe themselves as religious educators are
an anathema to education and discredit their profession. As long as confessional schools are open in their outlook, whether they espouse the beliefs of the major world religions or smaller faith traditions, they are hospitable to the promotion of autonomy. If they do not aspire to the cultivation of intellectual autonomy or if they are fundamentalist in outlook, then they may be described as closed confessional schools which ignore the wider religious, cultural and educational frameworks necessary for the development of the young people they teach.

The same criteria apply to closed secular or non-confessional schools which do not permit the possibility of any encounter for children with respect to religious belief. As Williams (2005, p.107) puts it about such schools they, ‘set limits to the autonomous development of children in as far as this approach is inhospitable to the possibility of coming to embrace religious commitment’. Closed confessional schools, like closed secular schools, are open to the charge of indoctrination and neither are value free. Furthermore, the notion that a secular form of liberal education is the only way forward for a modern society is equally unacceptable. Democratic rights include not only those who seek solely secular education for their children but also those who wish to commit their children to schooling of a religious nature. As children and young people mature, their rights are also to be respected through their own reasoned positions on religious and ideological issues, morality and the principles for the living out of their lives. In Terence McLaughlin’s (1996, p.147) words, ‘[Denominational] schooling can be seen to be compatible with liberal, democratic principles, not least by providing a particular substantial starting point for the child’s eventual development into autonomous agency and democratic citizenship’. Correlate this understanding of denominational schooling to France’s fiercely secular educational policy where Nicholas Sarkozy (2007, p.1) states, ‘[The] origins of the great religions, their visions of mankind and the world should be studied ... (in the spirit) of a sociological, cultural, historical analysis which would allow a better understanding of the fact [emphasis added] of religion. I am convinced that we should not leave the issue of religion at the school door’.

Implications for Enrolment Policies

One of the most pressing issues in relation to schools and school patronage lies in the need for collaboration from those in the worlds of secularism, education and religion particularly in respect of enrolment policies. Needless to say, such collaboration rests more easily with some than with others. However, it is incumbent on Boards of Management, whether they be secular or religious bound, to exercise extreme caution about their pre-conceived assumptions, goals and approaches to enrolment. Due to ignorance, by and large, all sides get it wrong at times and it is vital that their reservations or even hostility do not prevent them from working judiciously together for the common good and in the education of the young. Care and caution therefore are advised or in the words of former Minister for Education Michael Woods (2000, p.126):

If we have learned anything about the application of organisational and management theories to education, it is that schools are very complex organisations and cannot be run like the INTEls or the Smurfits of the business world. To an extent almost unknown in the business world, the effectiveness of a school is impacted by ‘intangibles’ such as shared beliefs concerning what counts as success, how parents are involved in school life, how interpersonal relationships are modelled, and shared understandings of what it is the school is trying to achieve. These ‘intangibles’ constitute the external features of a school culture.

The question now is, however, does a child lose her or his human rights by exposing the child to religions and beliefs through education? Or are human rights denied by excluding religions and beliefs from the curriculum denying the child the necessary tools to make up his or her own mind about religious debate or even practice in later years? Given that 89.6% of provision at primary level is largely under the patronage of the Catholic Church and that the Catholic Church has indicated a willingness to undertake such transfer/divesting of patronage in some of its schools (Quinn, 2011) perhaps it is fair to point briefly to some of that Church’s human rights documented track record. The Second Vatican Council places the
protection of human rights at the heart of politics where Daniel Bell (2001, p.191) describes that understanding as a ‘preferential option for constitutional democracy’. According to Regan (2010, pp.23-24), ‘Catholic discourse in the area of human rights draws together the basic themes of human dignity, respect for human freedom [and] the relationship of this freedom to the common good ...’ Catholic social teaching is grounded not only in the dignity of the human person but also in human reason and the natural law. John XXIII (1963) makes special reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) stoutly praising the role of the United Nations. Paul VI (1965) recognises the inviolable rights of the human person and the constitutional order of society, grounded in human reason and the natural law. John Paul II (1999) by and large had a positive view of the secular human rights movement and humanism as people of good will and he described the UDHR as, ‘one of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our time’. In the same context, Benedict XVI (2005) addressed the United Nations General Assembly where he reiterated that every generation has an arduous search for the right way to order human affairs and the Church is happy to be associated with the organisation.

Conclusion

In respect of denominational schooling, human rights, enrolment and school culture, attention to the Irish Education Act of the Department of Education and Science (1998) is worthy of consideration with its introduction of the School Development Planning Initiative for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. Foundations and strategies were laid for a highly sustainable framework but not before much exploratory and developmental research were undertaken. Time taken and thirteen years later this successful process is ongoing. School Boards and their staffs were permitted administrative, educational, pedagogical and philosophical wriggle room. ‘Wriggle room Patronage’ in the interests of pluralism, diversity and a forward looking Ireland is now required. Specifically the current Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn might take stock of the time taken by that school development planning initiative which recognised the complexity of educational reform. Fast track policies make shaky foundations. Case studies and inter-communicative dialogue among parents, teachers and Boards of individual schools at local level, where diversity and transfer of patronage is required, is of the essence. However, wriggle room patronage is not about procrastination. Rather it holds in tension the universal and the particular, the religious and the secular, the individual and community, theory and practice, emotion and reason, the abstract and the concrete. This language is also the language of education, religion and religious education. It is a language prized by teachers, theologians, philosophers and human rights campaigners. In this time of incalculable transition, each must continue to grapple with the questions and challenges that are beyond any one Forum, organisation or individual. Or in the words of Karl Rahner (1978, p.295) ‘a person who is searching for something which is specific and yet unknown has a genuine existential connection ... with whatever he or she is seeking, even if he or she has not yet found it’.

References


---

* Caroline Renehan is Senior Lecturer and Head of Religious Studies and Religious Education in the Faculty of Education at St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, Dublin. She oversees all programmes in the Department at undergraduate and postgraduate level.
WHY PAMPHILUS MATTERS: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN HUME’S ‘DIALOGUES CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION’

Abstract

David Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion is still remarkably relevant more than 225 years after its first publication. In the classroom, the Dialogues’ treatments of the design argument and the problem of evil continue to be viewed as classic articulations. In the professional journals, scholars continue to explore its epistemological and literary significance. Yet, an interpretation of the text in terms of religious education is curiously lacking. I shall argue that through the seemingly minor character of Pamphilus, the text may be read with an emphasis on issues of religious education and the fiduciary responsibilities religious educators incur. I assess the intersections between critical thinking, religious education, and youth, and give the performance of Pamphilus’s “adoptive father” Cleanthes mixed reviews.

Purpose

One look around the world and its billions of religious adherents will tell you that what one learns when one is young strongly encourages if not virtually determines one’s noetic structure of religious belief. Of course, there are many points on which religious educators might focus, including doctrine, rites, texts, history, and social activities.

The purpose of this essay is to examine David Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion as a work which brings to light the intellectual and moral responsibilities of religious educators when they instruct the young. What are the normative issues involved in instilling religious belief before the full critical capacities of the learner have matured? I believe David Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion is organized to speak to the normative issue of proselytizing the young and intellectually immature. With a focus on religious education, the role of the seemingly very minor character, Pamphilus, becomes highly significant. Moreover, Hume’s text gains the thematic cohesion that commentators have so long been searching to uncover.

Religious Education

What is education? William Butler Yeats is credited with saying that education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. Aristotle thought that the most important education of all, moral education, is best taught when the student is young and impressionable to the good habits of other, more experienced, people. Religious education may be entered into through the prisms of both Yeats and Aristotle. It is in tune with Yeats since religious belief, one essential objective of religious education, is more akin to a fire, than it is to a purely cerebral, cool-headed acknowledgment of a fact. It is in tune with Aristotle since religious belief is effectively transmitted from older generations down to the younger ones, who in turn pass on to those who come after. Religious belief, the fire, tends to be transferred downward through the generations, rather than up through them. Yet, should the flames be lit and nurtured at a young age? On the other hand, when the tender age of ready-acceptance has past, it may be too late to light and nurture them at all. Here, Hume’s Dialogues can inform us. For the purposes of this essay, I refer to religious education and religious educators in a broad way that includes the teaching of doctrine about the rationality of religion to impressionable youth who are able to access it on some level yet whose full critical capacities are not yet developed. Pupils would be between, roughly, nine and fifteen, to fall into
this category. The issues explored in this essay will be applicable to religious education taught at home or in more institutional settings.

Pamphilus the impressionable religious education student

In David Hume's *Dialogues*, there are three major characters who take part in summer conversations about God and His nature: Cleanthes, Demea, and Philo. Their discussion centers on the subject of whether God can be known through the natural world. Pamphilus is not a major character insofar as he has no speaking role in the conversations themselves. His functional role in the text would seem to be simply that of a spectator. He observes and does not participate. Pamphilus is, to be clear, a young spectator. His youth, we might think, makes him impressionable. Pamphilus himself admits as much. In his letter to Hermippus which commences the text, he remarks "My youth rendered me a mere auditor of their disputes; and that curiosity, natural to the early season of life, has so deeply imprinted in my memory the whole chain and connection of their arguments" (Hume 1998, p. 2). Thus, he claims to report what happened without being unduly biased: as he puts it, he was a "mere auditor." Yet, in his closing lines, again written in a letter to Hermippus, he admits that the experience has stayed with him: "Nothing ever made a greater impression on me than all the reasonings of that day" (Hume 1998, p. 89). Indeed, it is in large part because he is impressionable that I shall view the role of Pamphilus as much more important than the number of his lines and his self-proclaimed auditor-status might otherwise suggest.

What guides my forthcoming analysis are two related questions: First, what kind of religious education does Pamphilus receive? Secondly, what are the epistemic and ethical ramifications of that religious education?

How and when to introduce religion

After praising Cleanthes’s care for Pamphilus, Demea outlines what he thinks is the ideal plan for introducing matters of religion to the young, which he derives from Plutarch. Demea’s plan delays religious education until all other subjects’ frailties are exposed. Once Demea exposes the fragility of science, logic and ethics, the doctrine of the religion will be perceived as indubitable and glittering with truth. Demea’s method stands in contrast to Daniel Dennett’s (2007) recent claim that children should be taught as much about all religions as possible from the earliest possible age. Of course, the real atheist Dennett and the fictitious Christian Demea share different aims. Once Dennett puts all religions on equal footing, they will undoubtedly be seen as sociologically useful organisms but not verifiably true religious precepts. Demea’s objective is to produce belief in the pupil. To return to the point at hand, after Demea outlines his plan for religious education, the other participants soon offer their own opinions on how to bring the young to what Philo later calls a "due sense of religion." (Each character has a different idea of what a "due sense of religion" entails and how best to instill it.) Philo, although this is not his final word on the matter, wonders whether a religious education delayed is a religious education denied:

Are you so late...in teaching your children the principles of religion? Is there no danger of their neglecting or rejecting altogether those opinions of which they have heard so little during the whole course of their education? (Hume 1998, p. 3)

Demea’s Plutarchian position and Philo’s queries reveal a genuine moral problem. In short, what are our responsibilities to instill or to defer a sense of religion into the minds of those impressionable youth entrusted to our care? Whatever religious education strategy we choose, we should continually bear in mind that we are affecting our children’s development. Thus I assume here, as Bertrand Russell (1957) does, that a great determinant of adult religious belief is childhood religious education. The consequences from religious education are often significant, and often permeate many aspects of a life for its duration. These significant effects may turn out to be quite damaging: both physically (e.g., if one fasts to the point of harm or is martyred for a religious cause) and, more commonly, psychologically. Alternatively, the effects may be a unique and momentous opportunity to attain human fulfillment, salvation, or transcendent truth. So, I assume also the central question of Part I, “when should one begin to teach religion?,” is exciting, and should call forth the interest of Humean scholars and religious

16 Journal of Religious Education 59(4) 2011
educators alike. In this, I must disagree with Richard Popkin’s (1998, p. x) statement that “the dialogues proper...begin with an argument over the unexciting question of whether students should be taught the principles of religion at the beginning or at the end of their formal education.”

**What is Pamphilus learning from Cleanthes and the others**

The *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, as its full title suggests, is concerned with issues of natural religion. The lesson Pamphilus learns is that natural religion is correct. We must make some introductory clarifications about what natural religion is. Natural religion is the thesis that God can be known through the natural world. This view was taken for granted by many 18th century theists living, as they were, in the age of reason, science, and enlightenment. Both Vatican Councils and the Catholic Church’s *Catechism* (1997, 16) affirmed the thesis. The Church’s statement runs thus: “Our holy mother, the Church, holds and teaches that God, the first principle and the last end of all things, *can be known with certainty from the created world by the natural light of human reason.*”

Natural religion is an *a posteriori* enterprise. That is, natural religion is constructed (and defended) *on the basis of experience.* When teaching natural religion, a religious educator might refer to the complexity of human DNA, the suitability of the Earth for Humans, and the wonder of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. He might, in a more poetic mood, refer to the first two stanzas of the hymn ‘How Great Thou Art.’ Then, the educator would proceed to show how we can reason that such natural phenomena points the way to God’s plan, God’s benevolence, and *a fortiori*, God’s existence. Natural religion is usually contrasted with revealed religion. Revealed religion is, roughly, the claim that knowledge about God and His attributes are divinely disclosed. Revealed religion, like natural religion, may be learned *a posteriori* (God reveals himself in a dream, an experience, an activity, etc.), but revealed religion may also be the product of *a priori* deductions. St. Anselm (d. 1109), for instance, believed that God reveals himself independently of earthly experience. Rene Descartes (1596–1650) argued even more explicitly that God plants the idea of Himself in our minds. The religious educator may teach revealed religion by discussing such revealed truths as the graces the Apostles received at Pentecost or the passage from the book of Matthew (16:13-7), where Jesus’s nature is *revealed to* Simon Peter (rather than *reasoned by* Simon Peter).

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”  “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.”

God has revealed a truth to Simon Peter that the world of flesh and blood has not. Of course, natural religion and revealed religion are not mutually exclusive. We can know God through the world (natural religion) and through His divine disclosure (revealed religion). For some, the complexity of the human eye and the divinely inspired Bible each point to God.

Returning to the teaching of natural religion, the religious educator must model and instill certain intellectual techniques, which have normative significance. Logic and reason are integral parts of the enterprise of reasoning God’s plan, benevolence, and existence from observation of the natural world. The kinds of acuities that should be expected of one teaching natural religion would be, at minimum, these critical thinking skills: an attentiveness to the facts of experience, a cogent argument free of fallacies, an openness to critique, and an openness to improving one’s beliefs when appropriate. Here, the art of clear and careful thinking takes on a normative significance, for one *should* think clearly and carefully when one purports to construct and defend natural religion. This of course implies that there are some ways to reach logical and reasonable answers that are better than others. What this means for religious education is this: If we accept the responsibility of instructing a child or adolescent about natural
religion, then we acquire both an intellectual duty (to impart to the best of our abilities a clear method of reasoning) and a moral duty (to make sure that our methods of instruction always adhere to the requirements of proper reasoning wherever it may lead). If one or both of these duties are not met, the pupil may acquire a difficult-to-shake, false confidence in God, human reason, or both.

Cleanthes as educator and adoptive father

Demea points out that young Pamphilus is Cleanthes's "pupil" and "may indeed be regarded as [Cleanthes's] adopted son." The notions of "pupil" and "adopted son" suggest two distinguishable fiduciary relationships. That Pamphilus is a pupil of Cleanthes implies that Cleanthes assumes a responsibility for educating Pamphilus. As educator, Cleanthes has an obligation to see to it that his pupil's intellectual development is sound. That Pamphilus is regarded as an adopted son of Cleanthes implies that Cleanthes acknowledges a special relationship with the boy, and thus assumes a responsibility to help the boy to flourish on a level that includes, but goes beyond, intellectual affairs alone. Responsibilities to an adopted son are much more profound than responsibilities to a mere pupil.

So how well has Cleanthes educated by example? Let us review his performance in what I conceive as the two most important issues in the Dialogues: the argument from design and the problem of evil.

Cleanthes submits a version of the design argument early in Part II:

Look around the world: Contemplate the whole and every part of it: You will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions, to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with accuracy, which ravishes into admiration all men, who have contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance; of human design, thought, wisdom, and intelligence. Since therefore the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work, which he has executed. By this argument a posteriori, and by this argument alone, do we prove the existence of a Deity, and his similarity to human mind and intelligence (Hume 1998, p. 15).

Demea, a fellow theist, cannot agree with the conclusion that God is similar to man, however much He exceeds him. Moreover, Demea cannot accept the means to establish God’s existence by working backwards from existential premises. Demea is an Anselmian at heart, believing that God is to be proved by a priori arguments. He is thus forced by his convictions to play for Cleanthes the part of the believer-critic, a role that the monk Gaunilo played when St. Anselm crafted and clarified his own 11th century arguments.

The list of Philo’s objections is extensive. For one thing, Philo argues that order is in the mind: in other words, symmetry does not inhere in the world. That we perceive order in the world does not imply that order is, in fact, in the world. He also points out that we must not draw analogies about things of which we have no experience. Humans were not around to observe God and His creative act. And later he adds that the world resembles things other than machines, such as an animal or vegetation, so we cannot take the world’s resemblance to a machine too seriously (Hume 1998, p. 44). Subsequent to Philo’s earliest rejoinders, Cleanthes, in Part III, attempts a different line of argument. Through his “irregular argument,” Cleanthes hopes to elude Philo’s objections to his argument from design through appeals to emotion and intuition. Cleanthes says (to Philo):

Your objections, I must freely tell you, are no better than the abstruse cavils of those philosophers, who denied motion; and ought to be refuted in the same manner — by illustrations, examples, and

Cleanthes asks Philo to forget his philosophical method for the moment, for the conclusion of design is reached through mere intuition. Cleanthes then turns to a device with a long philosophical history of success, the thought experiment:

Suppose, therefore, that an articulate voice were heard in the clouds, much louder and more melodious than any which human art could ever reach...Could you possibly hesitate a moment concerning the cause of this voice? And must you not instantly ascribe it to some design or purpose? (Hume 1998, p. 23)

And he proceeds:

Consider, anatomize the eye: survey its structure and contrivance; and tell me, from your own feeling, if the idea of a contriver does not immediately flow in upon you with a force like that of sensation. The most obvious conclusion, surely, is in favor of design (Hume 1998, p. 25).

