

Kath Engebretson
Marian de Souza
Gloria Durka
Liam Gearon
Editors

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOKS OF RELIGION AND EDUCATION 4

International Handbook of Inter-religious Education

Part One

 Springer

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF
INTER-RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

International Handbooks of Religion and Education

VOLUME 4

Aims & Scope

The *International Handbooks of Religion and Education* series aims to provide easily accessible, practical, yet scholarly, sources of information about a broad range of topics and issues in religion and education. Each Handbook presents the research and professional practice of scholars who are daily engaged in the consideration of these religious dimensions in education. The accessible style and the consistent illumination of theory by practice make the series very valuable to a broad spectrum of users. Its scale and scope bring a substantive contribution to our understanding of the discipline and, in so doing, provide an agenda for the future.

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International Handbook of Inter-religious Education

Part One

Edited by

Kath Engebretson

Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Marian de Souza

Australian Catholic University, Ballarat, VIC, Australia

Gloria Durka

Fordham University, New York, USA

and

Liam Gearon

University of Plymouth, London, UK

 Springer

Editors

Kath Engebretson
Australian Catholic University
National School of Religious Education
115 Victoria Pde
Fitzroy
Victoria 3065
Australia
Kath.Engebretson@acu.edu.au

Marian de Souza
Australian Catholic University
National School of Religious Education
1200 Mair St
Ballarat VIC 3350
Ballarat Campus
Australia
Marian.Desouza@acu.edu.au

Gloria Durka
Fordham University
Graduate School of Religion &
Religious Education
Bronx NY 10987
USA
Durbar2@aol.com

Liam Gearon
University of Plymouth
London
United Kingdom SW15 5PH
liam.gearon@plymouth.ac.uk

ISSN 1874-0049 e-ISSN 1874-0057
ISBN 978-1-4020-9273-2 e-ISBN 978-1-4020-9260-2
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4020-9260-2
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010922990

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Printed on acid-free paper

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Preface

This Handbook is based on the conviction of its editors and contributing authors that understanding and acceptance of, as well as collaboration between religions has essential educational value. The development of this Handbook rests on the further assumption that interreligious education has an important role in elucidating the global demand for human rights, justice, and peace. Interreligious education reveals that the creeds and holy books of the world's religions teach about spiritual systems that reject violence and the individualistic pursuit of economic and political gain, and call their followers to compassion for every human being. It also seeks to lead students to an awareness that the followers of religions across the world need to be, and to grow in, dialogical relationships of respect and understanding. An essential aim of interreligious education is the promotion of understanding and engagement between people of different religions and, therefore, it has great potential to contribute to the common good of the global community.

Interreligious education has grown from the interfaith movement, whose beginning is usually identified with the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. This was the first time in history that leaders of the eastern and western religions had come together for dialogue, and to consider working together for global unity. One hundred years later another Parliament was again held in Chicago, another in 1999 in Cape Town, another in 2004 in Barcelona, and the latest Parliament of the World's Religions is to be held in Melbourne, Australia, in 2009, the year of the publication of this International Handbook. The Parliaments recognize, consolidate, give impetus to, and support a great range of grassroots interfaith activities. Interreligious education, that process that takes place formally in schools and universities, complements these activities, exists alongside them, and seeks to make connections with them.

A variety of terms related to interreligious education and interfaith dialogue are consciously used throughout the Handbook, and the various chapters assist in honing concise understandings of terms that are used within the arena of broad arena of interreligious engagement. However, this publication rests on the definition of interreligious education as an interactive process through which people learn *about* and learn *from* a diversity of religions. It aims at the transformation of attitudes and behaviors that may stereotype demonize or view those of other religions with suspicion. It is informed by comparative religion, theology, the sociology of religion,

and religious education, as well as philosophy of education, peace education, and critical and cultural studies. Those educators who engage in interreligious education not only seek that their students develop understanding of different religious worlds, but they also see as their ultimate task the development and sustaining of social cohesion and peace, and the continuing of a dialogue of mutual understanding, respect, and solidarity which can address the most significant issues of our times.

Interreligious education is cognitive, affective, and experiential. The *cognitive* dimension refers to learning about the world of religion in its many dimensions, and its focus may encompass breadth or depth of studies in religion or both. Interwoven with the cognitive aspect is the *affective* process of appropriating the cognitive at a personal level. In all of education, the student learns not only at an intellectual level but inevitably seeks to extract meaning from content. This affective process consists of reflecting on the implications of the content, integrating the content with life experience, being challenged by the content to deeper awareness or sensitivity, responding in a personal and creative way to the content. It is hoped that for many students the affective process will lead to reflection on personal values and attitudes, and perhaps a challenge to change previously held attitudes and assumptions. Finally, interreligious education has a dynamic, *experiential* dimension which immerses the students into the religious world of the other. This includes interaction among people of different faiths, listening to people describe their experience of their religions, visiting their places of worship, hearing about their favorite festivals and holidays, and listening to their favorite stories. It may include opportunities for students from different religions to prepare and conduct interreligious worship services, and to work together on projects for justice, development, and peace.

This International Handbook, then, is concerned with the discipline of interreligious education, and it represents the current state of scholarship in the discipline. It proceeds in four sections which together provide comprehensive coverage of the key theoretical and practical aspects of the discipline as it is at this time in history. The first section, edited by Gloria Durka, assists educators to build theory about interreligious education. The necessity for this theory building is found in the plurality and ambiguity of contemporary societies. Critical analysis of all aspects of human life pervades these societies, often challenges the truth claims of religions, and can represent religions as idiosyncratic, culturally conditioned reactions to the real-world. In addition it is often held in contemporary societies that common creeds, common stories, common hopes, and ideals that may be held within and across religions, are just individual manifestations of these, and that where and when they cohere is accidental. Herein lie particular challenges for interreligious educators, because they hold that common understandings, values, and ideals between religions are not only possible, but that it is the discovery of, the learning about, and the dialogue with these that hold the greatest hope for the future of local, national, and global communities. Interreligious educators must build their theories of the discipline, and the authors who have contributed to this first section of the Handbook provide thought-provoking material to assist in this task.

The second section of the Handbook, which has been edited by Marian de Souza, deals with pedagogy in interreligious education. The rise of multicultural, multi-faith, and multi-linguistic societies in countries that were once mono-cultural and mono-religious and, for the most part, mono-linguistic is evident in classrooms and other learning environments around the world. Good pedagogical practice in interreligious education helps students acquire an empathetic understanding of others, their histories, the countries they have come from, and the role religion plays in their lives. The different dimensions of interreligious education assist all students to not only to know and understand the religious beliefs and practices of others, but also to develop their own religious consciousness, whether or not this is grounded in a religious tradition. The educators who have contributed to this section of the Handbook provide, from their wisdom and experience, a discussion of many and varied learning programs from different parts of the world, each informed by sound theoretical perspectives. They demonstrate their clear awareness of the current contexts which have promoted religious divisions in pluralist communities. They employ creative and innovative pedagogical strategies to support interreligious education in a range of learning environments.

All of the sacred texts of the world's religions call for justice and peace-making among their adherents. Examples are the message of justice of the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures, the Qur'an's exhortation to kindness and compassion for all people, the teaching about compassion and respect for all of life of the Buddha, the Hindu ideal of sustainability and a peaceful lifestyle and the embracing of the out-cast by Jesus of Nazareth. Concern with justice for the world's people, nonviolent solutions to conflict and through these the attainment of peace, is shared by all of the world's religions and is the platform from which they can work together for the common good. Many of the greatest social justice leaders in the history of the world were closely associated with their religious traditions and drew inspiration for their work from their teachings. These inspiring leaders speak to today's citizens whatever their religious tradition, and challenge them to contribute to the work of social justice and peace-making in their own contexts. The work for social justice and peace can bring together people of good will from all religions. Interreligious education has a particular role in this and the contributors to the third section of this Handbook, which is edited by Kath Engebretson, discuss the important place of interreligious education in the promotion of social justice, human development, and peace.

The final section of the Handbook has been edited by Liam Gearon. In explaining the importance of interreligious education for citizenship and human rights, the focus of this section, Gearon argues that the role of religion in public life has been underplayed since the European Enlightenment, a fact seen especially in the separation of Church and State in the west. From this separation has grown the phenomenon of secularization, a climate in which religion is more and more relegated to the private sphere. However, the assumption and expectation of secularization are challenged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, in light of issues of global governance and power and greater awareness of human rights, including religious freedom. In their essential forms religions are champions of human rights,

and their absence from human rights debates and debates about what makes for good national and global citizenship leaves these debates impoverished. New trends monitoring the importance of religion in politics and the importance of religion and politics within education have been highlighted by a number of theorists of religion and education. This fourth section of the International Handbook brings together a number of expert theorists, empirical researchers, and those working in international educational policy forums to examine these trends and their educational implications for interreligious education, citizenship and human rights education, applying policy, pedagogy, and research considerations to one of the most exciting and challenging aspects of contemporary education.

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About the Contributors

Geir Afdal is Professor for religious education at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo and Østfold University College, Halden, Norway. He has published on issues of values and education, contextual religious education, theories of learning and religious education, and the relationship between research and practice in religious education.

Dr. Hamid Reza Alavi is Professor of Philosophy of Education – Islamic Education in the Department of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Shaheed Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran. He has written 14 books and more than 60 articles. Dr. Alavi has spent sabbatical leave at Harvard University and Oxford University.