Clearly, the phrases “could you possibly hesitate a moment” and “must you not instantly ascribe it” are appeals to intuition, not to reason and logic. So, with these transformed arguments, Cleanthes seems to backslide from his Part II position. In Part II, he asserts, “by this argument a posteriori, and by this argument alone, do we prove the existence of a Deity, and his similarity to human mind and intelligence” (Hume 1998, p. 15). But in Part III, just a few pages later, he asserts with as much confidence that “the arguments for natural religion” should be assented to “whenever any reasons strike...with...force” (Hume 1998, p. 25). Cleanthes has indeed shifted positions. He has ceded his essential claims and adopted a new perspective in about ninety seconds worth of reading time. He has gone from emphatically extolling the preeminence of cool-headed, inductive reasoning to firmly asserting the primacy of emotion-laden intuition, all in the presence of the young and impressionable Pamphilus.

Now, let us briefly turn to Cleanthes’s “principles” on the admittedly vexing problem of evil. In Part X, Demea, Cleanthes, and Philo exchange thoughts on whether an infinitely moral Deity could and would prevent evil. Demea and Philo, one may recall, take turns adding to each other’s distressing examples of evil: wars between animals on the food chain, wars between humans, physical diseases, mental disorders, and so on. It’s a Candide of evil. Philo remarks that “were a stranger to drop on a sudden into this world,” he would undoubtedly recognize that the “diversity of distress and sorrow” dwarfs life’s happy occurrences (Hume 1998, p. 61). For his part, Cleanthes first reacts with surprise to Philo’s and Demea’s taxonomy of tears and he downplays the amount and type of suffering found in the world: “I can observe something of what you mention in some others…but I confess I feel little or nothing of it in myself, and hope that it is not so common as you represent it” (Hume 1998, p. 62). Nevertheless, Cleanthes acknowledges the significance of evil for religion when he challenges the others without apparent hesitation:

If you can make out the present point and prove mankind to be unhappy and corrupted, there is an end at once of all religion. For to what purpose establish the natural attributes of the Deity, while the moral are still doubtful and uncertain? (Hume 1998, p. 64).

Consider the moral attribute of divine benevolence. For the Deity to be perfectly and infinitely benevolent, evil must occur as infrequently as is possible, which is never. If evil occurs less infrequently than it might have, then the Deity must not be as benevolent as He could be. Cleanthes puts it thus, “The only method of supporting divine benevolence (and it is what I willingly embrace) is to deny absolutely the misery and wickedness of man” (Hume 1998, p. 64). But, before we are permitted to get too comfortable with Cleanthes’s definitive position that the presence of evil must be denied to uphold the Deity’s exalted moral status, Cleanthes changes substantially just a few pages later. Cleanthes soon accepts that there is some small degree of evil in the world and hence, that God is better described as
“admirable, excellent, superlatively great, wise, and holy” rather than as “infinite” (Hume 1998, p. 67). This shift is particularly significant because Cleanthes had maintained God’s infinitude since early in Part II. He admits that his own analogy between God and humans professed in Part II now requires the downgrading of God’s moral attributes:

If we preserve human analogy, we must forever find it impossible to reconcile any mixture of evil in the universe with infinite attributes; much less can we ever prove the latter from the former. But supposing the Author of Nature to be finitely perfect, though far exceeding mankind, a satisfactory account may then be given of natural and moral evil, and every untoward phenomenon be explained and adjusted (Hume 1998, p. 67).

We can get a clearer idea of Cleanthes’s acknowledgement if we picture a balance scale. On one side is an infinitely benevolent God. On the other side is evil. An infinitely benevolent and powerful God would be at the highest possible position when evil is at its lowest possible position. As evil (wickedness and misery) occurs more frequently (i.e., as the evil side increases higher), God’s benevolence and power decline from the highest possible position since He is now less benevolent and powerful than previously thought. Because His status is thus relegated, He would no longer warrant the highest praise. Though this “new theory” demotes the status of God, Cleanthes thinks that the cost of downgrading God is a “lesser evil” which may be chosen to avoid losing completely God as the object of our adoration.

The larger role of Pamphilus in terms of religious education

With just that short review of Cleanthes’s performance, we may now develop a new perspective on the role of Pamphilus. We may begin with the end of Hume’s text where Pamphilus judges the performances of Demea, Philo, and Cleanthes. To the perplexity of many scholars, Pamphilus declares Cleanthes the winner (Hume 1998, 89). By making any declaration of winners and losers, whomever he selects, Pamphilus reveals to us that he views the summer conversation as a competitive endeavor, perhaps akin to a debate. But to his credit, Pamphilus also perceives the conversation as an inquiry (i.e., a quest for truth), since he evaluates the principles each participant defends and not just the participants’ rhetorical persuasiveness:

I confess that, upon a serious review of the whole, I cannot but think that Philo’s principles are more probable than Demea’s, but those of Cleanthes’s approach still nearer to the truth (Hume 1998, p. 89).

Pamphilus looks at "the whole" and evaluates the "principles" put forward. Given that he evaluates the arguments, and not solely the participants, we may rightly inquire into the following: On what grounds does he make his evaluation of the arguments and to what extent is his endorsement of Cleanthes’s principles trustworthy? In taking the latter question first, we shall be led to the former.

So, may we trust Pamphilus's endorsement? Popkin (1998, p. xvi) doesn't think so:

Still remaining is the question of the meaning of the final line. Since this line is uttered by Pamphilus it may signify nothing of importance, for Pamphilus has no real role in the Dialogues. His assessment of win, place, and show may be interpreted as simply the appraisal of a stupid bystander — or it may be the assessment of a Cleanthesist. We are told at the beginning of the first dialogue that Cleanthes was the intimate friend of Pamphilus’ father, and that Pamphilus is Cleanthes’ pupil...With this close relationship, it is no surprise that Pamphilus thinks Cleanthes has truer principles.

For Popkin, if Pamphilus's role is insignificant and he is a “stupid bystander”, then his declaration is insignificant (Popkin 1998, p. xvi). And, if Pamphilus is so awestruck by his special relationship with his adoptive father, Cleanthes, then his Cleanthesist declaration will likely be tainted by his affections. Either
way, Popkin thinks Pamphilus is not worthy of our trust. John Bricke (1975) suggests a third possibility: Pamphilus's evaluation primarily serves a literary purpose. It brings closure to a set of conversations linked in their general subject matter (i.e., the nature of God) yet specifically distinct from one another (e.g., the argument from design, God's necessity, the problem of evil, the argument that the afterlife is necessary to remedying injustice, and so on). But even on this third view, the substance of Pamphilus's evaluation is informatively dubious, and we need not trust its content, since its purpose is to bring closure to the text rather than to tell us anything useful. In any case, a literary function is not a philosophical one.

So, on what grounds is Pamphilus's declaration philosophically significant? I submit that the declaration is philosophically significant because of its revelations about religious education. Given Cleanthes's shifting of positions from Parts II to III and from Parts X to XI, I fail to see how Pamphilus can even ascribe principles to Cleanthes much less declare them superior. For what principle does one have if one abandons it in relatively short order? The best explanation for his favorable evaluation of Cleanthes's principles seems to be the psychological one expressed by Popkin: Pamphilus is impressionable, especially to the influence of Cleanthes. Where I differ from Popkin is on the centrality of Pamphilus to the text. Pamphilus's evaluation of Cleanthes as the winner, far from being just tangential to the primary issues of the dialogues, gains its significance precisely because of the naiveté of the evaluator and the fiduciary responsibility that Cleanthes has towards him. In spite of the serious objections to Cleanthes's arguments and in spite of Cleanthes's lack of intellectual commitment to his arguments, Pamphilus ends up subscribing to his muddled and nebulous thinking. The view of the Creator that Pamphilus received is that He is not infinite and the view of reason that he has received “proves” the God of natural religion on the weak foundation of shifting principles. God and reason both have been wounded.

Despite Cleanthes's dithering, however, he does inadvertently convey the invaluable lesson that reasonable people may differ on matters of religion. Pamphilus seems to have learned this lesson well. He tells Hermippus, the recipient of his letter recounting the arguments, why the dialogue form lends itself to natural religion:

Any question of philosophy...which is so obscure and uncertain that human reason can reach no fixed determination with regard to it — if it should be treated at all— seems to lead us naturally into the style of dialogue and conversation. Reasonable men may be allowed to differ where no one can be reasonably positive (Hume 1998, p. 2).

Such humility has long been a lesson of philosophers since Socrates claimed that he only knew that he didn’t know. Cleanthes displayed some degree of intellectual humility when he altered his untenable positions in response to the others’ critiques. Of course, I remarked above that I believe his flight from his central arguments was overly hasty and drastic, but I do concede that to jettison them amidst better alternatives provided a good example to the young Pamphilus that one must be ever open to amending one’s beliefs when appropriate.

But granted that Pamphilus does get this good lesson in intellectual humility, he gets a bad lesson in natural religion. Cleanthes, by so drastically changing his positions with respect to the two major topics of the discussion, first models a natural religion that does not require stable principles to prove God's nature and secondly, models a natural religion that simultaneously purports to prove God’s nature on the basis of those unfixed principles. This brand of natural religious teaching violates the intellectual duty to hold reasonable principles and the moral duty to teach only dependable reasoning procedures. As a religious educator, Cleanthes fails even though some form of his objective of Christian belief may very well have been imparted to Pamphilus. I shall close with a quotation from Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Emile (1966, p. 114) juxtaposed with a restated quote from Hume’s (1998; 89, p. 2) Pamphilus to light the fire of further thought:

Rousseau: It would be better to have no idea of the Divine Being than to have ideas that are mean, fantastic, and unworthy...The worst thing about the distorted images of the Deity imprinted on
children’s minds is that they endure all their lives, so that even when they grow up their God is still
the God of their childhood.

Pamphilus: Nothing ever made a greater impression on me than all the reasonings of that day...that
curiosity, natural to the early season of life, has so deeply imprinted in my memory the whole chain
and connection of their arguments.

References

Company.
posthumous essays of the immortality of the soul and of suicide. Richard H. Popkin, ed. Cambridge
and Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
College Press.

*Jason Swedene is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Lake Superior State
University, Michigan, USA*
The Rise of the American Common School as a Response to Religious Diversity

Throughout America’s history, schools have been seen as a means of creating a more cohesive population. After the American Revolution, many writers on education sought to have schools create a unique American identity for the citizens of the colonies. In 1786 Benjamin Rush wrote that creating an unbending love of country and fellow countrymen ought to be the focus of American schools, and he went so far as to argue that an estimable education would “convert men into republican machines” (Rush, 1965). Again and again in the history of American schooling, schools have been expected to help unite America’s population – to create cohesion amongst a population comprised of various kinds of differences. When waves of European immigrants arrived in the early twentieth century with different languages, cultures, and religions, schools were asked to give them a common language and to assimilate them into a common American culture (e.g. Graham, 2005, pp. 7-50). In the Civil Rights era, integrated schools were expected to help overcome racial tension.

Horace Mann, the first Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education and one of nineteenth century America’s leading educational thinkers and policy-makers, strongly asserted his view that “common” public schools would help society overcome various kinds of tensions among different social groups. In his Twelfth Annual Report about the common schools in Massachusetts in 1848, Mann wrote,

*a fellow-feeling for one’s class or caste is the common instinct of hearts not wholly sunk in selfish regards for person, or for family. The spread of education, by enlarging the cultivated class or caste, will open a wider area over which the social feelings will expand; and, if this education should be universal and complete, it would do more than all things else to obliterate factitious distinctions in society. (Mann, 1957, p. 87)*

Enabling a society to overcome “factitious distinctions” motivated many people to advocate for common schools, which are now generally called public schools. Indeed, Mann thought that the schools would overcome various kinds of social disharmony. For instance, Mann worried about the lower classes suffering under a “tyranny” of capital. The common school, wrote Mann, “does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility towards the rich; it prevents being poor”. While America’s schools have never been the social instrument that eliminated poverty as Mann hoped, the expectation that schools can address economic inequality – and social strife that results therefrom – has been a pervasive feature of American educational policy.

Indeed, in addition to his optimism about the common school’s ability to solve the problem of poverty, one of the kinds of “factitious distinctions” with which Mann was most concerned was religious diversity. In 1837, in his First Annual Report, he warned that in the absence of common schools, which were government funded and not attached to or governed by any religious organization, America’s school system would resemble England’s, “where churchmen and dissenters,—each sect according to its own creed,—maintain separate schools, in which children are taught, from their tenderest years to wield the sword of polemics with fatal dexterity; and where the gospel, instead of being a temple of peace, is
converted into an armory of deadly weapons, for social interminable warfare” (Mann, 1957, p. 33). Mann identified the common school as the only way to avoid inter-religious animosity and distrust: “Of such disastrous consequences, there is but one remedy and one preventive. It is the elevation of the common schools” (Ibid.).

Following Mann, another great proponent of the common school, John Dewey, continued to see the common school as a response to the various types of diversity in America. Dewey wrote, ‘In the olden times, the diversity of groups was largely a geographical matter’ (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 21). In America, however,

it is this situation [of diversity] which has, perhaps, more than any other one cause, forced the demand for an educational institution which shall provide something like a homogeneous and balanced environment for the young. Only in this way can the centrifugal forces set up by juxtaposition of different groups without one and the same political unit be counteracted. The intermingling in the school of youth of different races, different religions, and unlike customs creates for all a new and broader environment... The assimilative force of the American public school is eloquent testimony to the efficacy of the common and balanced appeal. (Dewey, 1916/1944, pp. 21-2)ii

When Dewey wrote these lines, he did so in the context of a proposed educational philosophy that explicitly sought to provide meaningful experiences across differences to create citizens with a robust democratic unity. Dewey did not assume that mere contact with people of other faiths (and races, and classes, and so on) would create social harmony. He rather thought that a genuinely democratic education creates a community in which individual differences can remain while people are enabled to work cooperatively and effectively with one another.

Only a few years after Dewey wrote the lines quoted above in Democracy and Education, the perceived threat of faith-based schools to social cohesion reached its apex in American history. In 1922 in Oregon, voters approved a bill that forced all children of the state to attend public schools through the eighth grade or age sixteen. The perceived need for common education for all was, at least in part, due to suspicion of and animosity towards Catholicism and Catholic schools (Jones, 2008, p. 10).iii The question of the bill’s constitutionality worked its way through the courts and ultimately resulted in the 1925 Pierce v. Society of Sisters United States Supreme Court decision, in which the option of primary faith-based schooling was protected. Though Oregon’s faith-based schools obtained judicial permission and protection to remain in operation, the public had had its say and a majority had seen common schools as the exclusive vehicle for social cohesion amongst a religiously diverse population.

The American tradition of criticizing faith-based schools as divisive and a threat to social cohesion persists through today. The Supreme Court case Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002) considered whether public funds in the form of vouchers could be used for tuition at faith-based schools in 2002. The court ruled that the use of public vouchers at faith-based schools was permissible, but the idea that education at faith-based schools leads to social strife was prevalent in the discourse about the case. Indeed, Justice Breyer, in a dissent joined by Justices Stevens and Souter, wrote, “In a society as religiously diverse as ours, the Court has recognized that we must rely on the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment to protect against religious strife, particularly when what is at issue is an area as central to religious belief as the shaping, through primary education, of the next generation’s minds and spirit.” Like Mann, many have argued that since the common, public school enables children from all religions to co-mingle, it is the best means of overcoming socially undesirable tensions among religious groups. Faith-based schools, on the other hand, are a threat to social cohesion because they reinforce and entrench difference. While there are other charges that are leveled against faith-based schools (including that they threaten children’s autonomy, for example) it is the threat to national unity that arises most frequently in the discourse about faith-based schools (Jones, 2008, p. xiv). It is the hope that the common school could serve as a means of overcoming deep religious divisions and animosities among Americans that is our main concern in this paper.
Many scholars have defended faith-based schools against the charge that they are an obstacle to social cohesion. For example, some have noted that mere contact with people of different faiths is neither necessary nor sufficient to promote cohesion, and might in fact exacerbate tensions (e.g. Short, 2002; Levinson, 2007). Others have argued that there is no reason that an education for social cohesion cannot take place in faith-based schools (Thiessen, 2001, pp. 29-43). In this paper, we suggest that a reconsideration of the alleged threat to social cohesion is in order given the changing aims of American public schooling. The goals of the common school in America were initially, and throughout much of its history, focused on creating citizens with appropriate attitudes, values and loyalties. In the early American model of common schooling, the idea of creating a citizen was central. Since the empirical reality of diversity in the nascent American republic featured deep sectarian differences and distrust among elements of the population, the common school was to be the chief tool for creating a socially cohesive citizenry. The public school in America today, however, has largely abandoned citizenship education – and therefore an education towards social cohesion – because of political currents that have radically altered America’s educational priorities. We contend, therefore, that arguments against faith-based schools based on concerns about social cohesion are no longer rooted in the empirical reality of schools today. The role of faith-based schools in America may remain problematic, but it is no longer so because of social divisiveness.