Ismail Albayrak graduated from Ankara University School of Divinity in 1991 and completed his MA at the same University in 1995. He received his Ph.D. degree from Leeds University in 2000. He then took up a position at Sakarya University in Turkey, where he taught and wrote on Qur'anic Studies, classical exegesis, contemporary approaches to the Qur'an and orientalism. He also has research interests in the place of Muslim communities and their activities in a globalizing world. In November 2008 he was appointed to the newly established Fethullah Gülen Chair in the Study of Islam and Muslim–Catholic Relations at Australian Catholic University.

Stefan Altmeyer is Assistant Professor of Religious Education at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of Bonn University, Germany. He studied Theology, Mathematics and Educational Studies and worked as a secondary school RE teacher at the Beethoven High School in Bonn. He is a member of the editorial advisory board of the Religious Education Journal of Australia and focuses primarily on the fields of (1) the aesthetic dimension of faith and religious education, (2) religious language, and (3) philosophy of RE. His recent publications include: Altmeyer, S. (2006). *Von der Wahrnehmung zum Ausdruck: Zur ästhetischen Dimension von Glauben und Lernen*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer; Altmeyer, S., Boschki, R., Theis, J., & Woppowa, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Christliche Spiritualität lehren, lernen und leben*. Göttingen: Bonn University Press.

James Arthur is Professor of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University. He has written on the relationship between theory and practice in education, particularly

the links between communitarianism, social virtues, citizenship, and education. He was involved as a member of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community in 1996. In 1998 he was invited by Professor Amitai Etzioni to give an address to the fifth annual White House/Congressional Conference on Character Building in Washington, DC to talk on faith schools. Current projects include the Citized Project – CitizED is a TTA-funded project focused on citizenship teacher education. It seeks to develop the professional knowledge of citizenship education teachers through research and development in professional learning. He is also working on a major research project on character education for the Templeton Foundation.

Cok Bakker, since 2003, holds a chair on “Religious Education in a multireligious context”. He is the director of the research institute INTEGON of the Department of Theology, working on the department’s central research theme of “The construction of religious identities”. Cok Bakker is the leader of a research group on school identity, focusing on the role of school ethos, and in particular the principal and the teachers in constructing a classroom climate as a space of encounter of differences.

Philip Barnes is Reader in Religious and Theological Education, and Visiting Professor of Religious Studies, Union Theological College, Belfast; Department of Education and Professional Studies at King’s College, London. He has published widely in the areas of religious education, philosophy of education, religious studies and theology. His most recent publication is a short critique of British religious education, *Religious education: Take religious difference seriously* (London, 2009), published by the Society of Philosophy of Education of Great Britain and included in its Impact series on educational policy.

Reinhold Boschki, Dr. theol., Dipl. paed., is Professor of Religious Education at the Roman Catholic Faculty at Bonn University, Germany. He is married and father of three daughters. His fields of teaching and research are: Religious education in early childhood; RE at school; Catechesis in Christian parishes; adult education; interreligious education; Jewish–Christian relations; education after Auschwitz.

Gary D. Bouma is Emeritus Professor of Sociology and UNESCO Chair in Intercultural and Interreligious Relations – Asia Pacific at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, and Chair of Board of Directors for The Parliament of the World’s Religions 2009. He is Associate Priest in the Anglican Parish of St John’s East Malvern. His research in the sociology of religion examines the management of religious diversity in plural multicultural societies, postmodernity as a context for doing theology, religion and terror, inter-cultural communication, religion and public policy, women and religious minorities, and gender factors in clergy careers.

Paul E. Bumbar, Ed. D. teaches at Dominican College in Blauvelt, New York. He has published articles on the philosophical and educational foundations of religious education in journals and is the author of curriculum materials in religious education.

Des Cahill is Professor of Intercultural Studies at RMIT University and has been one of Australia's leading researchers in the areas of immigrant, cross-cultural, interfaith and international studies for almost three decades. His many publications and research projects have focussed on immigrant and multicultural education, ethnic minority youth, immigrant settlement, ethnic community development, intermarriage and, more recently, religion and globalization. Since the events of September 11, 2001, he has played a major role in researching and bringing together the various faith communities in Australia and across the world through his research and community activities. Since 2001, he has chaired the Australian chapter of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP), and represents Australia on the executive committee of the Asian Conference of Religion and Peace. He was the leader of the City of Melbourne's successful bid to stage the Parliament of the World's Religions in December 2009.

Terence Copley is Professor of Educational Studies (Religious Education) at the University of Oxford, and also Emeritus Professor of Religious Education at the University of Exeter, England. His writings cover the history of Religious Education and "spiritual development" in state-maintained schools in England and Wales and methods of teaching biblical narrative in primary and secondary schools. Copley is a significant Christian educationist who argues that a process of secular indoctrination is occurring in British society in which vocal secularists are using the media to exclude religion from the public square. By contrast, Copley argues for religious values to be instilled in young people through state-maintained schooling. His work includes the BIBLOS project on teaching the Bible in a secular environment.

David L. Coppola is the AVP of Administration and the Associate Executive Director of the Center for Christian–Jewish Understanding (CCJU) of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT, since 1998. He teaches at Sacred Heart in the departments of Religious Studies and Education, and at Fordham University in the Graduate Schools of Education and Religion and Religious Education. A prolific speaker and writer, he is the editor of several volumes that explore Jewish–Christian–Muslim theological dialogues including, *Religion and violence, religion and peace* (2001), *Religion, violence and peace: Continuing conversations* (2003), and *What do we want the other to teach about us?* (2006).

Brendan Carmody, a Jesuit priest, is currently Professor of Religion and Culture at the Milltown Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Dublin. He has been a professor of religious education for over a decade at the University of Zambia. He has written and edited a number of books and has authored numerous articles. His current research interests include African Christian conversion and the role of religion in education.

John L. Elias is Professor in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University. His recent publications include *A history of Christian education* and *Philosophical foundations of adult education*. He is an editor of and contributor to the forthcoming *Educators in the Catholic intellectual tradition*.

Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Center for Christian–Jewish Understanding (CCJU) of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT. The former heard rabbi of a major Stamford, Connecticut Orthodox synagogue for 45 years and a worldwide traveler, Rabbi Ehrenkranz has devoted a good part of his life to improving humanity through interreligious dialogue. He is a sought-after speaker and also has taught at several Jewish seminaries.

Leona M. English is Professor of adult education at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada. She is the editor of the *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (Palgrave, 2005), and researches in the areas of gender, spirituality, and postmodernity.

Clive Erricker works for the Hampshire County as an Inspector for Religious Education. He is also a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Winchester and a Visiting Research Scholar at the Hong Kong Institute of Education.

Trond Enger is a Norwegian theologian educated at the University of Oslo and now teaching religion and religious education in the Ostfold College of Education in Halden, Norway. He is a longstanding member of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values, and has published widely on topics related to religion and religious education.

Dorothea Filus is research fellow at Monash University's Japanese Studies Centre in Australia, where she received her Ph.D. in 2000. She specializes in religion and society in contemporary Japan. She lived in Japan for almost 6 years during which time she studied, researched, and collected extensive data on Japanese religions, social stratification, globalization, and religious education.

Majella Franzmann is Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities) and Professor of Religion at the University of Otago, New Zealand. She has been teaching classes in Religious Studies for over 25 years.

Adrian Gellel is lecturer in Catechetics and Religious Education and a member of both Faculties of Theology and of Education at the University of Malta. He has recently defended his Ph.D. dissertation on meeting individual differences in the Religious Education classroom through Adaptive Teaching at the *Università Pontificia Salesiana* in Rome. In these past years he has published and researched on a wide range of subjects especially in the fields of Children's Spirituality and Religious Education. Adrian is also actively involved in ministry within the Maltese Archdiocese. At present he is the Diocesan Responsible for Religious Education in Schools.

Peta Goldberg is the foundation Professor of Religious Education at Australian Catholic University. Her research interests include religion and the arts and emerging pedagogies for the teaching of world religions, particularly Judaism. Professor Goldberg is the chair of the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) *Study of Religion* Syllabus Committee and she is National President of the Australian Association for Religious Education (AARE).

Zehavit Gross is head of the graduate program in Social Education in the School of Education at Bar-Ilan University. Her areas of specialization are Religious Education and Socialization Processes (religious, secular, feminine, and civic) among adolescents.

Ismail Latif Hacinebioglu is Associate Professor of Logic at Istanbul University, Turkey, and also visiting scholar of Islamic Philosophy at Trinity University College, UK. His recent publications include *Does God exist: The logical foundations of the cosmological argument; Informal philosophy of logic; Buddhist logic survey* (in Turkish). His main research areas are in philosophy of logic and philosophy of religion.

Anna Halahoff is Ph.D. candidate in Sociology completing a study of interreligious activities and is a UNESCO Research Assistant with the UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific, Monash University, Australia. Anna has developed a multifaith peace-building methodology for promoting intercultural understanding, awareness, and respect that has been effective in training religious leaders in civic skills and managing the media.

Kristian Berg Harpviken is Director of the International Peace Research Institute Oslo, Oslo University, Norway. His current research is concerned with transnational mobilization and civil war, war-related migration and social networks, regional (in-) security, peace-building and peacemaking, methodology in contexts of crisis and conflict with a geographical focus on Afghanistan and its neighborhood.

Paul Hedges is Senior Lecturer in Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Winchester, UK, and has taught for Canadian and Chinese universities. He has recently published (with Alan Race), *Christian Approaches to Other Faiths* (SCM, 2008), as well as articles in such journals as *The Journal of Religious History*, *Interreligious Insight*, and *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*.

Amjad Hussain is Religious Studies Lecturer at Trinity University College. His main research interests are in Islamic theology, Islamic history, Islamic education, and Islam in the contemporary world. He has contributed chapters to books, written articles, and presented papers on Islam in the United Kingdom and Turkey. Dr. Hussain is a member of the Shap Working Party on World Religions, and of the editorial board of the *Ilahiyat Facultesi Dergisi* (*Review of the Faculty of Divinity*) at Suleyman Demirel University in Turkey.

Dzintra Ilisko is Associate Professor and Head of the Institute of Sustainable Education at Daugavpils University, Latvia. She has published works on gender issues, religious education, teachers as researchers, and sustainable education.

Robert Jackson is Director of Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, Warwick Institute of Education, Warwick University. He has directed research projects funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Leverhulme Trust, the Arts and Humanities Research Board/Council, the British Academy, and various charities including the All Saints Educational Trust and the

Westhill Endowment Trust. Funded research has included projects on the religious upbringing of children in Britain from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, on new religious movements and values education and on various aspects of teaching and learning in religious education, intercultural education, and citizenship education.

Emmanuel B.J. Kallarackal is Holy Cross priest who ministers as a priest-educator, among the ethnically and religiously diverse people of northeast India. He has served the society in the capacity of vice-principal, student counselor, formation director, and principal. He has his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Universities in India and Advanced Professional Diploma and Ph.D. from Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University, NY. He has a passion for peace-education and the focus of his dissertation was peace education. He serves now in the capacity of a project director of a Catholic University in northeast India.

Eunice Karanja Kamara is Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Moi University, Eldoret Kenya and International Affiliate of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, USA. She holds a doctorate from Moi University and has special research interest in contemporary development concerns from religious, ethical, and anthropological perspectives. She has over 50 articles in refereed academic journals published around the world on a wide range of issues, several chapters in books, and co-edited two books. She is the author of *Gender, Youth sexuality and HIV/AIDS: A Kenyan Experience* (2005). She has consulted for both international and local organizations such as the All Africa Conference of Churches, World Bank, and UNFPA among others.

Linda King is currently responsible for UNESCO's work on the promotion of rights and values in education and more broadly for the promotion of basic education at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. She has been Chief of the Section for Rights and Values in Education since 2003 and Director a.i. of the Division of Basic Education since June 2008.

Feyodor Kozyrev is the Centre Director, Professor of Pedagogy, Head of Religious Pedagogy Institute at Russian Christian Academy for Humanities, St Petersburg, Russia. His monograph "Religious Education in Public Schools: Theory and international experience in Russian perspective" (2005) is the most extensive introduction to the recent developments in the field published in Russian. In a number of recent publications (Russian and English) he advances the concept of humanitarian religious education. His other foci of interest related to the pedagogical one are religion and science, interfaith dialogue, hermeneutics and gender issues.

Nadine Liddy is the Coordinator of National Projects at the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) in Victoria, Australia. She has worked in the non-government sector with refugee and newly arrived young people and communities for the last 20 years, and has worked with CMY for many years in both a direct service and policy capacity. Nadine has a background in casework, community development, and program

management, working with refugee and migrant young people in torture and trauma, housing, and education and training.

Oddbjørn Leirvik is Professor in Interreligious Studies, Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo. His areas of specialization: Islam and Christian-Muslim relations; religious education as an arena of interfaith dialogue. Recent books in English: “Teaching for Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies” (co-edited with Recep Kaymakcan, Istanbul: Centre for Values Education 2007); “Human Conscience and Muslim–Christian Relations” (London: Routledge, 2006).

Rod Ling is Research Assistant in the Institute for Social Change, University of Manchester and was until recently UNESCO Postdoctoral Fellow with the UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific in the School of Political and Social Inquiry, Monash University. Rod has completed a study of the management of religious diversity in an industrial workplace and has been involved in the analysis of census and large survey datasets related to religious diversity in Australia and other parts of the world seeking to ascertain the role of religious diversity in social cohesion.

Terence Lovat is Professor of Education at The University of Newcastle, Australia. His main research interests are in interfaith religion and values education. In recent years, he has been engaged in research and consultancy with Muslim communities in Australia, with a special interest in the influence of education on young Australian Muslims. He has also been involved in the Australian Values Education Program as a researcher and consultant.

Claudia Mahler (Dr. iur. 2000 Leopold-Franzens Universität, Innsbruck) is Senior Researcher at the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration, and associated Member of the Human Rights Centre at the University of Potsdam. She is a jurist and has worked as a senior researcher at the Human Rights Centre at the University of Potsdam, as a lecturer at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, and as an assistant at the Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck, Austria. She was also active as Vice President of the Human Rights Commission for Tirol and Vorarlberg, Austria, and as a Consultant to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. She has published widely on human rights, human rights education, and ethnic and national minorities. The latest book is a edited volume “The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and the Inclusion of Minorities”, together with A. Mihr and R. Toivanen, Peter Lang Verlag 2009.

Mary Elizabeth MullinoMoore, is the Dean and Professor of Theology and Education, Faculty of Theology, Boston University, USA. Previously a professor of religion and theology and director of the Women in Theology and Ministry program at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Moore earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Southern Methodist University, where she majored in psychology. She holds a master’s and a doctorate from the Claremont School of Theology.

Yoshiharu Nakagawa is professor of education at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan. He earned his Ph.D. from the Ontario Institute for the Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. His current interests include holistic and integral education, spirituality, and Eastern philosophy. He is the author of *Education for Awakening: An Eastern Approach to Holistic Education* (Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2000) and the co-editor of *Nurturing Our Wholeness: Perspectives on Spirituality in Education* (Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2002). His contribution also appeared in *Nurturing Child and Adolescent Spirituality: Perspectives from the World's Religious Traditions* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2006).

Wilna A.J. Meijer is Senior Lecturer in the Philosophy of Education in the Department of Theory and History of Education, Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences, of the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, and Visiting Professor in the Philosophy of Education at the University of Ghent, Belgium. Her recent research interests include Islam and Education, Humanities Education, and Hermeneutical Philosophy. Recent book publication: *Tradition and Future of Islamic Education* (2008).

Siebren Miedema is Full Professor of Educational Foundations in and Head of the Department Theory and Research in Education, Faculty of Psychology and Education, Full Professor of Religious Education in the Faculty of Theology, VU University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and Visiting Professor of Philosophy of Religious Education in the Faculty of Sociology, St. Petersburg State University, Russia.

Evelina Orteza y Miranda is Professor in the Faculty of Education, Graduate Division of Educational Research, The University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She has published works on the philosophy of education in various journals in Canada, the United States, England, Australia, and the Philippines. Her most recent publications appeared in *Panorama* and *The Education Journal*.

Afroza M. Nanji has a Masters in Education with a focus on community and adult learning. She is the founder and executive director of IDEA Youth Initiative which brings diverse youth together to dialogue on shared values and serve in the community. She is involved in religious education in the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Her professional endeavors focus on pluralism and education. Afroza serves on the Curriculum Advisory Committee of the Aga Khan Academies.

Peter Tze Ming Ng is Professor of the Department of Educational Policy and Administration and the Director of Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education, of the Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong. He has been for the last 20 years a Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, serving as the Director of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, Chung Chi College from 2000 to 2008. His recent work includes: "'Glocalization' as a Key to the Interplay between Christianity and Asian Cultures", *International Journal of Public Theology*, Vol. 1, 2007; "Re-thinking Education: A Proposal for Caring Spirituality

in Education” in *New Horizons in Education*, 56:2, 2008; and “The Education and Development of Children’s Spirituality” in *Hong Kong Journal of Early Childhood*, 17(2), 2008.

Karl Ernst Nipkow, born 1928. From 1968 to 1994, Professor for Practical Theology (Religious Education) at the Faculty of Protestant Theology and co-opted Professor for Education at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University Tübingen. Member of ISREV since 1982, co-founder of IAPT (1991). Complete bibliography in F. Schweitzer et.al. (ed), *Religionspädagogik und Zeitgeschichte im Spiegel der Rezeption von Karl Ernst Nipkow*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus (2008).

Gabriel Moran is Professor in the Department of Humanities and the Social Sciences at New York University. He is the author of 22 books, most recently, *Speaking of teaching* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2008) and *Believing in a revealing God* (Liturgical Press, 2009). He has worked in the field of religious education for almost 50 years.

Lucinda A. Nolan is Assistant Professor of Religious Education and Catechetics at the Catholic University of America where she teaches classes in history, theory and practices in religious education. Her research interest is twentieth-century religious education in the United States. She has written several articles on the history of Christian religious education and most recently co-edited with John L. Elias the forthcoming book, *Educators in the Catholic intellectual tradition*.

Mehmet Onal is Associate Professor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Adnan Menderes University in Aydyn, Turkey. His main research interests are philosophy of education and religion, comparative wisdom understanding of Eastern cultures, and Judeo-Christian and Islamic thought. Recent publications include *Prophet Muhammad as an Individual Guidance* (in Turkish) and “Wisdom and Innovation in Islam”, *Journal of Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* (2007).

Anthony Ozele currently serves as parochial vicar at Good Shepherd Church in Brooklyn, NY. He is engaged in organizing seminars and workshops for Directors of Religious Education and catechists, and is currently working on two book projects. His research is focused on contextualizing the family ecosystems perspective for religious education and pastoral ministry.