The Public School in America Today

If the common schools envisioned by Mann, Dewey and others were to be institutions that offered meaningful experiences leading to social unity and democratic citizenship, America’s common schools today fall woefully short of their hopes. The American system of education has recently undergone a tremendous change. The nineteenth century common school sought, primarily, to create common loyalties, attitudes and values and, secondarily, instruction in academic subjects (Glenn, 1988, p. 87). In contrast, the aims of today’s public schools are narrowly academic and rely heavily on basic literacy and mathematics test scores, the results of which are taken by politicians, policy makers, pundits and the general public to be indicators of a school’s success or failure.

The contemporary deficiency in public schools is the result of a gradual narrowing of educational aims that has accompanied the evolution of schooling in America since the establishment of the common school. A shift of focus toward academic achievement and away from creating a cohesive society has been a pervasive feature of American educational policy since the 1950s, when progressive educators like Dewey and his colleagues at Columbia University’s Teachers College were commonly blamed for the United States’ lack of scientific competitiveness – a perception that arose in response to the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik in 1957. One landmark in the movement towards a primary academic focus in schools was the release of A Nation at Risk in 1983. By the 1980s, the concern was largely economic competitiveness and focused heavily on the rise of Japan. The report sought to focus educational aims on academic achievement primarily and argued that firm standards in academic subjects were required to ensure the country’s economic health. Yet, as Diane Ravitch has argued, compared to the most recent policy reforms of No Child Left Behind, enacted by the George W. Bush administration in 2002, A Nation at Risk “looks positively idealist, liberal, and prescient” because it called for a balanced, coherent, demanding curriculum. In contrast, Ravitch writes, NCLB “was a technocratic approach to school reform that measured ‘success’ only in relation to standardized test scores in two skill-based subjects [reading and mathematics]... [NCLB] produced mountains of data, not educated citizens” (Ravitch, 2010, p. 29).

The transition to narrower academic goals as the near exclusive domain of America’s public schools is not entirely without merit. After all, schools have long been identified as a panacea for all kinds of social ills and they continue to be so today (even though many seem to assume raising standardized test scores will correlate with increased economic, technological scientific competitiveness or better preparation for students’ vocations or further academic studies). If the aims of education are so broad that schools fail to succeed at any one of them, there is clearly a problem. And educational reformers have, justifiably, argued that schools should focus rather on doing a single thing well– academic achievement (e.g. Hess, 2004, pp. 3-4).
Ravitch and others (e.g. Rothstein, Jacobsen and Wilder, 2008) have amply documented this new trend in regarding test scores as the sole marker of educational success, but it might be useful to provide a specific example of the effect of these narrow goals on educators, administrators and policy analysts. The Harlem Children Zone Promise Academy represents one of the most ambitious plans to change student achievement by changing the fortunes of the entire community in which the children live. Thus the publicly funded charter school makes available a range of services – including prenatal counseling, parenting education, health services, and social services – in the neighborhood in which it is located. A widely discussed report by the Brookings Institution recently demonstrated that The Harlem Children Zone Promise Academy students’ performance is average on their math and literacy standardized test scores compared to other New York City charter schools serving similar students. The authors of the Brookings report seek to debunk the idea that dramatic neighborhood investments such as those made in the Harlem Children Zone are necessary for student achievement. But surely given the broad mission of The Harlem Children Zone, should we not judge its success in terms of the character, health, prospects, creativity and so on of its students? The authors of the report counter, “improving neighborhoods and communities is a desirable goal in its own right, but let’s not confuse it with education reform” (Whitehurst and Croft, 2010, p. 9). The implication is clear: education and, by extension, education reform, is about academic achievement and the best tool we have of measuring that achievement is standardized test scores in math and literacy.

Lest one be tempted to defend The Promise Academy by arguing that it is concerned with far broader educational aims than merely boosting its students’ standardized test scores, one must tread carefully. The Promise Academy was justified largely by its potential to demonstrate significant improvement in academic achievement. An entire class was essentially expelled from the Promise Academy in its early years because their test gains were not sufficiently stellar, despite how these children’s intellects, characters and potential may have been improving. And, in the most heart wrenching part of Paul Tough’s book about the Promise Academy, the students’ scores were indeed improving, but some of the positive scores were released only after the entire class was dismissed (Tough, 2008).14 If The Harlem Children Zone had identified broader aims than increased test scores, it seems to have confined them to second place, behind academic achievement, narrowly conceived.

A Threat to Social Cohesion?

We ought to consider the prevailing educational ethos in light of the persistent argument that faith-based schools lead to social disharmony. Above, we mentioned various scholarly attempts to defend faith-based schools against the charge of threatening social cohesion. In the American context, however, these defenses are no longer necessary. American public schools are no longer expected to create national unity, nor are they given adequate time or resources to embark on that mission should teachers or administrators choose to do so. One can indeed continue the discussion of whether the common school would theoretically be better at fostering social cohesion than faith-based schools, but one must concede that such an argument is untethered from the reality of contemporary schooling in the United States. We are not suggesting that such a discussion is uninteresting; we do believe that it is valuable insofar as it allows us to further probe fundamental questions about the accommodation of minority rights in liberal democracies and questions about the aims of schooling. Further, it is a question with real implications in other countries that have not entirely succumbed to test score madness. However, the conversation has just as much implication for contemporary American educational policy surrounding faith-based schools as does a thought experiment in which the only religion in America is Buddhism and the only faith-based schools in the country are Buddhist. It would be intellectually taxing and rewarding to think through this scenario, but it would require positing a completely different culture of schooling and educational policy in the United States than the one that currently exists. We are not arguing that faith-based schools necessarily aim to provide an education that will lead to social cohesion. Rather, we are arguing that the charge that faith-based schools are socially divisive is moot because one can no longer expect public schools to offer an alternative education that will lead to social cohesion. Our argument depends on an adequate response to
two objections. First, even if one concedes that public schools are not addressing citizenship, are there not some faith-based schools whose teachings cast other individuals or groups as inferior and, therefore, are a threat to social cohesion? Second, are there not public schools that, despite the current emphasis on basic academic skills, do a good job of creating the kind of citizens who will comprise a cohesive citizenry?

The first concern is a serious problem among some faith-based schools. Some faith-based schools, like the fundamentalist Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) Schools, clearly provide children with teachings that are not at all conducive to social cohesion as their curriculum involves statements that people of other religions, races or ethnicities are inferior. And some religious schools, whether they are one of a Christian denomination, Jewish, Islamic or other, teach about, for example, homosexuality in ways that either directly or indirectly results in cultivating dangerous prejudice against homosexual people. The question is whether the existence of schools such as these tips the scales in favor of common schools over faith-based schools on the general question of cultivating social cohesion. So if one raises the objection that societies should not permit or fund faith-based schools on the grounds that they cause or exacerbate social divisions, then the question emerges: To what extent are common schools endeavoring to create social cohesion? If they are not at all, or not sufficiently endeavoring to do so, then we suggest that sustaining any preference for public schools based on these grounds is based more in sentiment than reason.

On the positive side, we acknowledge that in many public schools there are teachers and administrators who care deeply about citizenship and aims broader than basic literacy. Clearly there are educational theorists at schools of education throughout the United States who continue to make efforts to train teachers to deal effectively and sensitively with the diversity they find in their classrooms, in the hopes that America will become a better, and more cohesive, place. These are efforts that surely meet with some success in cultivating a more cohesive citizenry when such teachers enter America’s public schools and impact the lives of students in their classrooms. It is also worthwhile to note, however, that many faith-based school also explicitly attempt to foster social cohesion. Indeed, many Jewish schools in America embrace the Jewish concept of tikkun olam, or repairing the world, a basic mission of social justice that involves working to create a better world for all members of society (e.g. Pekarsky, 2006). And many Catholic schools, which is the largest category of faith-based schooling in the United States, have a strong mission of social justice that requires working on behalf of and with all society’s marginalized and oppressed people and not only those of the faith (e.g. Feinberg, 2006, pp. 75-6). Given that some faith-based schools retain concerns about citizenship and social cohesion in the very mission of their schooling, while teachers and administrators in common schools have much less support, time and resources to cultivate a socially cohesive citizenry because of the narrow aims of common schooling, there may even be an advantage for faith-based schools in facilitating social cohesion. Therefore, while we concede that there are some faith-based schools in which students are taught things that may create social tension, we also recognize the presence of many others that explicitly reject such teachings and therefore are better equipped to talk about creating a better society than are today’s public schools.

Further, it is not the case that the curriculum of public schools remains neutral on matters of church and state. In a much publicized controversy over Texas’s social studies curriculum in 2010, the Texas State Board of Education made various changes that emphasized the Christian basis of the founders’ political thought and the American Constitution itself. Notably, Thomas Jefferson — who created the idea of “separation of church and state” — was removed from the list of figures who inspired revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was replaced by St. Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin. The Christian faith of America’s Founding Fathers was also emphasized, despite the fact that Jefferson, one of the major figures among them and later President, was obviously not comfortable with embracing the idea of America as a fundamentally Christian country (McKinley, 2010).

The point of raising this example of the changes in the social studies curriculum standards in Texas’s public schools is to note that religious chauvinism — the kind that many worry is fostered in faith-based schools — is currently alive and well in some of America’s public schools. One should be quite concerned that a faith-based school might teach that other religions are inferior, thereby creating religious tensions. But if some
of America’s public schools are doing the same, the threat to social cohesion is no longer unique to faith-based schools.

Further, while ACE schools and other extreme faith-based schools fail to promote social cohesion and may indeed cause divisiveness, one must keep in mind that America’s public schools are de facto segregated along ethnic and socio-economic lines. This de facto segregation, coupled with the narrow educational goals of the public school, does little to cultivate social cohesion and, one could argue, renders students ill-equipped to deal with individuals of other faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. There is little reason to think that the de facto segregated public school students are in a better position to be part of a socially cohesive citizenry. The situation may suggest that we might seek the lesser of these two evils, but the choice is far from obvious.

Conclusion

Our point in discussing social justice missions of faith-based schools and mentioning the example of ACE schools is not to defend faith-based schools but rather to undermine a possible objection to our argument; namely, the objection that faith-based schools in America remain, in principle, more of a threat to social cohesion than do public schools (even if one concedes that common schools today do a poor job of providing the kind of citizenship education that would facilitate social cohesion). Also, as we stated above, our goal in this paper was not to argue that faith-based schools pose no problems to society or their own students. Rather, we have restricted our focus to arguing that the force of one particular charge which has historically been leveled at faith-based schools in America has diminished.

If the American educational ethos were to change radically and public schools began to look like those envisioned by Dewey, our argument would need to be reconsidered. However, given the state of America’s public schools today, there is little basis on which to continue to insist that faith-based schools pose a unique threat to social cohesion. If the worst faith-based schools were denied support on those grounds, as we believe they should, the public schools that neglect a social mission should be similarly denied. There may be reason to hope that the aims of public schools will once again broaden and that America’s public schools will begin to live up the aspirations of their most idealistic reformers. Until that time comes, educational theorists must acknowledge the state of the schools that exist and consider whether the historically persistent charge that faith-based schools are a threat to social cohesion remains relevant.

References


Endnotes

i Mann proposed, however, that the common school would nonetheless sustain a generic, non-sectarian “common Christianity” as its moral foundation, which was a largely a reflection of the dominant social mores of nineteenth century American Protestantism. Roman Catholics rejected “common Christianity” because they regarded it as “common Protestantism,” and many non-Christians objected to the religious education in the schools. Eventually, “secularism” displaced the notion of “common Christianity” in the common school.

ii For a fine account of Dewey’s skeptical position on religion, especially on how it relates to his educational thought, see Feinberg (2011).

iii At the same time, since Mann and Dewey also wrote within the context of a nineteenth and early twentieth century Catholicism which was strongly influenced by Pope Pius IX’s authoritarian, triumphantist, anti-modern, and anti-democratic views, one must be wary of any synchronic liberal conceit that roots its assertions about Catholicism in a pre-Vatican II context. Walter Feinberg argues that Dewey’s concerns about Catholicism were “understandable,” given his moment in history, but that “had [he] emphasized his other values, such as community and pluralism, had he explored the possibilities for pluralism within a tradition, he might have been more hopeful about the possibilities for openness and tolerance within Catholicism and other religious traditions” (Feinberg, 2011, p. 268). To generalize, secular critiques of any faith based schools must be examined for their reliance on outdated portraits.

iv “The common school was intended, by its proponents, above all as the instrumentality by which the particularities of localism and religious tradition and (in the United States) of national origin would be integrated into a single sustaining identity” (Glenn, 1988, p. 9).

v This is a widely noted phenomenon. For a valuable recent account of the history of aims and its relation to the accountability movement, see the overview by Rothstein, Jacobsen and Tamara (2008, pp. 13-34). For the impact that these aims have had in the classrooms of public schools, see pp. 181-198.

vi A charter school in America is a publicly funded school that that is independent, in that does not fall under the administrative umbrella of its local public school board.

vii As described in an otherwise positive account by Paul Tough (2008).

viii See, for example, Dwyer’s critical account of ACE schools (1998, especially pp. 16-19) or Sweet’s description of an ACE school in Canada (1997, pp. 88-92).
Writing almost a decade before No Child Left Behind, Bryk, Lee and Holland argued that, based on their study of Catholic schools, Catholic schools have managed to retain a concern for the common good that common schools have abandoned: “Although the common school ideal inspired the formation of American public education for over one hundred years, it is now the Catholic school that focuses our attention on fostering human cooperation in the pursuit of the common good” (1993, p. 10; see also 41 ff. and 303-304).

Halstead makes this argument, addressing the British context: “it is difficult and unfair to single out faith schools as a major factor in divisiveness in comparison with other factors such as discrimination and economic depression” (2009, p. 53).

*Avi Mintz is an Assistant Professor, School of Education, University of Tulsa, Oklahoma

* Graham P. McDonough is an Assistant Professor, Centre for the Study of Religion and Society, University of Victoria, Canada
Elizabeth Dowling*

RELIGIOUS LEADERS LEAD... OR DO THEY? AN EXAMINATION OF THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE REC IN AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Abstract

Leadership makes a difference to schools. Religious leadership in schools is exercised on different levels and through a variety of roles; however this paper argues that the Religious Education Coordinator (REC) has a key role in the delivery of quality Religious Education (RE) and consequently should have a significant educational leadership role in Catholic primary schools. This paper seeks to explore the changing perceptions around the leadership role of the REC. Drawing on contemporary literature and recent RE research, the author contends that the knowledge, skills and enactment of school leadership are fundamental for the effective implementation of the RECs responsibilities as a leader in RE. It identifies the supports necessary and challenges of the leadership dimension of the role. Finally it provides stimulus for Catholic primary school communities to critique their own leadership practices in order to raise the status and better support the dimensions of leadership required for the REC to succeed in their role.

Background to the role of the REC in Australia

In the Australian context the term REC is a title to signify those who have been designated to oversee RE in Catholic schools. Consequently the REC has key responsibilities to support and supervise all aspects of the day-to-day coordination of RE programs in church and school settings. Whilst RE is a shared enterprise of the whole school community, the REC must work in collaboration with the principal, leadership team, church leaders and school staff to promote the teaching of religious studies and foster the development of RE within a school/parish context. In this way they assist the principal to ensure that systematic, developmental and supportive processes are in place to bring about effective RE within the school.

REC’s have been operating within Australia since the early 1970’s under a variety of names and structures, and the role has evolved since its inception (Engebretson, 2006; Fleming, 2001). The implementation of the role has been guided by publications from Catholic Education Commissions and Catholic Education Offices (CEO). A recent review of these publications indicates that from an educational perspective the REC is delegated a key responsibility by the principal for teaching and learning in RE. Many dioceses have developed statements that unambiguously value the leadership contributions of the REC. This is interesting because the REC traditionally provides a wide range of advice and services for schools, teachers and members of the Catholic education community and has been called to demonstrate a commitment to quality RE. Contemporary discussion of the role now elevates this notion and suggests the REC must provide vision and leadership in RE too.

An analysis of the various diocesan documents provided by Fleming (2002) recognised that some of the role descriptions of RECs are very detailed. The benefit of this thorough and explicit documentation is that it clearly specifies the roles, responsibilities, employment and professional learning requirements of the REC and reflects their pivotal role in leading and supporting the school’s RE program. By making the skills and knowledge expected of RECs transparent and accessible, RECs will be better placed to succeed in their leadership role. How the written requirements align with the reality at a local level, however, is another issue.

The author’s recent review and analysis of official CEO documentation on the role of the REC in Australian Catholic primary schools illustrated variance in the ways in which RECs operate and are supported. Ambiguity and complexity associated with the role is reflected in the lack of consistency and agreement
with regard to clear expectations, responsibilities and priorities of the role. This finding concurs with Buchanan’s (2005) study that there is “no clear uniform perception about the role” (p. 6). There is also a lack of clarity as to the scope and extent of leadership needed in this role. As religious learning in Catholic primary schools is arguably dependent upon the exercise of effective leadership, this apparent variation in system guidelines indicates that there needs to be more clarity about the specific leadership role of the REC. A paucity of documentation “fleshing out” the leadership dimensions of the role exacerbates the effectiveness with which the REC can fulfil the role and identifies a source of tension in determining the most appropriate ways of evaluating their performance. This lack of clarity and agreement by major stakeholders is a significant area of concern and invites further scrutiny as it is fundamental to any attempts by Catholic schools to create and define new understandings of the leadership role of the REC. A paucity of documentation “fleshing out” the leadership dimensions of the role exacerbates the effectiveness with which the REC can fulfil the role and identifies a source of tension in determining the most appropriate ways of evaluating their performance. This lack of clarity and agreement by major stakeholders is a significant area of concern and invites further scrutiny as it is fundamental to any attempts by Catholic schools to create and define new understandings of the leadership role of the REC. Calls for lucidity in regard to this issue are not new. As far back as 1999, Bezzina and Wilson recommended a “greater commitment to religious leadership” (p. 39). They generated a number of options for religious leadership into the future including: a) status quo; b) raising the status of the role; Assistant/Deputy principal RE c) raising the status of the role and sharing some responsibilities; a second Assistant Principal as well as REC; d) shared religious leadership; and e) thinking outside the square (1999).

As each Catholic diocese is autonomous in the management of its schools, a measure of leadership diversity is necessary and inevitable, as schools conform to the local challenges placed before them. Nonetheless, these varying perceptions have made it difficult to establish agreed expectations regarding the different dimensions of religious leadership required in this leadership role. Notwithstanding legitimate variations across different contexts, a commitment to and a priority to seek to deliver outstanding religious leadership particularly in designated areas like curriculum and professional learning, is necessary in order to ensure the continuing credibility of the subject. The challenge for each diocese is to make adequate provision for this leadership dimension and to specify what it may entail in practice.

Coordinator or leader?

Perhaps the ambiguity about the leadership role of the REC needs to be explained. Historically, the REC position has been labelled as a coordinator’s role, as opposed to a leader’s role. A coordinator brings together, makes links and establishes routines and common practices. In contrast a leader offers expertise and directs and guides the development of the subject to raise standards. The concept of religious leadership, therefore, offers a greater degree of responsibility, direction and accountability than the notion of coordination. A distinctive focus on the leadership dimension of the role has occurred in recent years.

Table 1.: Upgrading of the role of the REC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diocese</th>
<th>Year, Title &amp; Responsibility</th>
<th>Year, Reviewed Title &amp; Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>1984, Coordinator Development, coordination and delivery of religious education curriculum</td>
<td>Draft 2005, REC- equivalent to DP A central leadership role with broad responsibilities for the learning programs and life of faith in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>1983, Coordinator Curriculum development and planning</td>
<td>2007, REC leadership in ensuring quality teaching and learning in religious education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>2004, Coordinator Involved in leadership structures</td>
<td>2009, AP Religious Identity and Mission (Masters Degree)Work as part of leadership team and actively shape the religious identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table highlights that Catholic primary schools have been challenged to review the arrangements made to designate positions of religious leadership. As a result, the new title “Assistant Principal” used by the CEO’s of Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra and Darwin (CEOA, CEOB, CEC, and CEOD) and the financial remuneration equivalent to a deputy position have given recognition to the increased professional status of the role. Further, the documents specify that leadership is required as opposed to simply coordination. Despite these positive leadership developments, anecdotal evidence from practising RECs suggests that greater promotion about the importance of the role is still required to raise the leadership status. Some current serving RECs report a disjunction between their actual work and what others perceive their work to be. This suggests that ambiguities about leadership that have evolved from the CEO documentation remain and need further attention (Crotty, 2002).

System support for RECs to promote the leadership dimension of the role

In order to meet the expectations of the aforementioned documentation and to assist the REC to effectively function in the role, various CEOs across Australia have made a commitment to raising the educational qualifications of the RECs through a broad range of initiatives. A rich tradition of professional associations for RECs in their role, stretching back some thirty years includes the provision of collegial support, guidance and resources. Like other leaders, RECs require vision, support, management skills, and an understanding of contemporary leadership, curriculum and pedagogy to succeed in their leadership role. More specifically, different dioceses have placed a high value on formal qualifications for the REC. This is evidenced in Melbourne’s draft Leadership in Catholic Schools: The Role of the Religious Education Coordinator policy (CEOM, 2, 22) which moves beyond broad statements, and for the first time in the Melbourne context, spelt out a criteria for a substantive appointment with inclusion in the leadership team and remuneration equivalent to a Deputy Principal. Unlike preceding documents, it aimed to ensure that RECs were prepared and equipped to become competent members of school leadership teams and rewarded appropriately. To be eligible for such senior positions, RECs need to be experienced and appropriately qualified. This continuing commitment to strengthen religious leadership in Catholic educational communities is realised through other CEO incentives (study support, resources, funding, etc) to encourage primary schools to make these criteria a reality.

For those desirous of moving into this upgraded leadership position, in partnership with the CEO, the Australian Catholic University (ACU) has tailored a Master of Religious Education degree to acquire professional expertise in theology, religious and leadership education. This course aims to extend knowledge and expertise to inform and enrich the leadership component of the REC role. Sponsorship for further studies at university level means that aspiring RECs or current RECs can avail themselves of this opportunity to develop their leadership skills in the area of RE. Commitment to academic study at a system level has reinforced the belief that leading a school’s RE program requires a high level of leadership, administrative and management skills. A REC must be adequately qualified and capable to best perform in his or her role. This view has been validated by Crotty (2002, p. 191) who claimed further study “resulted in the combined influence of curriculum leaders and informed religious educators on religious education in the classroom, and in education generally”. Crotty also affirmed that further study for the REC has “increasingly been prized for its beneficial consequences” (p. 182).

Leadership or Management

Some scholars (Engebretson, 1998; Fleming, 2001) recognised the leadership and management aspects of the role of the REC. Distinctions made between leadership and management by these writers, while helpful in some respects, do not adequately reflect the complex nature of educational leadership and management in the current climate. Leadership and management are complementary, yet it is now well recognised that leadership goals cannot be achieved without sound management skills. D’ Orsa (1998) affirmed that the REC needed “sound management techniques which characterise good leadership” (p. 34). In contrast, McCarthy (2004) probing the nexus between leadership and management, suggested “Administration, executive and management are... not necessarily connected with leaders and leadership” (p. 28).
Notwithstanding the aforementioned perceptions of the managerial role, a paradigm shift has occurred and disquiet about excessive managerialism has led to the appeal for transformation of managers and administrators into leaders. RECs need to be leaders who are not primarily administrators or managers. They must be more intentional about their leadership of learning. The “leadership” aspect of the role is expected at a deeper level, requiring more than just experience and competence in a series of administrative or management skills. Whilst leadership and management are both necessary, leadership has priority over management. The responsibilities of the REC therefore go beyond claims of simply management of the RE program and calls for a more expansive understanding of leadership. This contention echoes the CECV Leadership in Catholic School Development Framework and Standards of Practice (LSF, 2005) which promoted a strong focus on educational leadership within a Catholic school as distinct from leadership for management.

This nexus is complicated by the fact that the leadership role of the REC may also be perceived as middle leadership/management as the role is a strategic role and RECs use their position to increase organisational effectiveness. Traditionally, managers occupy the middle ground in organisations, however, the roles that managers play and the expectations that others have of them are evolving. The capacity of middle managers to lead towards school improvement is hindered by various limitations cited by Brown, Boyle, & Boyle, (2002) including, time, role ambiguity, exclusion from decision making and lack of communication. These inhibiting factors, identified in UK secondary schools, must likewise be overcome in Australian Catholic primary schools if a commitment to strengthen the leadership role of REC is to be achieved.

Recent research exploring the leadership dimension of the REC role.

Support for RECs and their capacity to engage with and enact leadership for learning is less well understood but critical to the promotion of quality RE. For this reason the leadership role of the REC in the Melbourne Archdiocese was investigated in more detail in 2005 in a joint research pilot project undertaken by the CEOM, in conjunction with the School of Educational Leadership, ACU. This two year pilot project tracked 13 RECs who had attained their Masters of Religious Education and were elevated to the position of Assistant principal with matching salary conditions, and inclusion in the leadership team. The Primary Religious Education Coordinators’ Pilot Project (PRECPP) drew upon surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews to map the leadership dimensions of eligible RECs. The findings and recommendations focused on the RECs in their school setting and sought to understand how they constructed meaning about their leadership role in Catholic schools. The final report (2007) illustrated that leadership team responsibilities were diverse and included: a) attending and participating in team meetings; b) ensuring the priority of the Catholic schools ethos; c) ensuring RE time is protected; d) preparation of and participation in selection interviews, e) meetings with the principal and parish priest (p. 21). This summary does not indicate the extent of leadership displayed by participating RECs unless there was awareness of their context before the study began however by the second year, findings indicated that almost eighty percent of participating RECs were exercising their responsibilities as members of school leadership teams. Further, some RECs were designated increasing responsibility in whole school leadership (2007, p. 41). Whilst we might celebrate the success in growth of leadership of the 13 RECs involved, it is also important to broaden support for the continuation and expansion of the leadership role for all in the role of REC. Though the role of the REC has been advocated as one of religious leadership within the school (D’Orsa, 1998; Engbretson, 1998; Crotty, 2005), the PRECPP report (2007) demonstrated that this is not necessarily the case in practice. Though the 13 RECs were elevated to more senior leadership positions, which included membership of school leadership teams, some respondents commented that there had been little or no change to the REC role (p. vii). In contrast, only one school indicated that the policy was “a matter of catching up with, and reflecting, good practice” (p. vii). This transition suggests that written aspirations do not transfer easily or automatically into action, and change in leadership practice will not occur quickly or spontaneously. Having positional leadership does not mean one has fully developed leadership capabilities. Whilst this research was particular to the Melbourne Archdiocese, the implications of the research for other dioceses are evident. It seems the existence of constraining factors beyond the control of RECs, means that the actual leadership work of RECs may differ from their desired roles. This lack of leadership growth over the two
What has become increasingly evident is that there is a need to deliberately foster and support the leadership growth of RECs. The PRECPP final (2007) recommendations related directly to the leadership responsibilities of the REC and directed that to facilitate the transition of the REC to whole school leaders, the new leadership role be clearly defined, that there be common understandings of the key responsibilities of the role and that principals utilize opportunities to “grow” additional leadership capacity in their schools (pp. 46-47). The research demonstrated that the leadership dimension of the role is inextricably linked to factors within the school as the workplace of the teacher and is subject to pressure and support from outside the system.

The need for suitable status and the difference between the theoretical status in documentation and the real status, financial arrangements, time and school based professional development was forwarded by Brandon as far back as 1984 and it seems these tensions still exist. Organisational arrangements are required to support the REC in their leadership role. Different Australian research revealed that the REC is supported by a range of structures and services including time release, professional learning and influences by the principal and leadership teams’ intent (Buchanan, 2005; Crotty, 2005; Fleming 2004). Fleming termed this support “symbolic” (p. 52). Both research and literature reinforced that RECs must be supported in a professional manner with the conditions that are necessary to enable the person to be most effective in the leadership role. Whilst different studies identified potential for and anomalies in the leadership role of the REC, it is clear that capacity building for REC in RE has been raised as a serious issue by various religious scholars. Further, the present leadership structure and organisation of some primary Catholic schools indicates that further improvements are necessary. The challenge remains to identify and to create the conditions for effective leadership so that RE is led by a recognised subject leader who makes best use of their leadership to ensure RE is acknowledged by virtually all learners and key stakeholders as being a priority in the life of the school.

**Encouraging the leadership role of the REC**

Whilst recognising the commitment, professionalism and dedication of many RECs any deficiencies in REC leadership must be addressed. In order to rectify this challenge, it is necessary that all Catholic primary schools be willing to confront the brutal facts of the current leadership reality in their schools. If RECs are to be encouraged and supported to grow in their leadership role, some key considerations are too important to be left to chance. Given that the work of the REC as an educational leader may be new, ambiguous and difficult, the following table (Table Two) is presented as a means of providing a framework for examining the leadership role of the REC and exploring ways to grow their leadership role. Whilst recognising that different school and parish contexts have implications regarding the leadership expectations for the role and responsibilities of RECs and the capacity of individuals to fulfil these expectations, the following considerations aim to proactively build the leadership capacity of REC’s in order that they in turn can lead staff to effectively implement the RE curriculum.

If, as has been argued, RECs are to be viewed as leaders within a Catholic school, then they must be empowered to participate more fully and actively in their leadership role. As REC role descriptions are negotiated at the local school level, Table Two may provide stimulus to renew local support and encouragement for the leadership role of the REC. It may also provide a sound basis on which to clarify options for the leadership role of the REC in Catholic schools. It can help identify the perceptions of the leadership role of the REC and to elucidate the conceptual and practical issues relevant to their leadership responsibilities. It acknowledges that an infrastructure must be provided that will enable the REC to develop the attributes and capabilities needed to lead the RE program. In short it is hoped that through collaborative conversations, schools may be able to reinvent the leadership practice of the REC, in varying
degrees, to provide effective forms of educative leadership. However for positive change to occur, all key stakeholders with a vested interest in the quality of RE, must work collaboratively to better understand the potential of the leadership role of the REC. A commitment to support the leadership work of RECs must also be extended to aspiring RECs.

Table 2: Review of the Leadership role of the REC in the Catholic primary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics for Review</th>
<th>Questions for discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership role of REC</td>
<td>In order to meet the responsibilities of their position, clear and specific guidelines are needed. Does the role description explicitly state the dimensions of leadership required by the REC in their specific roles and responsibilities? Are all key stakeholders aware of the explicit and implicit leadership expectations? Is RE pro-actively led and managed? As a school leader can the REC clearly articulate how important RE is in the life of the school and how this is demonstrated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and Appointment of REC</td>
<td>Prospective RECs require vision, leadership and management skills, educational qualifications and teaching experience which will enable leadership to grow and develop. What succession/mentoring practices are in place to nurture future RECs? Are there appropriate time/funding and support to nurture this development in ongoing ways? Are prospective RECs provided with formal and informal opportunities to grow in wisdom and leadership experience in the area of RE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction, Formation and Ongoing Professional learning of the REC</td>
<td>RECs are entitled to support in taking up their leadership role. Has appropriate and ongoing induction, information and advice/mentoring been provided to assist new RECs? Are RECs encouraged to be active in their pursuit of further contemporary knowledge and qualifications to fulfil their leadership role in the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Review of RECs</td>
<td>Regular performance reviews are a key ingredient to the ongoing process of professional learning for the REC and therefore it should be incorporated into professional practice both at the formal and informal level. Are regular reviews conducted to identify and prioritise the skills and attributes required by REC to lead RE? Are goals negotiated to promote their leadership as active members of the leadership team/executive? Is the capacity building of teachers part of the RECs performance review?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any developments will only occur with the full cooperation by CEOs, diocesan RE support staff, local parish leaders, principals, RECs and RE teachers. Success will be more likely to result if all parties are collegial and consultative. If key stakeholders take the opportunity to research, dialogue and proactively explore the nature and exercise of the key leadership role of the REC it may be possible to reconceptualise the attributes, skills and dispositions needed to successfully lead RE in Catholic primary settings.

Future directions

School leadership is currently the object of almost unprecedented attention. In educational literature, findings from diverse countries draw similar conclusions about the centrality of leadership to school improvement and the role of head teachers in the creation, management and leadership of culture in schools (Bush, 2003; OECD 2008). RECs operate within the intersection of community, staff, clergy, employing authorities and students and consequently experience the dynamics of competing challenges, aspirations and understandings held by these key stakeholders. In the domain of RE, system official documentation provided recognition of the need for and value of leadership in the role of REC. The increasing demands and complexity of the REC’s role, coupled with the increased span of what they are
expected to do signals a timely warning to re-imagine the role in ways which recognise and embrace their leadership potential. However, in RE, it appears this leadership theory, research and practice, needs to be more closely linked to research on effective teaching in RE, so that there is greater focus on what RECs as leaders need to know and do to best support RE teachers. In order to better understand and rectify this situation further research into the leadership role of the REC must be pursued. Whilst this review has identified some concerns about the capacity, credibility and responsibility of the REC in enacting the leadership required in their role, concern about the knowledge, time, energy, and skills required in leading RE, coupled with questions of modelling, infrastructure and other supports needed to actualise the leadership commitment may also serve as serious impediments to the leadership growth of RECs. Therefore it is necessary to further examine how RECs and key stakeholders in RE view the educational leadership responsibilities of the REC and better understand what strengthens their capacity to lead and what inhibits their capacity to lead.

The need to strengthen preparation and development for school leaders is recognised both nationally and internationally (Huber, 2004). Testament to the growing interest and investment in this field is the current OECD international activity Improving School Leadership. In the domain of RE this concern is further complicated by the changing context within which Australian RECs work. This context is characterised by increasing complexity in expectations of REC as leaders and greater demands for student accountability in RE. Perhaps the most visible form of accountability is the systemic requirements from CEOs like the reporting to standards (CEOM) and a Year 6 RE test (Catholic Education Office Sydney [CEOS], 2010) which compels leaders of RE to reflect on their role of educational leadership and its impact on student learning in RE. As schools and parish communities review and define the role of the REC in the light of their needs, expectations and profile, perhaps the significance and importance of the leadership role of the REC may emerge.

Key researchers (Bezzina, & Burford, 2010; Robinson & Timperley, 2007), policy makers and educationalists from a variety of educational contexts continue to make a major contribution to the national and international literature and debate on effective school leadership. This provides ample evidence of how critical the presence of effective and capable leaders is to workplace productivity, morale and student learning. In seeking to improve both learning and leadership in RE the intention of this paper is to help better understand the changing nature of REC school leadership in Catholic schools. It is clear that further research and more evidence are needed to explore how RECs as leaders lead in high stakes accountability environments. Mirroring the international OECD (2006) project which explored key leadership questions, those responsible for RE at both a system and local level should investigate how effective REC leadership can best be developed and supported. Likewise consideration must be given to what policies and practices would be most conducive to these ends. Such questions are not new, but what is new is the increased pressure to address them; pressures built up by the combined impact of ambiguity around the agreed roles and responsibilities of the REC; increased options and support for leadership development; the continued pressures of improved student learning; and the need to focus on a deeper understanding of the process and the role of REC leadership in cultivating and promoting the core work of the school- teaching and learning.