Douglas Pratt is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Waikato, New Zealand, and Adjunct Senior Research Fellow of the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University, Victoria, Australia. He is an Associate of the UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific, and a Research Associate for the Centre for the Study of Religion and Politics, St. Mary’s College, University of St. Andrews, Scotland. An active scholar and practitioner in interreligious dialogue, with specialist interests in Christian-Muslim relations, recent book publications include *Faith to faith: Issues in interreligious engagement* (OxCEPT, 2008); *The challenge of Islam: Encounters in*

interfaith dialogue (Ashgate, 2005); *Rethinking religion: Exploratory investigations* (ATF Press, 2003).

Paul Prinsloo's academic and research interests include religious studies, critical theory, cultural studies, art history, learning theories, and business – and sustainability education. Paul regularly reads papers at national and international conferences and has published in accredited and popular journals on a range of topics including the teaching of religious studies, corporate citizenship, ethics in business education, curriculum design and factors impacting student success.

Ram Puniyani is the secretary of the *All India Secular Forum*, Mumbai. He has been working for communal harmony and national integration in India, has written several books dispelling misconceptions about history and the demonization of minorities. His books: *Communal Politics: Facts Versus Myths; Terrorism: Facts Versus Myths; Second Assassination of Gandhi; Fascism of Sangh Parivar; Communalism: An Illustrated Primer*.

Hanne Eggen Røislien, International Peace Research Institute Oslo, Oslo University, Norway.

Cornelia Roux is Research Professor at the School of Curriculum-based Studies, Faculty of Educational Sciences, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. She has 30 years' teaching experience and her research focuses on curriculum studies, religion studies, religion and cultural diversity, and inclusivity and human rights education in multicultural societies.

Friedrich Schweitzer is Professor for Practical Theology/Religious Education, Evangelisch-theologische Fakultät, Universität Tübingen, Germany. His main research interests are in the areas of religious and moral development as well as in the history of religious education as an academic discipline. Schweitzer serves as the chairperson of the Comenius Institute, Münster, and the Education Chamber of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland. In the past, he served as President of the International Academy of Practical Theology and as President of the Academic Society of Theology. He is one of the editors of the journal *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie* and of the *Jahrbuch der Religionspädagogik*. He has published about 60 books and numerous articles.

Lyn Smith, MRE (Australian Catholic University), BEd Hons (Manchester), Catholic Teachers Certificate in Religious Studies (England), Certificate in Leadership in a Catholic School (CIT), is a qualified secondary teacher of Religious Education and History with 20 years' experience in various schools in England and New Zealand. She is married to Alan and has been DRS and Deputy Principal at secondary level. Lyn teaches in the Master of Religious Education program, Australian Catholic University, the Master of Education program, the Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) and the B. Ed. (Teaching), University of Auckland. She is beginning doctoral studies through the Australian Catholic University with a research interest in assessment in religious education.

Karin Sporre is Professor in Educational work with a focus on values, gender, and diversity at the Department of Teacher Education in Swedish and Social Sciences, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden. Her most recent publications are in the field of democracy, diversity, gender, and human rights.

Charlene Tan is Associate Professor in Policy and Leadership Studies, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. An editorial board member of *Reflective Practice*, she has published papers on religious and spiritual education in *Journal of Philosophy of Education*; *British Journal of Religious Education*; and *International Review of Education*. Her research interests include philosophical issues in education; religious and religious education; Islamic education; and comparative education in Asia.

K.H. Ina ter Avest is senior researcher in the Department Theory and Research in Education, Faculty of Psychology and Education, VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands. At the Utrecht University she is a lecturer in Religious Education. As a coach she works with teams of teachers of primary schools to explore teachers' subjective theories on (inter)religious learning.

Toni Tidswell completed her Ph.D. in 2006, with a thesis on women characters in the Qur'an and Hebrew Scriptures, and is currently lecturing on Women in Islam at the University of Otago, New Zealand. In 2008 she worked in the Higher Education Development Centre at Otago as a Senior Research Fellow for a project on neo-liberal reform in the university sector. Toni is also President of the Australian Association for the Study of Religion (AASR).

Reeta Toivanen is Adjunct Professor for social and cultural anthropology at the University of Helsinki. She works as a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations and Nationalism and at the Centre of Excellence for Global Governance Research, both at the University of Helsinki. She is a Board member of the International Consortium for Human Rights Education. She has published widely on ethnic and national minorities, anthropology of rights and human rights education, the latest book is a edited volume *The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and the Inclusion of Minorities* (with C. Mahler and A. Mihr), Peter Lang: Verlag, 2009.

Pille Valk[†] was associate professor of religious education in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Tartu in Estonia and in the Department of Applied Science of Education at the University of Helsinki in Finland. She was also head of the Religious Studies Unit of the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory. She was a specialist in religious education, particularly in the contextual approach to the subject, and in Church History and issues of interplay between religion and culture. She directed several externally funded research projects on theoretical and practical issues in developing a contextual approach in religious education, the role of

[†] Pille Valk died in late 2009, and this chapter is one of her last contributions to the field of interreligious education.

the Churches in European integration, and religious dynamics in the society. In the framework of the REDCo project she was responsible for the European comparative survey on the teenagers' perspectives on the role of religion in their lives, school, and society.

Richard Scott Webster is Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Education of Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. He has published articles on educational theory and philosophy, spirituality, existentialism and Dewey. He has a book in press with Sense Publishers, titled "Educating for Meaningful Lives through Existential Spirituality".

Richard Wade (B. Ed., Belf), STB, MA (Gregorian), M.Th (London), D.Th (MCD), is Senior Lecturer in the School of Theology based in Ballarat, Victoria. He has published articles on animal ethics, environmental theology, moral theology, and healthcare ethics.

Kevin Wanden MEd (Boston College), MEd (Canterbury), BSc, BA, DipTchg, is Director of the National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS) an agency of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference. He is a member of the congregation of Marist Brothers. Kevin is currently pursuing doctoral studies in teacher beliefs about the purpose of classroom religious education in Catholic secondary schools, through the Australian Catholic University.

Yaacov Boaz Yablon is lecturer at the School of Education, Bar-Ilan University, Israel. His research interests include affective education, peace education, and prevention programs. In his recent studies, he has focused on intergroup relations between religious and secular Jewish and Arab school children in Israel. He has studied various aspects of affective-based peace education programs, and the possible contribution of religious education to the enhancement of tolerance and understanding between these groups.

Barney Zwartz has been a journalist with *The Age* for 28 years, and religion editor since 2002. He has a degree in theology (first-class honors) and is part-way through a Ph.D. in moral philosophy. He has written a great deal about interfaith issues involving the three Abrahamic religions. In 2004 he was awarded an Australia Together peace prize for contributing to interfaith harmony. Since 2007 he has also run an Age blog, *The Religious Write*.

About the Editors

Kath Engebretson is teacher, lecturer, researcher, and writer in the School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University. Her research interests encompass all aspects of religious education and her latest book is *In Your Shoes: Inter-faith Education for Australian Schools and Universities*.

Marian de Souza is senior lecturer at Australian Catholic University, Ballarat Campus, and is the editor of the *Journal of Religious Education*. Marian has published extensively on her research which has investigated spirituality as pertaining to the relational dimension of the human person. She has developed an approach to learning that encourages imaginative, creative, and intuitive thinking and which addresses the spiritual dimension. Her most recent work has examined the role of non-conscious learning to promote and impede relationality, an important consideration in a society where social cohesion problems related to religious diversity are becoming apparent.

Gloria Durka is Professor in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University in Bronx, NY, where she directs the Ph.D. Program in Religious Education. She has published more than 100 articles and is the author and co-editor of 13 books on various aspects of religious education. She is currently serving as President of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV).

Liam Gearon is currently a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Plymouth. Formerly professor of education of Roehampton University, London, he has published widely in the study of religion and literature as well as education, with research over the past decade specializing in particular on the interface of religion, politics, and education. He has held research grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy.

Part I

The Philosophical and Theoretical Aspects of Interreligious Education

Gloria Durka

The plurality and ambiguity of postmodern society present unique challenges for religious educators who wish to foster interreligious education and dialogue. There are many faces of postmodernity, and those who teach are challenged to respond with courage and honesty to the implications generated by critical analysis of the postmodern project. The interreligious aspect of religious education is inherent to religious education itself, as Gabriel Moran asserts (1989, p. 228). While in the last century religious groups and individuals found themselves in a world of religious pluralism, it is much more the case today. The term “inter” in an interreligious approach means understanding one’s own religious position in relation to other religious possibilities (Moran, p. 228).

It has been claimed that postmodernism has touched every field, permeating cultural analysis as a whole, with results that are positive, negative, and ambiguous. How to respond to pluralism while cutting across the different cultures that rupture society, and at the same time, preserve certain core traditional values, represents a dilemma for educators. The chapters in this part address these challenges head on by acknowledging the difference and otherness of the “other” while celebrating our commonality. Authors propose that to educate religiously in the new millennium requires educators to acknowledge and embrace the fact that the experience of others is truly different from our own. Writing from different religions and various countries, representing a variety of philosophical backgrounds, authors probe, prod, and critique current religious educational practice and offer skills, information, and criteria for theory building and educational practice. The chapters in this part illustrate that theoretical discussion about interreligious education can only be advanced in the context of international, interreligious, and interdisciplinary perspectives. Even so, the chapters are sure to generate intense and many-sided debate.

Although there are a variety of ways of shaping the conversation, this part is divided into four subparts. The chapters in each subpart aim at enhancing the critical, scholarly presentation of various dimensions of historical religions and advancing the understanding of specific religions’ truth claims. The part is framed by two chapters written by the same author. They serve as “end pieces” for the whole part which is comprised of various chapters.