**Conclusion**

An understanding of leadership for learning is a valuable asset for all who work in Catholic schools, but more so for those who lead them. The REC can and should make an important and specific contribution to the leadership of RE learning. But attaining this goal may require that key stakeholders give REC as leaders, more possibilities in taking the lead. In the efforts to achieve high quality RE, RE but must be led—and deftly. In order to reflect the importance, status and complexity of leadership of RE, it has been argued that RECs leaders need to actively and confidently demonstrate educative leadership. In addition, a commitment to leadership training and support is necessary in order to enhance and develop the REC in their leadership role. In fact the development of leadership capabilities is an ongoing process for all aspiring and experienced RECs. The seriousness and complexity of this task cannot be overstated. Central to this
vision is recognition that, as leaders, RECs need to update their leadership skills and knowledge continuously, not only in response to a changing world but in response to new research and emerging knowledge about leadership learning and teaching. Hopefully over time, all stakeholders in RE will examine and intensify the leadership dimensions of the REC role and continue their commitment to ensure that the REC is a leader of RE. Realising the opportunities and meeting the responsibilities of leadership in RE may require continual questioning and courageous action. Success will depend on a shared clear and unequivocal vision of leadership in RE what its expectations are and how they can be supported and achieved.

References


*Elizabeth Dowling, Lecturer, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne Campus*
Jan Grajczonek*

THE CONSTRUCTION OF ‘CHILD’ AND ‘CHILDHOOD’ IN OFFICIAL CHURCH EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS PART 2: IMPLICATIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS

Abstract:

This paper following on from the paper “How Shall we Know Them? Part 1 - The Construction of ‘Child’ and ‘Childhood’ in Official Church Educational Documents” (Grajczonek, 2010), considers the implications that such constructions have for religious educators. It argues that at the heart of these implications are religious educators’ own views of ‘child’ and ‘childhood’. It is important that all educators purposefully consider the question, “Who is the child?” for themselves, and then how that sits with the construction of “Who is the child?” in these documents. Within the intricate and complex web that includes the Church documents’ image of the child, the contemporary early childhood image of child and the local cultural context of the image of child, religious educators must identify and articulate an image of “Who is the child?” that is aligned with their personal views, the local cultural context views, as well as with early childhood and Church views. Given the ambiguity that exists among these, the task of early childhood institutions and schools articulating their image of child is not without its challenges. However, it is essential that religious educators at the staff level come to shared understandings of the image of the child that is informed by all key elements, as without this articulation, the child will not be at the centre of all teaching and learning in the early childhood religion setting/classroom.

Introduction

Underpinning all decisions regarding young children’s learning is the image of the child as strong, competent and capable (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Fraser, 2006; Millikin, 2003). Contemporary early childhood education rejects the image of the child as being weak, deficient and needy. The image of the child held by an early childhood educator directly influences that educator’s philosophy of teaching, his/her approach to early childhood education and how he/she understands the construction of childhood. The image of the child and how childhood is constructed are also significant to early childhood religious educators. In a recent publication in the Journal of Religious Education (Grajczonek, 2010), the construction of ‘child’ and ‘childhood’ in official Church educational documents was interrogated. When compared with contemporary views of ‘child’ and ‘childhood’, the findings of this interrogation highlighted a number of ambiguities and challenges for early childhood religious education. This paper seeks to elaborate further on those findings of the previous study, specifically in terms of their implications such findings might have for early childhood religious education and religious educators.

Summary of findings of previous study

Before such implications are articulated, it would be helpful to summarise the key findings from the study. The specific documents analysed in this study included: Gravissimum Educationis, Declaration on Christian Education (Vatican Council II, 1965), The Catholic School (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977), The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988), and finally The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997). Extracts that included the words ‘child’, ‘children’, and ‘childhood’ to which specific characteristics and attributes were assigned were selected and analysed using Systemic Functional Linguistics (Freebody, 2003; Halliday, 1975, 1994) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (Freebody, 2003; ten Have, 2004). The analysis involved an integrated investigative process, which applied Systemic Functional Linguistics to determine how the language functions, and Membership Categorisation Analysis to gain deeper insights.
into the nature of childhood as described in the specific and implied category bound activities assigned to children.

The analysis revealed that overall in these documents children are not viewed as active agents either in their own experiences of childhood or as participants in decisions which affect their lives. Explicit in the documents is what is to be done to children and for children but by whom is not always made clear. On the one hand, it is at times implied to be parents and/or teachers. On the other hand, it is explicitly named as the family, the Church, and the Catholic school as responsible for children’s training and actions. Such training is assigned to children’s physical, intellectual and moral development. However, prudent training is explicitly required for children’s sexual development. With this emphasis on children’s development, children are constructed as becoming rather than being, that is, “the significance of the here and now in children’s lives” (Australian Government Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations, 2009) is not recognised or acknowledged. The training of children as articulated overall in these documents is to provide for, and protect, children - two of the ‘Ps’ in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), but remains silent on the third ‘P’ participation.

A further finding of the study was that children are constructed as deficient and vulnerable rather than capable and strong (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Malagazzi, 1993), unable to cope with secular culture which is implied to be harmful and pessimistic. This construction is particularly evident in The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997) which places children into a bleak world (para. 15) from which they seem to have no escape save through the Catholic school. This construction more than any other, constructs children as lacking any ability to initiate or enact change themselves.

Children are mostly constructed as the universal child, that is the one child representing all children, which disregards several key theories regarding early childhood, including sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1967), which advocates the social nature of learning and bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), which emphasises the many contexts children inhabit all of which influence their learning. However, children are acknowledged as unique individuals in The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 22). Children are placed in several cohorts including: vast numbers denied an education; many others denied a Christian education; and finally, in most cases as “children of God”. The “children of God” construction is particularly remarkable in that it places children alongside and equal with adults, that is, as a ‘competent subject’ (Dillen, 2007, p. 41).

Overall then, the contemporary image of the child as competent and capable, whose present being and current experiences are valued contradicts the image of child constructed in these documents. What does this contradiction imply for religious educators in early childhood settings?

**Implications for early childhood religious education and religious educators**

*Consider purposefully the image of the child*

At the heart of this discussion regarding the implications of how the ‘child’, ‘children’ and ‘childhood’ are constructed in the documents is this concept of ‘image of the child’. The image of the child directly shapes how educators understand childhood, which in turn shapes and maps approaches to teaching and learning. It is therefore crucial that before educators think about curriculum planning, preparation and implementation, that they first consider and articulate what is their image of child. Rinaldi (as cited in Hughes, 2007) argues that the following key questions must be seriously considered by all educators:

- Who is the child?
- What is childhood?
- Does childhood simply exist, or do we create it?
- Does each society create its image of childhood and of its child?
- How does a child learn? (p. 50)
Educators’ images of children have many reflections (Fraser, 2006) which include first, a personal one informed by our memories and experiences of our own childhood. Then, a more objective image that is constructed by our observations of children is added. The final and strongest reflection is the cultural one, “shaped by the values and beliefs about what childhood should be at the time and place in which we live” (Fraser, 2006, p. 20). Rinaldi (2001) emphasises the significance of cultural influences in shaping values and beliefs about what childhood should be. The contemporary image of child reflects society’s more significant valuing of children. It is as if society has re-imaged its views of the child and the construction of childhood, articulated more formally at the international level in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) as well as at the national level in Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Australian Government Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations, 2009). Certainly in nations such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States of America, and countries of Western Europe, children’s place in society is no longer hidden; they are active participants who have the right to articulate themselves about matters that concern them.

It is equally as important for early childhood religious educators to also consider and articulate their image of the child. However, for religious educators in the Catholic sector, in addition to their own personal reflections, and to the objective reflections as well as cultural and societal reflections, exists another reflection to be considered – that of the Church as articulated in its official education documents. Just as educators must know the key informing educational theories regarding the image of child and construction of childhood, early childhood religious educators must be cognisant of the Church’s image of child and its construction of childhood. Therefore our discussions regarding the documents’ views need to begin with how the image of child as constructed in such documents might inform and shape religious educators’ own images of the child. An extended implication of seeking to articulate one’s own image of child clearly and succinctly is the importance and necessity for all staff then to come to a shared understanding of what the image of child might be for their particular early childhood setting or school. This discussion at the Catholic setting would consider views of children at five levels: (i) first, each staff member would need to share their personal images and this should be done in a respectful way as a diverse range of images would be articulated; (ii) then it would be necessary to attend to the question of “Who is the child in this setting, at this time?”, which considers the specific local cultural context which has to be at the heart of all discussions and decisions; (iii) third, the image of the child as constructed in the Church documents requires exploration; (iv) next, the contemporary view of the child in terms of early childhood education theory must be also taken into account; and finally (v) a clearly articulated image of “Who is the child for us here at St. ....?” is required.

Responding to the question of “Who is the child?” is key for all educators working with young children in Catholic child care and early education centres, as well as early childhood settings in Catholic schools. Once religious educators consider this question both personally and at the institution level, other key implications concerning young children’s learning in the religion program can then be attended to.

Consider children created in “the image and likeness of God”

Two key images constructed in the documents were “children of God” and “created in the image and likeness of God”. These images deserve probed at a deeper level, as the documents include adults along with children in both constructions. Two different aspects of these constructions have implications for educators. First, in being constructed with adults implies that children are no less than adults and therefore command the same respect and treatment as adults. To do less is to enact ‘adultism’, which dismisses childhood and requires children to act like adults (Miller-McLemore, 2003, as cited in Dillen, 2007). With this as the central concern and starting point, all other decisions are then made so as to affirm and ensure children’s dignity and agency that is generally given to adults as a matter of course. The implication here is that religious educators invite children rather than demand, for example respect children’s decisions when they opt not to pray or respond during shared prayer sessions; seek their genuine input into decisions about when they would like to pray or which aspect of the church they would like to learn more about, or which symbol on the altar they would like to know more about, or which sacred symbols of other religious
traditions about which they would like to know more. Scaffold them in their emerging critiquing skills for example, by asking what were the ‘good’ or positive aspects of the prayer celebration or class prayer assembly and what were the ‘not so good’ or weak aspects. Probe more deeply into their responses by asking how they might improve prayer time or the gospel presentation. “I wonder what else we could add to the presentation of that gospel story to make it more alive, or more engaging, or more creative.” This enables young children to realise they can evaluate or question and they will come to realise that they are valued as participative agents rather than as passive recipients.

The second aspect of the particular construction “created in the image and likeness of God” which acknowledges the dignity of all children implies their sacredness, uniqueness and individuality. It is this understanding of children as unique individuals and having dignity that must underpin and drive our central modus operandi. This is related to the previous discussion but it does require intentional and explicit honouring of children, their questions, responses, ideas and the like. Sometimes in the busy and rushed nature of the days linked to young children’s seemingly endless energy with constant chatter and questions, such chatter and questions can be ignored, dismissed and/or disregarded as idle asides. Young children will soon come to realise that what they have to say, their input, their contribution is neither highly regarded nor important. Their sense of dignity and sacredness can be diminished. The only means we have of attending to the dignity and sacredness of each child is to listen, really listen and hear what it is they are seeking to express. The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education pays great attention to listening to each child, enacting a pedagogy of listening. The implication arising from this construction of children as being “created in the image and likeness of God” is a pivotal one for religious educators.

A pedagogy of listening requires the educator to listen with “the third ear, to hear implied meanings of children’s words” (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 249). Listening as practised within the Reggio Emilia approach is central to the learning relationship between educator and student and if an educator seeks to attend to the individual child’s learning he/she must first listen by being open and attentive:

  Listening is a premise of every learning relationship. Of course learning is an individual act, but we also know that learning is taken to a higher plane when there is the possibility to act and reflect on the learning itself. Representing our learning process and being able to share with others becomes indispensable for that reflexiveness which generates knowledge. (Rinaldi, 2006)

For religious educators to enact a pedagogy of listening, an acknowledgement of, and attention to, the dignity, uniqueness, and sacredness of each child is required. A pedagogy of listening (Dahlberg et al., 2007; Rinaldi, 1993) acknowledges young children’s speaking rights as well as the right to be listened to, that is, not be interrupted, or pre-empted or even manipulated. Their suggestions need to be legitimised. Overall, early childhood educators do take children’s agency seriously and ensure that they do have decision-making rights. However, during the religion class these same rights can be overlooked. An example of this is to respect children’s personal decisions when they make the choice not to pray during class prayer times. Comments made by teachers following a prayer time in which a significant number of children elect not to pray, such as, “You’ve probably forgotten how to pray,” (Grajczonek, 2006b, p. 166) imply that these children should have prayed. Such comments do not enact children’s agency and voice. To enact a pedagogy of listening would reflect an image of child that would explicitly say, “You, created in the image and likeness of God, have much to offer to this place; your ideas, thoughts, contributions and beliefs are valued, as is our relationship.” If the child is to be at the centre of all our curriculum and pedagogical decision-making, we need to first come to know the child, and to come to know the child requires relating to the child, speaking with the child, listening to the child. We cannot respond authentically and insightfully if we have not listened. At the same time, it is also equally as important to explicitly demonstrate and model for children their obligations to reciprocate listening to, as well as respecting and honouring others. Several times throughout the documents the child and children are constructed as “child of God” and “children of God”. Such images are at the same time both problematic and beneficial. On the one hand, tensions arise from this construction as it suggests that all children in the class are children of God and educators know that given the pluralist nature of student populations in Catholic schools, not all children would ‘fit’ this image. When religious educators are reflecting upon their image of the child in terms of
their diverse lives and backgrounds, they cannot disregard children’s diverse religious contexts. Educators’ views of what the child is and ought to be is rooted in culture, society and family values (Fraser, 2006), but family religious traditions must also be taken into consideration. We do not only live in a multi-cultural society, but we also live in a multi-religious society and that society is reflected in education systems, including the Catholic school system. Our image of child must reflect this diversity across all aspects of their learning, including the classroom religion program.

In the first instance then, all educators in Catholic schools need to be aware of the nature of the student populations in their classrooms. If early years educators do not know who are Christian and not Christian, then they run the risk of not acknowledging the Other, or worse, completely disregarding and dismissing the Other, treating all students as belonging to one faith, in this case, Catholicism (Grajczonek, In press). There is much discussion and debate surrounding the issue of students who are not Catholics in Catholic schools (Chambers, Grajczonek, & Ryan, 2006; Donlevy, 2002, 2006) and further clarification of the complexities associated with this issue is certainly required. Notwithstanding that however, one effective starting point for early childhood religious educators would be to acknowledge and embrace diversity giving ‘voice’ to all young students. One way we could enact this is to invite everyone to share their religious beliefs, rites and celebrations, key religious days and the like with other class members. Such discussion can initiate rich interest and engagement.

An example of how to acknowledge the Other was recently shared by an early childhood religious educator who gave ‘voice’ to a young Hindu boy when he wanted to share the excitement of his family’s previous evening’s religious festival at home. He had brought the symbol of the particular deity, Ganesha, to school and was able to explain the significance of this symbol with great passion. His knowledge and ability to express that informatively and enthusiastically ignited immediate response and interest in the classroom and the teacher recognised the ‘teachable moment’. She then reached for the candle, crucifix and coloured cloth from the prayer table and shared the religious significance of these three symbols for Christians. Suddenly, the young students were engaged in what these symbols meant for Christians (and most were Catholics) and wanted to know all about them, other symbols and their associated celebrations. Following the investigations over the next few weeks, these young children were then able to stand up and share elements of their own religion informatively. The teacher reported that her classroom religion program in that year had been the most successful and effective in terms of students’ interest and engagement in, as well as knowledge, understanding and appreciation of, the classroom religion program outcomes.

**Emphasise children’s ‘being’**

The documents also place a significant emphasis on children’s *development* rather than their *being*. In this construction, children are viewed *universally*, the *one* child representing *all* children who develop through a series of stages including physical, cognitive, social and moral. It is as if children are passive recipients seemingly ‘caught’ or ‘stuck’ in a particular stage of development, waiting for the appropriate adult training to proceed to the next stage. These developmental theories had significant influence on children’s religious developmental theories (Fowler, 1981). Poststructural theory influenced by the work of Foucault (1972), challenges these theories of structures into which children are placed in order to explain their development, advocating that children should have agency in constructing their own lives. Poststructuralism argues that *the child* in the singular form cannot be representative of *all* children, as each child’s experiences of childhood is unique and distinct to a variety of contexts including their social, cultural, political and religious contexts.

Such challenges can also raise dilemmas for early childhood religious educators who on the one hand, call on such theories as Fowler’s to assist in their considerations of young children’s approaches to learning in the religion program. For example, they know that it can be difficult for the young child to fully understand and appreciate the metaphorical and religious meanings of the sacred creation myths. They know that if not presented in the appropriate ways, young children in the intuitive projective faith stage
(Fowler, 1981) find it difficult to distinguish between fact and fantasy and therefore can take such stories literally. However, on the other hand, if they hold the image of child as competent and capable, they know that they can find ways of explaining the role of metaphor and how it has assisted all cultures to try to explain their beginnings and relationships with their creator/s. By paying attention to children’s being at the present time, religious educators can harness their strength and capabilities, listen to their ‘voice’, to their questions, wonderings and even explanations about such key stories. Religious educators can explore with children the richness of the Australian Indigenous Dreaming stories and how they provide meaning for Aborigines’ understandings of the origins of life and world. Young children will be intrigued and engaged in such investigations. The new sociology of childhood (James & James, 2004; Mayall, 2002) focuses on the child as an individual and values each child’s being and current experiences of his/her childhood. This understanding has been captured and embraced in Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (Australian Government Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations, 2009) which emphasises young children’s being:

Childhood is a time to be, to seek, and make meaning of the world... Being recognises the significance of the here and now in children’s lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life’s joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present. (p. 7)

Enable and activate children’s resilience

The documents, particularly The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997) also construct children as vulnerable. When educators view children as vulnerable they construct them as needy and wanting, rather than as independent and strong. Yet again, we meet this construction of the ‘deficit’ rather than the ‘abundant’ child. Educators know the importance and value of young children’s resilience. Children cannot be cocooned from life’s challenges and it is essential that young children are encouraged and shown how to deal with challenges and frustrations, to explore fresh approaches, to persevere and persist. Eaude (2009) insists that children’s search for meaning necessarily involves them trying to make sense of difficult issues such as suffering, pain and loss, and that too often this is the one aspect of children’s spirituality that adults avoid perhaps in their overriding desire to protect children. However, it is as important for children to try to make sense of such issues as it is for adults. In his program “Ten Sources of Power and Perspective” (pp. 171-209) which is a series of steps that offer “ways of empowering that deeply felt impulse that is the innate spirituality of children” (p. 173), Hart (2003) suggests that educators assist children to master themselves, to take that deep breath and work through the initial frustration or discomfort, to persist rather than to give up.

Many instances can occur during any one day in which children become upset and feel powerless, and during such times teachers could support and scaffold children to problem-solve, to respond and to initiate a positive outcome, rather than react. Children’s literature is filled with individual children who take agency, who are resilient and who do take the initiative to achieve positive outcomes, rather than react in negative ways. A very negative image of children’s circumstances was conveyed for those children constructed as the “new poor” in this document (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, para. 15). Educators could respond to this construction in a variety of ways. First, ensure that the class/group takes initiative and agency during any whole school activity that focuses on providing aid for children in such circumstances. Let them be part of the decision-making processes regarding what can be done and how to do it. Discuss with children the Church’s stance on social teaching and social justice particularly with regards to what the Church means by an ‘option for the poor’ (Grajczonek, 2006a). During such discussions and school activities, assist children to realise that all of us have the capacity to make a difference in others people’s lives, just as we have in our own lives.

Another aspect of this vulnerability is children’s seeming inability to cope with the bleak environment of the contemporary world (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, para. 15). In this particular construction, little sense of hope is generated. However, it is important that educators ensure an optimistic and positive view of the world is promoted. Children cannot come to believe that they or others are victims...
of a world that offers no hope or of circumstances that are insurmountable. Indeed the Christian worldview is one of hope. It is essential that children do not become overly anxious about the state of the world, or that they have no ways of enacting change. Young children can be taught the Christian understanding of hope and can be scaffolded to voice what that ‘hope’ might look like, sound like and feel like in the early years setting or classroom, in the school and in the community. They can be assisted and scaffolded to appreciate that they can enact that hope; they can enact that change. It would also be equally as important to assist children to reflect on any change they enacted, explicitly acknowledging and articulating their efforts and successes.

Conclusion

The construction of the ‘child’, ‘childhood’ and ‘children’ in these official Church educational documents has raised a number of significant implications for all religious educators. Recognising that ambiguity exists in these constructions, impels educators all the more to know in what ways they can respond to ensure young children’s participation, to enact both their agency and voice. This paper has considered several implications for religious educators that calls for their own articulation of the image of the child, the consideration of the dignity and sacredness of each child who is created “in the image and likeness of God”, the emphasis of children’s being, and the enabling and activating of children’s resilience. These implications are only examples and are by no means definitive. They are offered as ways to open discussion and as springboards for further discussion and implementation into the early childhood religion program as well as into the religious life of all early childhood settings and classrooms. It is also important that discussion goes beyond the classroom to the wider school or centre setting. At staff meetings, school/centre committees meetings, professional development sessions, and the like, religious educators can be advocates for children’s voices and participatory rights not only in their own classrooms but also in the wider setting outside of the school/institutional contexts.

References


Grajczonek, J. (2006b). "Wot's in a string o' words?": An ethnomethodological study investigating the approach to, and construction of, the classroom religion program in the Catholic preschool. Unpublished EdD, Griffith University, Brisbane.


* Jan Gracjzonek is a lecturer in the School of Religious Education, McAuley Campus, Queensland
TRANSFORMATIVE CATHOLIC PEDAGOGY – A TEACHER INSERVICE AND EVALUATION PROGRAM IN THE DIOCESE OF WILCANNIA-FORBES (PART TWO)

Abstract

This is the second in a two-part article that seeks to outline and provide selected working examples of one approach by a far-western NSW diocese to map the total life of a Catholic school. This approach is entitled ‘Transformative Catholic Pedagogy’ (hereafter TCP or ‘Six Circles’). As its titles suggest, it refers to a process of mapping six spheres or circles of involvement across the total curriculum or life of a school, ranging from Grace-, God-, Jesus-, and Reign of God-images, through the foundational characteristics of a Catholic school, and onward through the spheres of spirituality, pedagogy, teaching strategies and professional development. This TCP framework has been employed between 2008 and 2010 across eighteen primary schools (some one hundred and forty-five teachers, with staff gatherings ranging from four to twenty-two teachers) in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes, as well as in primary and secondary schools, and Catholic Education Offices, in other dioceses.

Part One provided an introduction to TCP and outlined the components of Circle One – God’s Grace, God as Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, and the Reign or Kingdom of God. Part Two addresses TCP Circles Two to Six, maps key themes across the Six Circles, and summarises teacher evaluations on the process. Finally, as for Part One, this article’s contents and insights are counterpointed throughout with quotes on personal, spiritual and social transformation from a range of authors cited throughout the program. These include the Franciscan Richard Rohr, in this author’s view one of the most significant Christian commentators today on these and other topics.

Circle 2 - The five characteristics of a Catholic school

‘It is of utmost importance, therefore, that the Church’s institutions be genuinely Catholic: Catholic in their self-understanding and Catholic in their identity’ (John Paul II, 2004, cited in Miller, 2006, p. 18)

Circle Two is focused on five major aspects that characterize all Catholic schools, not only in Australia but worldwide. These five characteristics are proposed and explained by Archbishop J. Michael Miller in his booklet The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools. He argues that all Catholic schools are:

1. Inspired by a supernatural vision
2. Founded on a Christian anthropology
3. Animated by communio and community
4. Imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum
   • Love of wisdom, passion for truth
   • Integration of faith, life and culture
5. Sustained by Gospel witness
(Miller, 2006, pp. 17-59)

During discussions about Circle Two, teachers are given a copy of Archbishop Miller’s text along with an ‘easy reading translation’ completed by the late Barry Dwyer (2007). The original text of Miller’s chapter on Catholic schools contains rich and thought-provoking phrases which teachers are encouraged to meditate upon and discuss, such as – education forms the whole child, the inalienable dignity of the human person, schools exist not just to promote worldly success or a higher standard of living, Christ is often ‘fitted in’ to a school rather than being its vital principle, and ‘the spirit of Catholicism’ permeates the entire curriculum (Miller, 2006, pp. 20, 21, 26, 42).
Another useful and complementary listing of Catholic school characteristics is found in the writings of Thomas Groome. Groome builds upon the work of Langdon Gilkey in suggesting a total of eight key characteristics infusing the Catholic Christian tradition. He begins by naming *five main* characteristics of Catholic Christianity. To these he adds *three* other substantial characteristics evident within the tradition. The first five he calls key *theological characteristics*. These are:

1. Its positive anthropology—a benevolent or *caritas* understanding of the human condition;
2. Its conviction about the sacramentality of life—that there is always “the more” to be found in the ordinary and the everyday;
3. Its emphasis on relationship and community—the conviction that humankind is “made for each other”;
4. Its commitment to history and tradition—honouring the legacy of wisdom, arts, and sciences, including the Scriptures and traditions of Christian faith left by generations before us; and
5. Catholicism’s appreciation of a wisdom rationality—favouring a reflective way of knowing that encourages responsibility and wisdom for life.

The last three he calls the three *cardinal characteristics*, since they act like ‘hinges’ (Latin, *cardo*) that bind the five more theological characteristics together. These three are:

6. spirituality—on seeking ‘holiness’ of life;
7. working for justice and the social values of God’s reign;
8. Catholicity itself—hospitality for all and, as St. Augustine emphasized, being open to truth wherever it can be found. (1998, pp. 59-60)

The process that teachers are asked to engage in as a whole school group or a number of smaller sub-groups (depending on the size of its staff) is twofold. Firstly, to add any clarifying words in parentheses to what Archbishop Miller has proposed, in order to make the text more meaningful and adaptable to the school in question. For example, one school added to the first characteristic, inspired by a supernatural vision, the words welcoming, nurturing, and being of service.

At the same time this raises the second part of the process – to express the school’s aims and vision for each circle in the form of present continuous verbs. As Rabbi David A. Cooper asserts, God is a verb – always active, flowing out, self-emptying, making all things new (1998, pp. 65-70) – so too is the school community which strives to act in the image of this ever-renewing God. Hence the form of the previous words – welcoming, nurturing, and being of service. The school has never completed the task but is always striving towards its goal. We are eternally pilgrims ‘on the way and under cover’ (Origen). The expression of central concepts such as God, spirituality and curriculum involvement expressed in the form of present continuous verbs (e.g. nurturing) is a principle applied to the construction of each one of the Six Circles.

**Circle 3 – Vision and Mission, Spirituality, Charism and Philosophy**

‘[of ‘presence’ as part of spirituality, Rohr writes] The mystery of presence is ‘that encounter wherein the self-disclosure of one evokes a deeper life in the other’. There is nothing you need to ‘think’ or understand to be present; it is all about giving and receiving right now, and it is not done in the mind. It is actually ‘a transference and sharing of Being,’ and will be experienced as grace, gratuity and inner-groundedness’. (Rohr, 2008, p. 64)

Circle Three focuses on the whole-school vision and mission, spirituality and charism(s), and overall school philosophy. This is the last of the three ‘inner circles’ of ‘being’ and is therefore on the cusp of the three outer circles of ‘doing’ or ‘action’. The concepts of vision, mission, spirituality, charism and philosophy are overlapping and inter-twined. The Vision includes the religious, spiritual and ethical guiding principles of the school; the Mission is how the school acts out its Vision. Spirituality is described in the next section below. Charisms include the spirituality and legacy of those religious orders that have been associated with the school (e.g. Josephite, Marist, Mercy, De La Salle, Presentation, Good Samaritan, and others). Finally, philosophy refers to the school’s system of beliefs, values and/or tenets. All of the above are typically
expressed in school documentation and handbooks, but more importantly in the person of the teacher—his/her personality, witness and service. However, the chief advantages of mapping these five aspects within Circle Three in particular, and the Six Circles in general, are brevity, visibility and clarity. It is therefore important for staff members to agree on the minimal number of words that capture each of these characteristics within Circle Three.

**Spirituality**

One can engage in different types of reading and reflection at the service of spirituality. Three typical types of reading are informational, recreational and formational. The calibre of reflection invited by the TCP-Six Circles process is assuredly informational, but at its most profound level it is formational and transformational. Such an understanding echoes the call to transformation present in the biblical narratives noted in Part One of this article. The nature of ‘transformation in spirituality’, that teachers are invited to embrace, exists on at least three levels – the quest for truth or ‘wisdom’, judgement, and appropriation.

Sheldrake writes:

> Because the study of spirituality is self-implicating, it is not only informative but transformative... ['information' includes historical data, textual analysis, theological frameworks, and various types of spiritual practices] However, beyond information lies a quest for ‘truth’ or wisdom embodied in a tradition or text and how this may be accessed. This confronts us with the questions ‘what difference does this make?’ and ‘what could or should our response be?’ This transformative dimension of the study of spirituality involves judgement (this makes sense, is important and of value) and appropriation (we seek to make this wisdom our own) (Sheldrake in Sheldrake, 2005, p. 13).

Returning then to the ‘spirituality’ focus of Circle Three, school staff are invited to name key words (ideally as present continuous verbs) that capture the concerns of this Circle – for example, welcoming, cultivating the spirituality of a saint, founder or religious order, promoting hospitality, encouraging a Sabbath spirituality, and so on. Some concepts and sources that teachers are encouraged to reflect upon include – spiritual consumerism (Rohr in Feister, 1996, p. 46); Alister E. McGrath’s writings on spirituality (1999); selected quotes from Marian de Souza et al (2009); and Mudge (2009). Teachers are also provided with reflections on the religious orders mentioned above, based on the official web sites of those orders. Finally, they reflect on the interconnections between Circles One, Two and Three as outlined in the next section.

**Statement linking Circles One, Two and Three**

The following is proposed as a statement that can assist in linking concepts addressed across the first three Circles of Being – Circles One, Two and Three.

*Grace* has its deepest roots within the identity of God; the identity of God is summed up in the intimate relationship of ‘communio’ that is *The Holy Trinity*; the Trinity is a way of naming our relationship with God, a way of responding to the gift of Love expressed in *Jesus Christ*, who is the Son of the Father, breathing life in the Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ is both the Parable of God and embodies the *Reign of God* which is central to Jesus’ own spirituality – this Reign is announced and lived out by Jesus. It anticipates the transformation and renewal of the earth, abundance and celebration, justice, and end to oppression, suffering and death, intimacy with God and harmony within the whole created order. All of the above is summed up in the *five hallmarks of the Catholic school*, and is in turn expressed in the teacher’s and Catholic school’s *vision and mission, spirituality, charism and philosophy*, which seeks to put into practice all the foregoing relationships, values and transformative practices.

**Circle 4 – The whole-school pedagogical cycle**

> ‘The question for us is always “how can we turn information into transformation?” How can we use the sacred texts to lead people into new places with God, with life, with themselves?’ (Rohr, 2003, p.1)
Circle Four represents the commencement of reflections on the outer three circles of ‘acting’ or ‘doing’ – what could be termed the visible ‘mission of the school in action’. Circles Four, Five and Six are the practical or concrete circles, yet they would be nothing without the theological, spiritual and ethical foundations built up during the construction and discussion of Circles One to Three. As with Circle Three, Circle Four is concerned with the articulation of present continuous verbs rather than nouns – just as it was noted that God is a Verb, so pedagogy is an expression of that same activity and ‘pouring forth’ in love, wisdom and service. In this context, a pedagogical cycle is understood as a full cycle of teaching, learning, assessment and reporting engaged in by every teacher in the school over the course of every unit, integrated study, or semester of work. Circle Four is devoted to an examination of the whole-school pedagogical cycle, not simply that of an individual classroom or teacher. This calls upon teachers to commit to a difficult and challenging project – a whole-school community (staff, parents, students, clergy, significant others) conversation on what is and what informs their pedagogical cycle.

Here, a pedagogical cycle is also understood as a discernment and spiritual formation cycle. In the context of schools and other teaching institutions, pedagogy, education and spirituality are interconnected realities. Bernecker reminds us that any authentic Catholic pedagogy involves the need to stop, listen, explore possible paths, and then respond. She writes: ‘In healthy discernment, we stop, listen, look around, [are] open to possibility, assess, wait, and then leap into action with deliberate intent’ (2009, p. 1). Bernecker’s cycle coincides with the five-stage biblical narratives already discussed above and also, as we shall see, a great deal in common with other more educationally-based pedagogical cycles outlined below.

In constructing words and phrases around Circle Four, teachers are reminded that this whole-school pedagogical cycle is employed by teachers and not students. The distinction to be made here is that Circle Four relates to the teacher’s pedagogical framework, Circle Five addresses teaching and learning strategies that can be observed in classrooms – what the students are doing. It should also be observed that liturgy, prayer, spirituality, and the construction of sacred space are unique and important aspects of a Catholic school’s total pedagogical cycle. Teachers begin by considering one already existing and significant Catholic pedagogical cycle – the Cardinal Joseph Cardijn model of See-Judge-Act-Review. This model focuses on the need to interact with society as a disciple of Christ, and to see, judge (ethically evaluate), act and review a situation as Christ would have done, based on Catholic scripture and tradition (Cardijn, website, 2005).

Examples of other possible school pedagogical cycles considered by teachers include – Community of Inquiry (Philosophy in Schools), Shared Christian Praxis (Groome), Integral Learning (Julia Atkin & Ned Herrmann); First Steps (Annandale et al, 2003), and other models obtained by searching for ‘teaching models’ in Google Images, Advanced Search – the Kolb, AGQTP, DETT, New Zealand Experiential, and the Corney and Batista experiential models.

Circle 5 – Whole-school pedagogical strategies for teaching, learning, assessment and reporting

‘The knowing of God includes both information – but it’s information that’s engaged in a relationship...[however] it’s primarily about reflective transformation. You want people to learn stuff so that they will want to change the world, in order that what they’re trying to do is imagine in real life God’s new creation – which is what the Christian hope is... - it’s about the transformation of all things’ (Charles Sherlock, ABC Encounter, 2010, p. 5)

Whereas Circle Four focuses on the whole-school pedagogical cycle from the teachers’ perspective (the pedagogical cycle that they typically employ), the focus of Circle Five is on classroom strategies taught to and engaged in by the students. In other words, Circle Four is a methodology known to by the teachers and not taught to students; Circle Five consists of strategies taught to students and observable in the classroom. Understandably, there are often links between Circles Four and Five. For example, shared Christian praxis in Four will be linked to R.E. unit teaching strategies in Five; de Bono’s lateral thinking theory in Four will be linked to Six Hats and CoRT strategies in Five, and so on. Some examples of Circle Five teaching/learning strategies are:

- De Bono’s Six Hats, lateral thinking, CoRT & related strategies;

Journal of Religious Education 59(4) 2011  51
• Kagan’s cooperative learning strategies;  
• Individual strategies such as KWL, Jigsaw, Think/Pair/Share;  
• PEEL (Project for Enhancing Effective Learning);  
• First Steps related strategies;  
• Bloom’s taxonomy strategies and focus questions;  
• Fertile Questions; and  
• Jolly Phonics & Mathletics strategies.