The first subpart of this part contains five chapters devoted to key aspects of the philosophical foundations of interreligious education. In the first “end piece” chapter, “Religious Pluralism and the Paradigm,” Evelina Orteza y Miranda presents “the paradigm,” namely, exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, as a response to religious diversity and plurality. It points out the usefulness and limitations of “the paradigm” and suggests a new way of dealing with religious pluralism that gives due regard to all religions, namely, interreligious dialogue. (This is the subject of the last chapter of this part.)

In his chapter, “Enlightenment’s Wake: Religion and Education at the Close of the Modern Age,” L. Philip Barnes offers a critique of modern British religious education and its commitment to Enlightenment values and commitments. He suggests that the liberal theological conviction that the different religions are each spiritually valid is constitutive of British education. Barnes posits that current representations of religion in British religious education are limited in their capacity to challenge racism and religious intolerance because they are ill-equipped conceptually to develop respect for difference. Brendan Carmody argues for the need to confront the question of truth. In “Interreligious Education and the Question of Truth,” he points out that there can be a tendency to overemphasize sameness and downplay difference in approaches that strive for inclusiveness. He calls for an approach that recognizes difference and promotes dialogue, where attention is given to the truth claims of religion in a way that enhances rather than undermines the creation of community. “Philosophical Reflections on Dialogue” by John L. Elias reviews philosophical discourse on dialogue and education. The author draws selectively on the extensive tradition of Western philosophers who have written about dialogue as a method for arriving at knowledge and truth. Elias considers the nature of dialogue, its risks, limitations, and processes. The last chapter in this subpart is “The Search for a Common Epistemological Ground within the Interreligious Framework: A Concept-Centered Approach.” The author, Ismail Lalif Hacinebioglu, places emphasis on the relationship between certain concepts, epistemology, truth-values, and religion. He concludes that there is an urgency to reach a level of understanding of various truth claims which could enable the sharing of peace for all.

The three chapters in the second subpart of this part consider how some religious bodies have and could interact with each other. Two scholars collaborate in the first chapter: Christian author David L. Coppola and Jewish scholar Rabbi Joseph H. Ehrenkranz. In “Toward a Theoretical Framework for Participating in Interreligious Education and Dialogue,” they ground their framework in six philosophical convictions that are strongly rooted in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. They conclude with some broad theoretical applications for interreligious dialogue and education based on this framework. The chapter, “Interreligious Dialogue: Ecumenical Engagement in Interfaith Action,” by Douglas Pratt, outlines some background, initial impetus, and rationales whereby the Christian Church has engaged in interreligious dialogue. Focus is on the respective central agencies of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. The author proposes that in and through this comparative study, the contours of an ecumenical Christian

stance toward – and or engagement in – interreligious dialogue should emerge. Paul E. Bumbar’s chapter, “Many Mansions: East and West in the Roman Catholic Communion,” looks at what is called the Roman Catholic Church, and provides an introduction to the 19 Eastern Catholic Churches within that communion. Their somewhat troubled history with the Church of Rome reveals how difficult and necessary it is for religious bodies and educators to offset even benevolent hegemonies in order to maintain and develop religious identity.

Chapters in the third subpart address some political issues which ground interreligious education efforts. Using the experience of the United States and its experiment of banning religion in public schools, Gabriel Moran’s chapter, “Religious Education in U.S. State Schools,” explores the impact of such separation on interreligious dialogue. Trond Enger argues that because all religions are complex entities, there is a need for religious criticism which adheres to adequate standards. In “Civilizing the Religions,” he points to human rights as that standard, and discusses the internal conflicting principles which emerge from that standard from the perspective of recent experiences in Norway. Lucinda Nolan’s chapter, “The Heritage of the Women Delegates’ Speeches to the World Parliament of Religions, 1893,” is an exposition of a selection of prominent speeches given by women at the Parliament. The event marked the emergence of women as both religious leaders and heralds of the growing pluralism of the United States at the turn of the century. Her chapter offers insights into the fledgling interreligious movement of the time, and highlights key theoretical principles which have relevance for interreligious education today. Dzintra Ilisko uses the arena of Latvia’s changing society as an example of the limitations and possibilities of emerging interreligious models of education. Building on the premise that true religious education is explicitly interreligious, her chapter, “Educational Encounters and Interreligious Education: A Latvian Case Study for Expanding the Borders of Hospitality,” proposes a hermeneutic of hospitality as a powerful tool for fostering interreligious education.

The five chapters which comprise the last subpart of Part 1 are focused on the process and aims of education. In his chapter, “Religious Foundations of Education: Perspectives of Muslim Scholars,” Hamid Reza Alavi highlights the educational theories and methods of major Muslim scholars, and suggests how they have relevance for interreligious education in current settings. The topic of wisdom is explored by Mehmet Onal in “Wisdom (HIKMAH) as a Holistic Basis for Interreligious Education.” The author suggests that the concept of wisdom is a crucial aspect of all religious education including Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. His chapter presents definitions of wisdom, and focuses on world wisdom literature and the religious traditions. Amjad Hussain argues for a contextual intercultural and interreligious Islamic education that has a healthy balance between ethnic cultural identity, religious life, and confident dialogue. His chapter, “Islamic Education in the West: Theoretical Foundations and Practical Implications,” especially emphasizes the necessity for a more intercultural-oriented Islamic education. Drawing on insights from systems theory and ecology, Anthony Ozele’s chapter, “Envisioning an Ecosystems Perspective for Interreligious Education: A Christian

View,” addresses some of its ramifications for interreligious education. The underlying principle of the ecosystem perspective is the attainment of stability and mutual consideration in all societal transactions as well as reciprocal cooperation between various parts of the ecosystem. This chapter suggests that the family ecosystems perspective is fundamentally pertinent for envisioning a curriculum of interreligious education that is creatively responsive to the dynamics of global realities.

The last chapter in this subpart is also the closing “end piece” of the whole part. In “Religious Pluralism and Dialogue/Interreligious Dialogue,” Evelina Orteza y Miranda shows that dialogue/interreligious dialogue has come to be accepted as a way to deal with questions that arise out of religious diversity and the relation of one religion to another. She carefully analyzes the various meanings and nuances of dialogue and highlights their importance for religious/interreligious education. Working from the philosophical principle of reality, her chapter asks the student of religion to take religion’s own claims seriously. She concludes that interreligious education, which encourages dialogue between and among various religious beliefs, will heighten one’s awareness of one’s reasons for believing what one believes and so understand its implications for daily living.

In addressing the philosophical and theoretical aspects of interreligious education, the chapters in this part broaden the arena of discourse for religions. The hope is that such discourse will enhance progress toward peace and justice. Martin E. Marty (2005) puts it well:

Faiths will continue to collide, but those individuals and groups that risk hospitality and promote engagement with the stranger, the different, the other, will contribute to a world in which measured hopes can survive and those who hope can guide. (p. 178)

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Religious Pluralism and the Paradigm

Evelina Orteza y Miranda

Introduction

This essay explores some ideas and problems related to a current interest among theologians, scholars in religion, and religious educators, namely, religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue.¹ The willingness to engage in this dialogue, which is now characterized by openness, cooperation, and charity, is a stark contrast to dialogues – if they could be named as such – of previous years, which tended to reduce to acrimonious debate, open hostility, sans grace. This is, perhaps, due to a realization that religion is a human phenomenon and as such it struggles with basic human problems, such as meaning and purpose of life, nature of good and evil, human suffering, and injustice. There is, then, no need for diverse religions to confront each other possessed of a siege mentality, ready to battle. These concerns are common to us all, needing concerted efforts to deal with and solve them.

But given the universality of these concerns, there is a diversity and plurality of religious systems representing various ways of faith that provide different answers. This, in itself, is not a problem. Religious diversity is not a new phenomenon. There have always been different religious belief systems, for example, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism, practiced in different parts of the world by various people. Restricted to their original settings and localized in their influence, they were not in touch with each other and so were unfamiliar with each other. The question of which one system is right or wrong, or which one is or which ones are acceptable, on whatever grounds, did not arise. Even when they became known, tolerated, or, perhaps, accepted, the believed assumption, given the dominance of European and Western thinking, is or was that Judeo-Christianity is the superior, if not the only

E. Orteza y Miranda (✉)
University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada
e-mail: orteza@ucalgary.ca

¹“Dialogue” and “interreligious dialogue” are used interchangeably in the essay even as the latter identifies religion as its specific matter of interest.

true religion. The vigorous missionary efforts of the Christian Church² to spread the Gospel and establish educational institutions helped secure the acceptance of this belief.

Now, however, with mass communication and international travels, acquaintance with and knowledge of these various religious faiths have become readily accessible, attracting interest in or acceptance of them. And it is common to find communities where neighbors who are adherents and practitioners of diverse religious beliefs live side by side. This situation affords people with first-hand experience of knowing and seeing how diverse religious beliefs are lived out in peoples' lives, providing insights into the influence and meaningfulness of their faith. Religious diversity is a fact of modern life. For some it could be a threat to cherished beliefs, tempting them to retreat to the security of the absolute certainties of their religion. For others, it could be a challenge either to test their faith or to create new meaningful relationships within the plurality of beliefs, with no one faith pretending to be superior over the others. Recent and current research studies, carried out by some anthropologists, scholars of religion, and theologians, have come to judge the view of the superiority of a religion over others as contestable, even unacceptable, and smacking of arrogance and pride.