Circle 6 – Whole-school professional development and spiritual formation

‘[Richard Rohr has identified] two ways to live out ...transformation: the path of prayer to get rid of ego, and the path of suffering...For Rohr, the image of Jesus on a crucifix is a constant reminder of how much the world hates love. To follow Jesus we must be both forgiving and inclusive (exclusion is unforgiveness),...We have to experience that core teaching at an inner transformational level’ (Rohr, 2007, p. 2)

Circle Six focuses on the mapping of professional development and spiritual formation. The aim of this Circle is to construct a potted history of the school’s past, present and future professional development (PD). In order to arrive at a development perspective on their PD involvement, schools are asked to list some examples of PD prior to 2008 on the left-hand side of Circle Six, examples of PD between 2009 and 2010 in the centre of Circle Six, and projected examples of PD from 2011 and following on the right-hand side of Circle Six. For schools mapping the six circles after 2011, this can be translated as three periods of PD – the first three years prior to the present year, the PD that took place in the present year, and the PD planned one to two years into the future. In planning and projecting post-2011 PD, schools are also asked to consider an incremental approach to PD which builds systematically on foundations and key themes over three or four years, rather than to plan totally different and unconnected PD over that time. For example, schools in the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes are asked what PD they will initiate that will build on their existing diocesan foundations of shared Christian praxis, Integral Learning, First Steps, and other programs. Some schools aim to build on these foundations with programs on Sacred Space and Meditation in the Classroom (e.g. the Coming Home program – Christie, 2005). Others build on these same foundations with fertile questions (Harpaz & Lefstein, 2000) and philosophy in schools programs (Cam et al, 2007), or with a combination of Quality Teaching (Gore, Ladwig and King, 2004) and fertile questions methodologies. In each case a series of PD is in evidence that builds upon key themes such as questioning, quality teaching, prayer, and other important concepts.

Statement linking Circles One through Six

The following statement was given to teachers to assist them in linking key concepts across Circles One through Six:

Grace has its deepest roots within the identity of God; the identity of God is summed up in the intimate relationship of ‘communio’ that is The Holy Trinity; the Trinity is a way of naming our relationship with God, a way of responding to the gift of Love expressed in Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, breathing life in the Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ is both the Parable of God and embodies the Reign of God which is central to Jesus’ own spirituality – this Reign is announced and lived out by Jesus. It anticipates the transformation and renewal of the earth, abundance and celebration, justice, and end to oppression, suffering and death, intimacy with God and harmony within the whole created order. All of the above is summed up in the five hallmarks of the Catholic school, and is in turn expressed in the teacher’s and Catholic school’s vision and mission, spirituality, charisma and philosophy, which seeks to put into practice all the foregoing relationships, values and transformative practices. All of the above is also embodied in the school’s pedagogical cycle and TLAR strategies, based on the example of Jesus as Teacher, in the Catholic Wisdom tradition, and on the use of transformative Catholic pedagogies in individual classrooms and across the whole school. Finally, all of the above finds expression and confirmation in the school’s ongoing...
professional development cycle, and in the continuous tracking of foundational themes across the Six Circles and in the life of the school.

Example of one school’s mapping of Six Circles

Included below is an example of how one school has mapped their Six Circles. The following example is from St Joseph’s Parish Primary School, Peak Hill, NSW. Due to lack of space for the crucial Circle One, its contents are included at the bottom left-hand side of the slide:

St Joseph’s Parish School, Peak Hill – 6 Circles of Grace, God, Jesus, Reign of God, Ethos, Spirituality, Pedagogical Cycle, Strategies & PD

1. God's Grace, God as Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Reign of God – see key words and phrases below

2. The 5 Hallmarks of a Catholic School

2.1. Inspired by a supernatural vision – God, Divine, Sacred

2.2. Founded on a Christian anthropology – in intimate relationship with the person of Christ

2.3. Animated by Communion & Community – based on life of Trinity

3. The Philosophy, Vision, Mission & Charism of the School

3.1. God's Grace, God as Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Reign of God

3.2. Inspired by a supernatural vision – God, Divine, Sacred

3.3. Founded on a Christian anthropology – in intimate relationship with the person of Christ

3.4. Animated by Communion & Community – based on life of Trinity

4. Imbued with a Catholic worldview – includes search for wisdom and truth; fusion of life, culture and faith

5. TLAR strategies in the classroom

5.1. TLAR strategies in the classroom

5.2. The Philosophy, Vision, Mission & Charism of the School

5.3. The 5 Hallmarks of a Catholic School

5.4. The Pedagogical Cycle for TLAR (teaching, learning, assessment, reporting)

6. Professional Learning, PD & Spiritual Formation

6.1. TLAR strategies in the classroom

6.2. The Philosophy, Vision, Mission & Charism of the School

6.3. The 5 Hallmarks of a Catholic School

6.4. The Pedagogical Cycle for TLAR (teaching, learning, assessment, reporting)

6.5. Professional Learning, PD & Spiritual Formation

PD 2008
New Graduate Program; Outback Maths; Whole-school Literacy; Count Me In Too; SENA Testing;

PD 2009-2010
LTLL; TCP (Six Circles); First Steps Literacy & Maths; Statement of Faith; ICT & Smart Data; Jolly Phonics; SSNP; Low SES; Myraid Seed

PD 2011ff
TCP (Six Circles); Statement of Faith; LTLL; IT Updates; First Steps;

St Joseph’s Parish School, Peak Hill – 6 Circles of Grace, God, Jesus, Reign of God, Ethos, Spirituality, Pedagogical Cycle, Strategies & PD

God’s Grace – the smiles on children’s faces; creation; close relationships within a family-style school community;

God as Holy Trinity – The Human linked with the Divine; Loving; Linked to Family and Relationships; Guiding;

Jesus Christ – Friend, Brother, Companion, Role-model; Honour, dedicated to Tolerance and Forgiveness;

The Reign of God – Tolerance, Respect, Forgiveness, Not holding grudges, Empathy
‘There is a difference between change and transformation. Change happens when something old dies and something new begins...But change might or might not be accompanied by transformation of soul. I’m afraid it usually is not. If change does not invite personal transformation, we lose our souls... But the old [self, issue, addiction] does not die gracefully: It always takes hostages. These have the potential of building bridges to the next coming of Christ’ (Rohr in Feister, 1995, p. 292)
In Rohr’s words, the Six Circles mapping followed by the tracking of key themes is a process inviting not change but personal and staff transformation. Once the Six Circles are mapped initially, members of staff in sub-groups are asked to track some key themes across the Circles. They are asked to select a theme that will ‘test out’ the continuity of the Six Circles; in other words, to test if that theme is present across the total life of the school in its Being and Doing, not just in theory or just in practice. If, for example, the school knows that it is already effectively addressing the area of spirituality or differentiated learning, they are encouraged to pick a more challenging theme. They then track the theme by selecting examples from each circle linked to that theme.

Examples of themes that could have or have been tracked by schools include – service, justice, mission, teaching technology, teaching problem solving, using fertile questions, prayer, ecology and sustainability, welcoming, hospitality, differentiated learning, and inclusion. After being provided with an example of how one theme could be tracked (Community and Communio), St John’s Parish Primary School, Cobar were asked to map some additional themes. They selected the three themes of: Ecology and Environment; Welcoming, Hospitality and Inclusivity; and Teaching using ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). Their chart detailing the tracking of these four themes is shown on the previous page.

**Teacher evaluations of TCP**

> ‘In Christian discourse, the word “metanoia”...melds the concepts of repentance and conversion...[it results in] an unconditional commitment to a complete internal reorientation as well as the manifestation of this redirection in external conduct’ (Boisclair, 2007, p.862)

In many instances, the effects of the Six Circles mapping could be compared with a type of ‘metanoia’ (Greek, ‘a change of mind or heart, a new way of seeing and thinking’) in terms of ways in which teachers learned to think, teach, and apply concrete values within their particular school. The one hundred and forty five evaluations that were returned revealed that teachers experienced various degrees of transformation and new insight into areas as diverse as – teaching, transformational theory, spiritual formation, Cardijn’s see-judge-act paradigm, Christology, Trinitarian theology, the theology of Grace, and the links between their pedagogical cycle and teaching/learning strategies.

In what follows I have included the more common reflections from the Evaluation Sheets, written in response to four key questions.

**Question One** asked teachers about the most important insights and ideas that they had gained personally throughout the TCP process. Teachers commented that consideration of the Six Circles had helped them critique their teaching practice and theories of teaching and learning. They also appreciated: ‘taking time to reflect on our school’s ‘being’ and ‘doing’ through the Six Circles’, ‘every theory is linked to a practice and vice versa’, ‘there is a link between preaching and practising’, and that ‘there is a lot of power in naming and reflecting upon what is already happening at our school, then exploring the “gaps” or areas for improvement’ (Mudge, 2010).

**Question Two** asked teachers to consider ‘what specifically you would apply from this inservice to your teaching and to student learning in your particular classroom’. Some of the most common responses were: ‘to link all classroom practice to a Catholic Christian vision’, ‘focus on the importance of sacred spaces and the children’s relationship with God’, ‘continue to re-read and reflect upon the insights contained in the [two inservice] reading booklets for Six Circles’, ‘look at applying the facets, theology, and scripture from the first inner three circles [Circles of Being] to my actual teaching methods’.

**Question Three** asked teachers to reflect on ‘the strengths or areas of effectiveness present in the Six Circles PD sessions’. Their responses included multiple affirmations of the following: ‘taking the time to reflect on each Circle’, ‘to work as a staff group in reflecting on our school community and our vocation as teachers’, ‘having the time to identify strengths and weaknesses of our school approach across the Six
Circles’, ‘relating the inner circles in particular to our school ethos and teaching practices’, ‘the simplicity yet power of the whole process, and being led by the presenter step by step through the Circles’, ‘everything was related to the school and our particular situation, it wasn’t just theoretical or academic’.

Finally, when asked in Question Four to identify weaknesses or areas of development that needed to be addressed in order to improve the Six Circles PD sessions, teachers simply expressed regret that they did not have more time to consider each Circle and to complete more of the readings provided (it was explained that the booklets, containing many supplementary readings, could be reflected upon and discussed over a three year period); that they would have liked full days rather than after-school sessions to complete the process; and that the latter after-school sessions were too far apart at times to develop a sense of continuity and understanding in relation to all Six Circles.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Following completion of evaluations, schools were encouraged to continue their revision and mapping of the Six Circles by employing it within the following key contexts over the next two or three years:

- Continual revision of the Six Circles during targeted staff meetings by including the simplest possible layout and least number of words in each Circle;
- Revisiting the Circles prior to and following School Reviews;
- Reviewing diocesan and school Vision and Mission [the Wilcannia-Forbes Diocesan Statement of Faith];
- Planning ongoing Professional Development;
- Discussing staff spirituality, pedagogy, and other areas;
- Revising school mottos and preparing parent information during kindergarten enrolment and on other occasions.

What then are some general implications of this process for the parish school – their teachers, children, parents and local communities? Firstly, to enter into the process and map key components of what the school stands for is foundational. Schools need to articulate who they are, what they stand for, how they are affirmed and challenged, and how they respond on a daily basis to the Church’s mission. Secondly, Six Circles challenges schools with the question of ‘Where to next?’ What are the implications of this mapping process for future action and involvement – social justice in the community, deepening of prayer and spirituality, more profound understandings of whole-school pedagogy, finding ways to teach prayer, silence and meditation to staff and students? The possibilities are endless and all potentially transformational.

Finally, there is a need to reflect metacognitively on the nature of the process in which they have and will continue to be engaged – transformative Catholic pedagogy. How does it happen, how is it visible (how would you prove or provide evidence that certain aspects of it actually exist in relation to the teaching/learning/interaction of staff, students, and parents?; what in other words are its key indicators?), what implications does this mapping process have for the future development of the school, its links with other schools, and its place in transforming the local community and the world?

In the final analysis, as Rohr, Groome and others comment, the nub of transformation is not cerebral but concerns the personal integration of head, heart and hands. It is an active fusion of components from all Six Circles – being and doing, prayer/contemplation and action, ethos and pedagogy, spirituality and social engagement. It is a personal process which acknowledges that ideas, principles and spin don’t transform people – it is rather people who transform other people (Rohr, n.d., p. 1). Ultimately, transformation is relational and has its foundation in the interpersonal relations, visible in loving service and the outpouring of self to others, between the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Based on this central relationship, teachers and schools need to intentionally ‘waste time’ on such radical and useless concerns such as prayer, spirituality, faith formation, and spreading the Good News in order to bring the Six Circles to fruition:

I want to look at the experiences in your lives of people who’ve deeply touched you, who’ve deeply changed you. They’re always people who are not afraid to be personal. Ideas really don’t change
people. People change people. Those who are truly bringing good news are people who know how to be in relationship, who know how to waste time with you.

We need to waste time with the Lord, too. This is the foundation of our prayer lives. You’re not being unproductive when you wait for God, when you listen for and seek the Holy One (Rohr in Feister, 1995, p. 339).

References


* Dr. Peter Mudge is Lecturer in Religious Education and Spirituality at The Broken Bay Institute, Pennant Hills, NSW, Australia. His ongoing areas of interest and research include – religious education, spirituality, Studies of Religion, sacred space, connected knowing, transformative pedagogies, and the role of the arts in religious education and spiritual formation. He has received formal training in drawing and painting which he pursues in his home art studio.
A selection of his copyright-free religious art images can be found at: www.flickr.com/photos/ceoreals/sets
His contact email is: pmudge@bbi.catholic.edu.au
REFLECTIONS ON PRIDE

As teachers we often find that two or more first-order moral principles clash with each other. For example, we desire our students to have proper self-esteem, but fear that they, and we ourselves, are often too proud and esteem ourselves too highly. The following reflections may provide suitable material for students confused about the rival claims of self-esteem and humility. In Greek myth pride, or hubris, is punished when mortals fail to acknowledge the gods, but the punished show no contrition and may not know how they have offended. In contrast to the externality of the Greek sense of hubris, Jesus preached the need for inner rejection of pride even in one’s most virtuous actions as a condition for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Greek Religion

The dangers created by excessive pride, or hubris, are frequently depicted in Greek myth and drama. In Herodotus’s History, Artabanus, an uncle of Xerxes, King of Persia, warns his nephew against tempting disaster by his over-confidence:

Do you see how the deity strikes with its thunder the tallest animals, and suffers them not to be ostentatious, but the smaller ones do not at all offend? It Do you see how the god ever hurls his bolts against the loftiest buildings and trees of the like kind? For the deity is wont to cut off anything that is too highly exalted.

Many Greek myths warn against attempts to emulate the gods and failure to give them their due. Medusa boasts about her beautiful hair. As punishment her hair is changed by Athena into hideous snakes and her face into a Gorgon so ugly that it turns people to stone. Queen Cassiopeia insults Poseidon by claiming that she and her daughter, Andromeda, are more beautiful than his sea nymphs; in revenge Poseidon chains Andromeda to a rock, to be eaten by a sea-monster, but Perseus comes to her rescue. Bellerophon also slays a monster, the Chimera, but in pride he rides the magic horse Pegasus to the top of Mount Olympus, the home of the gods. Enraged at his presumption, Zeus sends a gad-fly to sting Pegasus and throw Bellerophon down to earth. He falls into a thorn bush and ends his life in misery, blind, crippled, and alone.

Icarus, son of the master craftsman Daedalus, flies high into the skies with wings from feathers and wax made by his father. Daedalus warns him not to fly too close to the sun, but the arrogant Icarus flies higher. The wax melts and, although Icarus keeps flapping his wings, he soon has no feathers left and falls to his death. Phaeton is a son of Apollo, the Sun God, and the nymph Clymene, but his schoolfellows laugh at the idea of his being the son of a god. His pride wounded, Phaeton persuades Phoebus Apollo to let him drive the chariot of the sun for a day. His pride soon turns to terror and he calls on Zeus for help. Instead, Zeus launches a lightning bolt and ends his existence. The proud Niobe boasts that her fourteen children prove her to be a superior mother to Leto, because the nymph has only the twins Apollo and Artemis. Artemis
and Apollo kill all fourteen of Niobe’s children with poisoned arrows. Niobe is turned to stone and weeps for ever as waters pour down her petrified cheeks.

In one version of the myth, the Titan Prometheus shows excessive pride by stealing fire for humankind from Zeus. In another version Prometheus usurps Zeus’s role as creator and fashions human beings from clay. In both stories Zeus punishes him by binding him to a rock and setting an eagle to eat his liver every day, only to have it grow back to be eaten again the next day. Prometheus became a hero in much later literature, but other writers pointed to him as a warning against presumptions to divine power.

Nearly every major figure in the Iliad and Odyssey suffers from hubris. When Helen’s suitors swear to defend her successful suitor against any challenge, they fail to sacrifice to Aphrodite. The revenge of the goddess is that Helen and her two sisters, Clytemnestra and Timandra, will become adulteresses who bring misery to themselves and their cities. Paris accepts the role of judge of the beauty of three goddesses: Hera, Athene and Aphrodite. He is bound to offend two of the three. By choosing the Goddess of Beauty, Aphrodite, Paris gains Helen as his bride but condemns Troy to destruction.

Agamemnon in his pride sexually subjugates Clytaemnestra and thereby offends Aphrodite and Artemis, whose priestess she is. After Clytaemnestra gains revenge by beheading Agamemnon on his return from Troy, she vain-gloriously proclaims the day an annual festival. Her arrogance provokes her own son, Orestes, to avenge his father by slaying her. Ajax is punished for his pride in refusing the help of Athena in battle: he boasts that he can take care of himself. The proud Odysseus fails to thank Poseidon for helping him to trick the Trojans into admitting the Wooden Horse into their city, and later treats the one-eyed giant, Polyphemos, with contempt, even though he is a son of Poseidon. Faced with the wrath of Poseidon, Odysseus spends ten years at sea before he can return home, and ten only through the intervention of the goddess Athena.

Meekness is never commended in the Homeric epics or by the great tragedians. Just the reverse: pride is always to be upheld and loss of face avoided by heroes. Plato and Aristotle associated meekness with servile status; and Socrates, as represented by Plato, claims in pretended humility at the beginning of each dialogue that he is himself a very ignorant man, but only to demonstrate subsequently his superior wisdom even more decisively.

The Bible

God’s punishments in Genesis are very similar to those imposed by the Greek gods for excessive pride. God is depicted as hostile to the arrogance of his human creation that they might gain power like his own by eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Adam and Eve’s act of disobedience is comparable to that of Prometheus’s theft of fire on behalf of mortals. The subjection of the descendants of Adam and Eve to hard labour in the fields for men and the painful labour of child-birth for women seems less gruesome than Prometheus’s unending chewing of his liver, but that punishment affect him alone, not all future human beings.

The punishment of the people of Babel (Babylon) for building a Tower of Babel so high that it nearly reaches the sky is confusion of tongues and even more human misunderstandings than would otherwise have been the case. This echoes the punishment of Greek heroes who fly too high and so displease the gods by their pride.

Comparable, too, are the angels who fall from heaven through pride. They are major figures in several apocryphal works and in John Milton’s Paradise Lost, although not in Genesis. However, Isaiah prophesies that the King of Babylon will through his pride be brought low, like Lucifer, the Day Star.

How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God…I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High." But
you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit. Those who see you will stare at you, and ponder over you: "Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, which made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who would not let his prisoners go home?"

Ezekiel warns the king of Tyre, a city grown rich by trade:

Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God...Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations...They will bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas.

Many books of the Bible confirm David’s comment on the deaths of the proud Saul and his son Jonathan: ‘How the mighty fallen. Proverbs warns that ‘Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.’

In Job comes a powerful change in the concept of pride that comes before a fall. Job is at one level the study of a just man who believes that he has conducted himself so well in life that he ought to be immune from grief and suffering. Job’s gradual realization under God’s persecution of him and his family that pride in one’s own good works is misplaced, since we ourselves have not created the world in which we may for a time prosper.

Job before repentance has very much the sort of pride that Jesus castigates in the Pharisees of his day. They have what they consider justifiable pride in what they are and the way they live: they are of the seed of Abraham and follow the Mosaic Law. They feel no need to repent because they believe they have not sinned. Like the older brother of the Prodigal Son, they find it unjust and intolerable that the worthless should be preferred to the godly and diligent. The Pharisee in the Temple prays in his pride: ‘O God, I thank thee that I am not like the rest of mankind, greedy, impure, or even like that tax-collector over there.’ In contrast the tax-collector prays, ‘God have mercy on a sinner like me’. Many of Jesus’s listeners must have been shocked at his judgment in favour of the tax-collector; Jesus declares, ‘everyone who sets himself up as somebody will become a nobody, and the man who makes himself nobody will become somebody’. In Luke a Rich Fool is full of pride in his ‘plenty of good things laid by, enough for many years: take life easy, eat drink and enjoy yourself’. But that very night God ordains he must surrender his life.

Jesus made a huge demand: to be born again and fit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the penitent must reject pride in even those things they valued in their lives so far. This was easier for those with very little in which to take pride, but too much for those who thought they had lived godly and virtuous lives: their number included most of the spiritual leaders of the Jews.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says of Himself ‘Take your yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.’ Paul took up the same theme: ‘Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...’ Yet to many others Jesus seemed far from meek. Indeed, Jesus was attacked by ‘certain of the scribes’ because they thought him too proud for any human being. They asked, ‘Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? Whereas the Old Testament prophets usually introduced their messages with the words, ‘Thus saith the Lord!’ Jesus often begins with ‘I say unto you.’

During Jesus’s trial the high priests ask, ‘What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.’ (Mark: 14: 61-64). Jesus made a fundamental challenge to the Law and Prophets as they had been understood by the Jews. Their anger at what they saw as his pride and presumption led to the crucifixion.

The Church

As with all other peoples, Christians, especially perhaps their most able leaders have constantly been open
to the sin of pride. The more learned and inspiring the clerics, the greater the authority likely to be conferred on them and the greater the temptation to spiritual pride. Most of the great monastic movements began with the impulse to subdue pride and live a life of humility, but time and time again reform was needed, since monasteries were often richly endowed and temptation to ease and luxury became too great for some to resist. The same cycle also afflicted the Orders of Friars and the secular clergy.

St. Francis of Assisi found to his distress that some who had vowed to follow him in the path of humility were taken up with pride and ambition for power. After his death the ‘Spiritual’ Franciscans, who tried to lead their lives as he had led his, were declared heretical for preaching that ‘no friar should have anything save a robe with a girdle and breeches’ (Hay, 1964, p. 152). The Orders of military monks, especially the Knights Templar, were founded with a rule of poverty and abstinence, but they accumulated great wealth and were noted for their pride and refusal to obey any authority outside their ranks other than the Pope himself. Missionaries and Christians in strange lands have often found it difficult to combine the aura of authority needed often needed to get potential converts to listen to them with humbleness of heart.

The Teaching situation

Jesus did not teach children. Given that he had to order his disciples to suffer children to come unto him, it seems that children’s access to him was often limited. When Jesus declared that we must become as little children before we may enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the meaning was not that we should be childish, nor childlike, except in being open to new teaching, whereas men and women are likely to be much more attached to ideas and practices they feel unable to change.

Christian teachers are unlikely to want to follow Charles Wesley in presenting to students, ‘Gentle Jesus, meek and mild’, any more than to urge them to become ‘Christian soldiers marching as to war.’ Much as we ourselves may be moved by ‘Come down O Love Divine’ when it asks for ‘True lowliness of heart that o’er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing,’ weeping with loathing in the classroom is not what we seek. The call to ‘pour contempt on all my pride’ may not get the school week off on the best note. More fruitful might be John Bunyan’s Shepherd Boy’s Song:

He that is down needs fear no fall
He that is low no pride.
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

Most teachers rightly want their students to take pride in many of their national, family, school and personal achievements, yet also to check arrogance. Although a noble calling, the teachers’ task is not an easy one. Material such as that gathered here may help a little to relate significant episodes in our past to their own often difficult situations.

Anyone who has worked with students who are preparing to be RE teachers knows that of their latent fear of being asked hard questions by their prospective students. This fear is compounded if questions relate to the interface between science and religion. If, for example, you want to put the “cat amongst the pigeons” try asking student RE teachers if Adam and Eve really existed! One of the key reasons for this unease is that in both disciplines, student teachers often display poor content knowledge. This book does not address this underlying issue but it does provide some interesting insights - but not enough practical strategies - on how to answer student questions on science and religion.

The book is divided into three parts and takes an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on philosophy, psychology, education and scientific paradigms. The first part deals with children’s questions about death and what legitimate answers can come from science and religion. Part Two look at moral education and religion. The final part examines teaching science and religion. In each part there are several small and focussed chapters that are quite easy to read.

A general theme that is developed in Part One is that children often have a far more sophisticated understanding of death and dying than they are given credit for. This misapprehension is attributed to an overreliance in the past on the work of Piaget. The chapters here provide an overview of current psychological thinking on how children cope with death. Those who work in the counselling or student welfare fields will find the practical focus of many of the chapters very helpful. For instance, Saykaly’s chapter discusses understanding bereavement in children and McCormick raises the important issue of how to talk to children about death.

Part Two looks at moral education without a connection to a sponsoring religious tradition. This has great resonance for educators, in say, Quebec, where moral, and for that matter religious, education is under the auspices of public education officials. The chapters here seek to place moral education within a conceptual framework, one that stresses liberalism and tolerance. The chapter by Schleifer et al. is a very interesting and timely discussion on the concept of reasonable accommodation and how it relates to moral education. This is an extremely pertinent issue in Europe and in other erstwhile Christian countries that are now increasing secular. In this climate, moral education has devolved to public schools but how should they deal with the religious claims and sensibilities of students? This question is often raised in relation to Islamic students, perhaps most prominently, in connection with whether or not to allow female students to have their faces covered.

Part Three while focussing on teaching science and religion lacks a strong educational grounding. The chapters in this section draw largely on philosophical premises which while thought provoking may be of limited value to classroom teachers. Carr and Thesee, for example, examine the perceived conflict between science and religion and propose an epistemological solution based on the concept of ethical education. The chapters in this section are heavily influenced by the debate, largely in the United States,
The interdisciplinary study of religion and science continues to break new ground. With fresh scientific findings seemingly appearing daily in newspapers and on the web, religious belief in the twenty-first century ought to have a more comprehensive educational scope. Discussion about the relationship between religion and science has for the large part moved past tired issues (e.g., whether we evolved or were created directly by God), carving its way toward larger questions about the meaning of human life in a scientifically understood world. This book is an example of this development. Based foundationally on the idea of wonder (in the authors' words, the “spiritual side” of science), Drs. Tonie Stolberg and Geoff Teece provide a pedagogical tool that engages scientifically-informed topics so that students can reflect further and find illumination on the meaning of their lives.

The book is slim at only 139 pages in length—nearly half of which are sample lesson plans. The first half offers a brief outline of the authors’ approach, relying on a phenomenological theory of religious education and an understanding of scientific discoveries from the twentieth century. Many helpful points are made, but their development and organization could be clearer. The lessons, intended for ages 11 to 19, touch on universal questions of human meaning. They engage topics like cosmic origins, human death, the self, suffering, and destiny by employing modern scientific understandings, leading to student reflection and articulation of their own beliefs. For example, for students aged 16-19, a lesson on fulfillment and destiny first compares a theistic viewpoint about the afterlife to a scientific account of the end of the universe. Students grapple with their own emotional response to the issue (e.g., “Do you have an image of heaven?”) and then use their personal experience to engage different religious tradition’s views on the afterlife (e.g., “Compare Judaic ideas of afterlife to an Islamic Paradise or achievement of Brahmic state of eternal bliss.”) Each lesson supplements the UK National Framework for RE rather than constructing a standalone unit or course plan. Continued use of bibliographical listings at the end of each chapter offers much potential assistance for the teacher, but, as the authors acknowledge, more adequate resources may (and in fact do) exist.

As is often the case, context sets the parameters for the work of the religious educator. Stolberg and Teece both lecture at the University of Birmingham and therefore focus their attention on the concerns of religious educators in the UK’s public schools. The authors counter the tendency of religious educators to place “learning about” religious content over and above “learning from” religious traditions. Arguing that
the phenomenological approach developed in the 1970’s was never meant to cause division between the two types of religious learning, the authors argue that religious insight should influence students both cognitively and emotionally. Because scientific discoveries often lead to deeply religious questions, the authors wisely engage the human sense of wonder, potentially transforming the learner and, subsequently, reinforcing the significance of religion in modern society.

Their transformational model endorses personalizing religious meaning by way of highlighting commonalities among various traditions. For example, they explore how all major religions have a soteriological (redemptive) dimension in common. In effect, students peel back the outer shell of religious traditions to arrive at a universal meaning to salvation. My concern is that distinctions between religions are blurred. Students are in danger of implicitly learning a consumerist approach to choosing which meanings of which religions ought to be accepted. Ironically, while seeking to increase religious knowledge around general themes, the authors run the risk of dismissing the historical development and concrete application of each of these religions as a whole. In a way, they seem to educate (unintentionally) toward some kind of new syncretic, universal religion.

On a positive note, their work calls to mind many questions open for further research:
1. What could pedagogical work in religion and science look like in other countries and/or in religiously affiliated schools?
2. What other educational approaches might beneficially meet at the juncture of religion and science?
3. What pre-existing curricular materials could enhance student learning in this area?
4. Would it be helpful to draft an entire curricular program around those “big questions” in human living?
5. How prepared are religious educators to teach this area?
6. What models for teacher training could improve their capacity, especially since religious educators are often remiss toward scientific theories and discoveries?

The book is useful for a growing number of religious educators wishing to engage scientific findings as a way to enhance their teaching, especially for those in the UK’s public schools. More importantly, it is a hopeful sign of ongoing discussion and educational research in the ever-expanding field of religion and science.

Matt Hoven, PhD
Assistant Professor of Religious Education St. Joseph’s College, University of Alberta Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION is a refereed publication for the academic exploration of the task of religious education in modern society. The journal helps disseminate original writings and research in religious education and catechesis -- and in related areas such as spirituality, theology, moral and faith development, cultural contexts, ministry and schooling. It includes a variety of feature sections -- on contemporary educational issues, book reviews, conferences, resources and practical hints for teachers. Articles for publication on religious education in various contexts and on the related areas noted above, as well as on any of the feature sections are welcome. See the inside back cover for details.

EDITOR: Dr Marian de Souza (Australian Catholic University, Ballarat Campus)
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR: Dr Brendan Hyde (Australian Catholic University, Melbourne Campus)

EDITORIAL BOARD
Professor Marie Emmitt (Dean of Education, Australian Catholic University)
Professor Peta Goldburg rsrn (Head, National School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University, McAuley Campus)
Professor Neil Ormerod (National School of Philosophy and Theology, Australian Catholic University)
Professor Graham Rossiter (National School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University)
Dr Marian de Souza (Editor, National School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University)

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING EDITORS
Dr Kate Adams (Bishop Grosseteste University College, United Kingdom); Dr Philip Barnes (King’s College, London); Professor Emeritus Robert Crotty (University of South Australia); Dr Kent Donlevy (University of Calgary, Canada); Professor Gloria Durka (Fordham University, New York); Professor Leona English (St. Francis Xavier University, Canada); Professor Leslie Francis (University of Warwick, United Kingdom); Professor Liam Geary (Oxford University, United Kingdom); Associate Professor Peter Hobson (University of New England, Armidale); Professor Robert Jackson (University of Warwick, United Kingdom); Professor Terry Lovat (University of Newcastle, New South Wales); Professor Mary Elizabeth Moore (Emory University, Atlanta, USA); Dr James O’Higgins Norman (Dublin City University, Ireland); Dr Myrtle Power (St Paul University, Ottawa, Canada); Dr Mandy Robbins (Glyndwr University, United Kingdom); Dr Caroline Rennehan (St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, Ireland); Professor Richard Rymarz (St Joseph’s College, University of Alberta, Canada); Professor Friedrich Schweitzer, (Tübingen University, Germany); Professor John Sullivan (Liverpool Hope University College, United Kingdom); Dr Laurie Woods (National School of Theology, Australian Catholic University); Professor Andrew Wright (King’s College, London).

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Dr Michael Buchanan Australian Catholic University; St Patrick’s Campus; Dr Sandra Carroll Australian Catholic University; Mount Saint Mary Campus; Mr Michael Chambers Australian Catholic University; McAuley Campus; Dr Graham English Australian Catholic University; Mount Saint Mary Campus; Professor Peta Goldburg rsrn, Australian Catholic University, McAuley Campus; Dr Jan Grajczonek Australian Catholic University; McAuley Campus; Dr Brendan Hyde Australian Catholic University; St Patrick’s Campus; Dr Peter Mudge, Lecturer, Broken Bay Institute; Professor Graham Rossiter; Australian Catholic University; Mount Saint Mary Campus; Ms Ann Maree Whenman Australian Catholic University; Mount Saint Mary Campus.
Notes for Contributors

Journal of Religious Education is an academic refereed journal subject to peer review. It is published by the School of Religious Education, Faculty of Education of Australian Catholic University four times each year.

Articles on the following are welcomed:
- religious education in various contexts;
- the religious needs of young adults in the immediate post-school period;
- various models of faith communities in which evangelisation and catechesis may take place besides the Catholic school;
- religious education of children and adolescents;
- continuing religious education for adults;
- family ministry and youth ministry.

Submissions
- All articles submitted should be approx 5000 words in length and prefaced, on a separate page by an abstract of no more than 150 words. Please use Calibri 11 font.
- Any tables should be attached separately but there should be a clear indication in the manuscript as to their placement within the article.
- A COVER sheet should contain the title of the paper, author’s name, brief biographical details, institutional affiliation, postal address, phone, fax, email address, where available.
- Please submit your article electronically as a Word attachment to EditorJRE@acu.edu.au
- Authors will receive a copy of the issue of the journal in which their contribution appears.

Contributions on the following are welcomed:
- Ideas for Practitioners
- Internet Resources
- Research
- Conferences
- Notes on Resources
- Correspondence – relevant to topics discussed in the journal
- Current Issues

Referencing Style
The journal uses the American Psychological Association (5th ed.) system of referencing. This acknowledges the author, date and page, if applicable, of the work cited in the text (http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html). Great care should be taken to ensure referencing is accurate – particularly with the limited use of capital letters in titles.

The views of the contributors are not necessarily those of the editorial advisory committee of Journal of Religious Education.

An annual index is included in issue four of each volume. The journal is currently indexed in: APAIS, AUSTROM, Australasian Religion Index, Journals in Religious Education and ERA Register of Refereed Journals.

JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION is published four times each year by:
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY PO BOX 650 BALLARAT, AUSTRALIA
YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION: $55.00 (Aust.) $70 (Overseas) ABN 15 050 192 660
ISSN 1442–018X

© Copyright of this material remains with Australian Catholic University and individual authors. Permission to reproduce single items for classroom use is granted provided that the source is acknowledged.