If this is so, how then should different religions view each other? If all religions are false, the question of which one to accept does not arise. They could all be relegated to twaddle. But, suppose all religions are true. This creates a problem, for different religions make contradictory claims. For one religion, there is a substance in human beings, called soul, which endures beyond physical death. For another religion, such does not exist. Nothing endures. To say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God evidenced by what Scriptures say may not be satisfying to other religions. Christianity interprets itself and so do Buddhism and all other religions, and so they validate themselves in their own way. If all religions are true, this renders the idea of conversion superfluous. There would be no need for all these religions. One would suffice. If most religions are only partly true and only one is true, the onus is on the latter to show evidentially and argue that this is so. But, the absence of a set of objective criteria acceptable to all that could be employed to judge acceptability or rejectability of religious beliefs creates an enormous difficulty. This is not, however, to insist that in the absence of such criteria we cannot move on in pursuit of the mysteries of our faith. We simply have to soldier on hoping that some clarity will emerge helping us to make rational (hopefully, even reasonable) sense of our lives.

Considering that each religion is a distinct system of thought and, like any language, adequate and capable in itself to meet any need that is deemed important and requiring conceptualization and articulation, in what ways could one religion be said to affect or not affect another? Admitting that a religion, like any language, could be influenced by different religions, and to some extent assimilate some of

²The terms "Christian" and "Christianity" refer to both Roman Catholic and Protestant branches. Distinction is made when it is necessary to do so.

their elements, there are still enough constraints in a religion – for example, its distinct sacred texts, historical and religious figures and saints, miraculous events, etc., or in any language, its lexical items, syntax, phonology, etc. – to protect and maintain its identity. “Neither Hinduism and Buddhism, nor Christianity and Judaism are explicable without reference to each others,” says Alan Race (1982, p. 83), on influencing one another, but there is no confusing one for the other.

If we seek to find ways in which faiths can coexist, says Alan Wolfe (2006), in his review of Martin Marty’s book, *When Faiths Collide*,

we run the risk of denying precisely what is “religious” about them, for we ask them to rank their faith in God lower in their scheme of things than their willingness to get along with others. But if we respond by concluding that every religion has no obligation other than to its own truths, we ignore the fact that people of different faiths live near each other – and could, if they wish, destroy each other (Wolfe, 2006, p. 346).

How then should religious plurality be viewed and managed by all religions such that it could be satisfactory, more or less, and instructive to everyone?

This essay attempts to contribute some clarifications to these problematic matters. There is no pretense to an exhaustive treatment of them nor to some complete and settled agreements which have evaded centuries of discussion and deliberations among theologians and philosophers. Its task is twofold. First, it presents what is called “The Paradigm,” namely, exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism,³ as a response to religious diversity and plurality. How this response views the current situation will be discussed, and whether or not it has furthered or improved our understanding of it. Second, it points out the usefulness of The Paradigm and at the same time its limitations, thereby suggesting the necessity of a new way of dealing with religious pluralism that gives due regard to all religions, namely, interreligious dialogue.

Responses to Religious Pluralism and Diversity

The onus and obligation in dealing with questions of religious pluralism seems to fall primarily, if not solely, on the Christian religion. Karl Rahner, S.J., suggests why this is so when he said that religious pluralism

is a greater threat and a reason for greater unrest for Christianity than for any other religion. For no other religion – not even Islam – maintains so absolutely that it is *the* religion, the one and only valid revelation of the one living God, as does the Christian religion. The fact of pluralism of religions, which endures and still from time to time becomes virulent. . . even after a history of 2000 years, must therefore be the greatest scandal and the greatest vexation for Christianity (as cited in Fredericks, 2004, p. 1).

The response of Christianity to religious pluralism and to the soteriological question “Who will be saved?” has been drawn from what has come to be labeled as

³For an instructive discussion on these positions see Race (1982).

“The Paradigm,” namely, exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. It serves as a background to show the need for engaging in interreligious dialogue.

Exclusivism

“To believe that one and only one basic (religious) perspective offers an accurate description of reality” (Basinger, 2002, p. 4), is exclusivism. Broadened, it could read, “one religion is mostly right and all the other religions go seriously wrong or that only one world religion is correct and all others are mistaken” (p. 4). Others add the terms “exclusively true” and “absolute and unique,” thus exclusivism is “the view that one’s religion is exclusively or uniquely true and other religions are false” (Hobson & Edwards, 1999, p. 48). There is something that separates religions from each other which makes them distinct and unique, for example, its particular history, sacred texts, rites, practices, and beliefs. So “Christ is the presence of God on earth for Christians; the Qur’an is the presence of God on earth for Muslims. The Dharma is apparently God’s earthly presence for the Buddhists” (Fredericks, 2004, pp. 10, 12). These are not problematic in themselves. Uniqueness, however, raises some questions “when similar or sometimes conflicting claims to uniqueness are made by other religions” (D’Costa, 1990b, pp. viii–xxii). Or, when consequences from such claims are perceived to create or be responsible for questionable attitudes toward other religions, for example, the definiteness and normativeness of the full revelation of God in Christ, as illustrated in the following quotation:

(The) Christian faith claims for itself that it is the only form of faith for (humankind); by its own claim to truth it casts the shadow of falsehood, or at least of imperfect truth, on every other system. . . . But we must not suppose that this claim to universal validity is something that can be quietly removed from the Gospel without changing it into something entirely different from what it is. . . . (Christ’s) life, his methods and his message do not make sense, unless they are interpreted in the light of his own conviction that he was in fact *the final and decisive word of God to (humankind)* (Neill, 1979, p. 16).⁴

This uniqueness exclusive to a religion is then associated with what is true. If my religion is true, it follows that all others are false or incorrect. This is a logical consequence of exclusivism. It cannot be avoided and not to recognize it has been called the “fallacy of tolerance” (Gardner, 1988, p. 93). Since all religions claim to represent the whole truth or to consist only of significant salvific truths exclusively possessed by them, they can be judged exclusivistic in its general sense, that is, they believe their perspective on a given religious issue is alone true or is at least closer to the truth than any other perspective. Indeed, if I believe in my religious beliefs, it follows that I believe them to be true. It is odd to believe in something if one does not also believe that it is true or know it to be true. To say “I believe x to be false” is to say that it is true that x is false. I believe not in the falsity of x , but in the truth of its falsity. I believe that which is true. Of course, I could be shown to be mistaken

⁴Emphasis added.

in my beliefs and if this is so, then I cease in believing in or about it. Each religious belief system insists on its being true, suggesting an exclusivistic streak in all of them. However, in Diana L. Eck's judgment,

the exclusivist position has been most extensively developed by the monotheistic Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions. . . .and they have been uncompromising in their emphases on the Oneness of God, the Oneness of truth, and the exclusivity of the way to truth and the community of truth (Eck, 1993, p. 173).⁵

Exclusivism, therefore, raises an uncomfortable question, "Who will be saved?" For one thing, exclusivism suggests exclusion, a refusal to admit someone who is not in, keeping someone out, shutting out others by means of a barrier, for example, qualifications, authority, beliefs, etc. An exclusivist could be one who excludes herself from those who are excluded from her group. A sense of separatedness and isolation is evident. An isolated group adheres to one construction of reality to which its members subscribe, and knows and believes it to be true. In knowing and believing in this one and only construction of reality, to the exclusion of other constructions, its members would have difficulty in dealing with or taking seriously other constructions of reality. Those who do not know and believe the truths that they know, could be judged ignorant or blighted – in darkness. When these isolated groups come in contact with each other, fear or hostility, due to ignorance or suspicion of each other, could be a possible consequence.⁶ "Exclusivism," says Eck, "could be the ideological foundation for isolationism" (1993, p. 174).

In itself, however, exclusivism does not seem to raise devastating concerns, especially when it could suggest a sense of accommodation, saying: "Leave religious groups alone, they are doing no harm to others. Allow them the freedom to do what they want to do." Religious believers, as exclusivists, could also be commended for developing deep convictions and loyal commitment to their beliefs, unlike the Laodiceans. What is worrisome and causes some concern is not about the claim of transformative power of the particular vision one has, since this is true of all religions, but over the claim of the "finality and absolute priority of one's beliefs over competing views" (Eck, 1993, p. 178) which could mean or be taken to mean that exclusivism "is coupled with a highly negative attitude toward other traditions" (p. 178). Exclusivism is not merely a matter of "how we hold our own convictions, but also with how we regard the convictions of our neighbour" (p. 178).

Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus

Exclusivism associated with Christianity goes by the expression "no salvation outside the Church (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*)."⁷ This suggests that most, if not all,

⁵I have drawn freely some ideas from Eck's work on The Paradigm and employed them in this essay. I acknowledge my indebtedness to her.

⁶For a discussion on different kinds of ideology, example, ideology of isolation, ideology of hostility, etc., see Lochhead (1988, pp. 5–30).

non-believers (non-Christians) are destined to eternal perdition. But, is this the correct and only interpretation of this axiom and, therefore, in agreement with a suggestion that exclusivism “carries with it the obvious danger of intolerance, hybris and contempt for others?” (Panikkar, 1978, p. xv).

In his summary of the main points of this axiom, Gavin D’Costa discusses its interpretation and employment throughout its development, namely: (1) the axiom affirms that all grace, and thereby salvation, is related to Christ and thereby to His church; (2) the axiom bears no explicit relationship to the status of non-Christians or their religions; it is not addressed to them; (3) the axiom often acknowledged without contradictions that some non-Christians before Christ were saved; and (4) acknowledgement of salvific grace operative outside the explicit boundaries of Christianity, the phenomenon of religious pluralism need not be negatively evaluated by (Christian) theologians. On point (2), he showed that the axiom was applied to “heretical or schismatic societies of Christians,” for example, the Manichaeans, Donatists, and Pelagians, or to “cases of those perceived to be responsible for schism, revolt or betrayal” but not to the “great religions of mankind.” In short, the axiom applied to groups that tended to encourage disunity within the church, but not to those outside of the church. Indeed, there was much discussion on topics such as the position of the just who lived before Christ, grace outside of the Church, etc. D’Costa mentions Kelly, who says that for Augustine “. . . even those who are heretics or schismatics, or lead disordered lives, or even are unconverted pagans, may be predestined to the fullness of grace . . .”⁷ The primary value that undergirds exclusivism is faithfulness and loyalty to one’s religious traditions. The problem of the other is left largely as his or her problem. D’Costa showed that John Hick and others misunderstood the axiom and hence were led to conclude wrongly that it necessarily implied that those outside the boundaries of the visible Church are unredeemed. The axiom read rightly, says D’Costa, could be “. . . an important starting-point for Christian reflection on the existence of religious pluralism and the question of salvation outside the church” (D’Costa, 1990a, pp. 130–147).

Given D’Costa’s interpretation, an important point that could be drawn from it is that exclusivism’s main interest is in identifying certain doctrines of a religious group, for example, Christianity, that single out its distinctiveness. Admitting that such doctrines, summarized as “no salvation outside of the church,” could be misused or abused, still it is shown that its interest is not in other religions, but in distinguishing one religion from another by its distinctiveness or exclusiveness. In short, its main concern is to protect the integrity and unity of the doctrines.

Exclusivism, associated with Christianity, therefore, cannot be judged to be primarily (even solely) interested in figuring out whom to exclude, whom to include, and whom to send to eternal damnation. On the contrary, given its insistence that Christianity consists of the one and only true set of beliefs which have to do with

⁷In the dying moments of his life, one of the criminals who hung on the cross alongside Christ cried out to Him: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” And Jesus Christ replied: “. . . today you will be with me in paradise.” Luke 23: 42–43.

one's salvation from sin and eternal destiny with God, then it must be proclaimed and declared to all. Exclusivism is universal in its aim to spread the Word to all corners of the world, to extend it to all humanity and invite all to come to the Kingdom of God. It does not simply want to exclude but truly desires, above all, to include everyone in God's kingdom even as God Himself desires this to be so. In his letter to Timothy, Paul exhorts him to pray for kings and all who are in authority saying: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all (human beings) to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth" (I Tim 2: 1-4).⁸

Admittedly, the Christian church and her various missions and other activities have not always and in all ways been admirable in their consequences. There is no need to rehearse them here. But, consider exclusivism again. If exclusivism is characteristic of the Christian Church, and if all her activities are motivated primarily and solely by God's unconditional love (agape) for humankind, how could exclusivism be judged so negatively as eager and ready to condemn those outside the boundaries of the visible church to eternal separation from God? If God's love, an expression of His grace, is a gift bestowed upon all believers, and which love they do not merit or cannot earn, how could such a love be used as an expression of superiority, looking down upon other religions with contempt? Nowhere does Christianity encourage a negative or judgmental (i.e., condemnatory) disposition toward other religions. It admonishes believers to leave judgments of individuals' relationship with God to God alone. What is encouraged is respect for others for they are also centers of consciousness and possess reasons, convictions, and feelings, and are human beings, bearers of *Imago Dei*. That there could be religious disagreements does not mean that the teachings and beliefs of others are not serious and could be taken lightly. Of human beings as persons, a seriousness of reflection, a competency on their part in forming their own beliefs must be assumed. To show compassion and love for everyone and an eagerness for reconciliation are frequent admonitions of Christ. The "danger of intolerance, hybris, and contempt for others," which Panikkar (1978, p. xv) asserts, is not a logical derivation from the axiom. Indeed, he says that even "when asserting your religion as 'absolute religion,' this does not imply an outright condemnation of the beliefs of all other human beings who have not received the 'grace' of your calling" (p. xv). The danger of intolerance is not, therefore, in the doctrines of Christianity, but could be possible indicators of believers' understanding of their beliefs. But, the validity and respectability of a religious system of beliefs does not depend upon the kind of lives that believers lead or upon their practices or their thinking about it.

A person can remain an exclusivist and not necessarily be close-minded, dogmatic, or contented. There is nothing in the term that suggests that these terms are reducible one to the other. A pluralist could also be close-minded and dogmatic

⁸Per the quotation, it appears that Paul is endorsing a kind of universalism. However, he goes on to specify saying: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men . . ." I. Timothy 2:1-4. So, knowledge of the truth is Jesus Christ.

about his being so. One can remain a contented religious exclusivist without violating rationality (Gellman, 2000; Plantinga, 2000). However, if we agree with the proposition that the religious domain, like other serious human endeavors, partakes of a common goal, the goal of knowing and reaching the truth, and if diversity of religious beliefs, which are often incompatible if not contradictory with each other, raises the question of which one to accept as a system of true beliefs and which ones to reject, then it appears that to enter into a critical assessment of one's religious beliefs, in order to be assured that in the face of epistemic conflict, there are good reasons for their continued acceptance, could be a *prima facie* obligation. Additionally, this concern is necessitated by the fact that colleagues and friends who are equally rational, sincere, and honest as I am in their manner of acquiring religious beliefs and faced with the same matters of fact, do come to hold diverse beliefs. Even if it is commonly believed (I think wrongly) that the realm of religious beliefs is an individual, private matter, it appears that there is a need to be responsible to members of our community for our beliefs. In this way, religious beliefs are like moral responsibilities grounded in our social obligations to others, especially because religious beliefs tend to issue in actions.

The desirability of openness of mind, that is, to listen and to hear what others have to say, even as one at the same time remains loyal and faithful to one's religious commitments, is in accord with the acknowledgement that to claim that it is possible to fully and completely know and understand correctly on earth all there is to know and understand about God is sheer arrogance. Who can predict, in the wideness of God's mercy, His mysterious workings in the lives of people of various faiths? For exclusivism, per Christianity, the borders of one's religion are wide open, attracting others to come in.

Inclusivism

Consider exclusivism again. Defined by Griffiths (2001) as the view that one's religion is exclusively or uniquely true and other religions are false also "commits anyone who holds it to the claim that no alien religious teaching is identical with any teaching of the home community. For if there were any such instance of identity, it would immediately follow that if the relevant teaching of the home community is true, that of the alien religion must also be true" (Griffiths, 2001, p. 54). He goes on to point out such identities: "unrestricted violence is unacceptable;" "sensual indulgence is not the highest human good" (p. 56); selflessness and love for others; etc. There are overlaps between and among different religious beliefs. In other words, there could be some elements of truth that are or could be shared by some religions. This leads to an inclusivist view that suggests the possibility of truths in other religions while endorsing one religious account.

However, the truths that are possessed by these religions, per Christianity, are incomplete, hence, needing fulfillment. The case of Cornelius, the Roman centurion from Caesarea (Acts 10:1–46), illustrates this point. Described variously as "a just man," "a devout man and one who fears God," has "a good reputation among all the

nation of the Jews,” “who gave alms generously to the people and prayed to God always,” Cornelius was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon Peter who was vacationing in Joppa. When Peter came, Cornelius told him of his vision of a man who said “Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here . . . he will speak to you.” Peter responded: “In truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.” Peter then goes on to specify who this God is that Cornelius worships, citing Jesus of Nazareth, the good works that He did, His crucifixion, His death, and resurrection and concludes: “. . . He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead, to Him all prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” The calling of the Holy Spirit upon those who heard ensued and their baptism took place. Cornelius’ religious practices were all acceptable to God, but they needed to be completed. The God he worships must be specified in the name of Jesus Christ, “preaching peace through Jesus Christ.” Cornelius’ acts of righteousness finds fulfillment in the remission of his sins through Jesus Christ. In short, the elements of truth in his religious practices served as preparations for Cornelius’ acceptance of God’s final, decisive, full, and complete revelation of Himself through Jesus Christ. Inclusivism attests to the universal grace of God and at the same time retains the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

All religions tend to be inclusivistic in that the proclamation of their faith is intended for all. Says Eck: “Many a Hindu thinks of a Vendanta as the culmination and crown, not only of Christianity, but of all religious paths” (Eck, 1993, p. 180). A Muslim says, “To be a good Muslim, you first have to be a good Jew and a good Christian. Islam includes everything that is there in Judaism and Christianity” (p. 180). Inclusivism, more open than exclusivism, tends to widen its notion of truth even as it restricts acceptance of it by reference to the truths of a particular religion. It is obviously tolerant and seems to display a sense of magnanimity. It does not view diversity and plurality of religions as threats to one’s religious beliefs. They serve as an impetus and motivation for finding out what they teach, if they fit into one’s own faith or if something may be learned from them (Griffiths, 2001, p. 60).

Still questions are raised regarding the assimilative tendencies of inclusivism. Teachings of other religions are domesticated to fit into the scheme of an accepted religion. This suggests a lack of respect for these beliefs in that they are not fully recognized on their own terms. A Buddhist monk’s talk, for example, of the dynamic interaction of meditation and compassionate action in his tradition could be interpreted by a Christian as the linking of these two activities by God the Holy Spirit. In this way, the Buddhist view becomes acceptable to her Christian tradition. But, the Buddhist teaching is not accepted or explained on its own terms. It is accepted on the basis of a view which is external or alien to it. Nothing is learned about Buddhist meditation and compassionate action (Fredericks, 2004). Or, when a Christian commends some Theravada Buddhists by saying that God is manifesting Himself in their lives, the statement is not meaningful to them because they do not believe in a deity. But, the good that they do is now shown or validated in the case of a Christian

explanation. Christians, in short, answer their questions about other religions, not by allowing them to speak of their own practices and answering questions in their own voices, but by explaining them in such a way that they could be accommodated as instances of a Christian view. The Christian tradition, in thinking in this way, remains in tact and shielded from the challenges of religious diversity. Instead of welcoming religious differences as opportunities for learning and enrichment, inclusivism tends to interpret them from a particular religious perspective, thereby, domesticating them. Not much is learned from different religious traditions on their own terms.⁹

However, Christianity, considered exclusivistic/inclusivistic, cannot be judged to be hesitant in entering into and engaging other religions in dialog. Beginning with Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), a move to view other religions in an inclusive way has become evident. The document titled “The Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions” commonly known as *Nostra Aetate*, affirms that “all (human beings) form but one community . . . all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth (Acts 17:26) . . . all share a common destiny, namely, God. His providence, evident goodness, and saving designs extend to all (human beings) (Acts 14:17; Romans 2:6–7; I Timothy 2:4)” (as cited in Gioia, 1997, p. 37).

To share the same nature and the same rationality with all human beings, as God’s creation, forming one community, suggests that we ought to treat all as partners in achieving one common goal, the searching and reaching for the truth. Hence, the document appreciates Hinduism’s emphasis on “the limitless riches of myth and the accurately defined insights of philosophy” in its attempts to be released from “the trials of the present life by ascetical practices, profound meditation and recourse to God in confidence and love” (as cited in Gioia, 1997, p. 38). On Buddhism, the document notes that it “proposes a way of life by which (human beings) can, with confidence and trust, attain a state of perfect liberation and reach supreme illumination.” Both are human efforts to respond to the universal love of God.

Being one community means we have responsibilities to others for our beliefs that they, indeed, are in accord with our common goal. And even as we share with others our faith and way of life, believing that this is in accord with God, we must still respect, perhaps, even encourage the spiritual and moral truths found in other religions. Who knows if there could be glimpses of truth in them, inchoate in form may be, but possibly reflecting God’s glory, believing that God is at work among His creation? The inclusivist attitude is summed up in the document in this way:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in (other) religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflects a ray of that truth which enlightens all men. Yet she proclaims and is in duty bound to proclaim without fail, Christ who is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). In Him, in whom God reconcile all things to himself (Corinthians 5:18–19) men find the fullness of their religious life (as cited in Gioia, 1997).

⁹For a discussion on assimilative tendencies of inclusivism, see Fredericks (2004, pp. 11–21).

The move to inclusivism articulated by the Catholic Church could be appreciated, even considered historic. Nonetheless, it is judged as failing to consider other religions in their own right, in their own terms. The truths in them are accepted not because they are true, but because their origin which is reflected by them can be traced back to truth as proclaimed by a particular religion, in this case, Christianity. Inclusivism is non-judgmental, accommodating and at the same time remaining loyal to particular religious beliefs. An inclusivist, therefore, continues to consider its religious beliefs as the norm to which every other religious belief must conform.

The discussion shows that in its response to religious pluralism, Christianity (and other religions as well) did not simply retreat to the certainties of her faith and to seek refuge in it no matter what the facts are. Rather, it took it as a challenge to take seriously its implications for the Church's exclusive claim that in Jesus Christ is the full revelation of God, final and complete. It is an opportunity to inquire, once again, into her doctrines to see if they are correctly understood in all their complexities and whether the implications drawn from them for action and practice are logically acceptable and consistent with the total teachings of the Church. To examine one's religious beliefs, says Alvin Plantinga (2000), could "bring about a reappraisal of them, a reawakening, a new or renewed or deepened grasp and apprehension of (them). . . .It could serve as an occasion for a renewed and more powerful working of the belief-producing processes by which we come to apprehend (our) religious beliefs" (p. 190). Or, as Panikkar (1975) suggests, reflection on one's beliefs could imply "the critical awareness that my belief – which for me may be ultimate and even intentionally exhaustive does not preclude a free interval or an intellectual perspective (a step back, one may say) from which my own belief may be seen, judged, and even criticized" (p. 408). It is not to give up one's faith, but to dig deeper into its truths and mysteries and be enriched in trying to understand ourselves as we truly are. It is, in the words of Anselm, "faith seeking understanding."¹⁰ It is possible to be mistaken or to misunderstand beliefs that are closest to peoples' lives because they define who they are. And so, they can be applied wrongly on other beliefs.

Our religious beliefs are exploratory in the sense that the results of our reflection and meditation on them have a provisional and a mixed character, knowledge from God and from other human beings. They need to be continually evaluated and assessed in the light of God's truths (for the Christian, the Bible and the teachings of the Church). This means that our reflection on them is never finished and cannot become a completed system of thought,¹¹ but it is an on-going intellectual, moral, and spiritual activity as long as one is on earth and short of seeing all things wholly

¹⁰This means that it is perfectly reasonable to start with one's faith beliefs and then understand them using reason. One seeks to deepen one's beliefs, seeks grounds for one's beliefs, and expands and develops them. This is opposed to the view that understanding (reason or arguments) must precede faith which is the enlightenment view which tends to place optimal premium on reason before everything else when dealing with significant matters. (Prof. Kelly James Clark, Dept. of Philosophy, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, personal communication, July 28, 2006).

¹¹While a religion's belief system could be organized logically observing consistency and coherence, a believer's experiences in life may not exactly fit the systematized set of beliefs in

as Jesus Christ saw them. This is not a sign of failure, but an admission of the finiteness of human beings, of minds that know specific or fragments of truths. Also, our religious beliefs are relativistic in the sense that it is relative to the quality of the spiritual state of the person reflecting on her beliefs. In a word, it is pluralistic: “We explore and reflect on our beliefs at different points and by different parts and with different concerns and backgrounds” (Holmes, 1975, pp. 59–60), hence, requiring an openness of mind regarding our disagreements on them. Admittedly, our limited knowledge of God is due, in part, to (1) an inadequate experience of/with God, and (2) confused conceptualization. The first requires our deepening personal encounter and experience with God, the business of the devout; the second is the task of philosophers of religion and philosophically minded theologians and believers “trying to shed light upon that mystery (which is God)” (Hudson, 1979, p. 210).

Inclusivism does not necessarily weaken the confidence of a believer in her beliefs nor does she give up her commitment to them. What could be done is to look for possibilities or openings for connections with other religions, and understanding their spiritual aspirations and longing in hopes that one can learn something from the other and vice versa. This means that different religious traditions must be allowed to speak on their own terms and to speak for themselves, and for others to listen and hear what is actually being said, assuming, rightly or wrongly, equal validity of all religions. This discussion shows the benefits that each religion experiences when it acknowledges the reality of religious pluralism in modern life. Now, to turn to pluralism.

Pluralism

Religious pluralism views all religions to be equally effective salvifically in the lives of their believers. All religions are equally valid in its own way by their internal self-determination and conditioned in their responses to the Divine/God/Reality, etc. by such factors as accidents of birth, cultural traditions, and historical facts.¹² Each religion is equally effective in its transforming power, for example, “by giving one’s self to God in Christ for the Christian, living in accordance with the Torah or with the Qur’anic revelations that Jews and Muslims, respectively, find a transforming peace with God,” says John Hick (1988b, pp. 366, 376). So, “is Christianity really a religion destined for all people?” asks Roger Haight. No. Jesus Christ is the normative revelation from God for the Christians. But, He is only one Saviour among others and he is not the only way to salvation. God is also normatively revealed in

abstraction. The bafflement of Job had to do with his acceptance of God’s righteousness and justice, formulated in the abstract, but did not fit with his suffering which he judged to be an unjust act of God. Job’s experiences could not be tidied up and fixed to fit the logical system of his religious beliefs.

¹²In Keith E. Yandell’s (1999) view, “the own conceptual world” regarding religions, which make them inaccessible to assessment by outsiders is “utterly mistaken.” For related interests, see Griffiths (1991).

other religions. No one religion is superior over the others. Paul Knitter, a prominent Catholic theologian says:

Other religions may be just as effective and successful in bringing their followers to truth, and peace, and well-being with God as Christianity has been for Christians. . . . These other religions, again because they are so different from Christianity, may have just as important a message and vision for all peoples as Christianity does (as cited in Fredericks, 2004, p. 9).

Echoing the idea of pluralism, Harold Kasimow (1999) says:

I am a Jewish pluralist. As such, I am committed to the Jewish path, not because it is superior, but because it is my path. I view the concept of the chosen people as God choosing the Jews to follow the path of the Torah, while at the same time choosing the Hindus to follow the Vedas, the Buddhists to follow the Dharma, the Muslims to follow the Qur'an and the Christians to follow Jesus of Nazareth (p. 4).

If believing in one religion or another is God's choice for one people and not for another, who can disagree with God? Additionally, if it is God's choice, it follows that this or that religion must be in accord with God. God cannot choose a religion for a people that clearly contradicts or is contrary to God's holiness and righteousness. All religions, therefore, are equally acceptable to God and effective salvifically in the lives of believers. The validity of these religions is, obviously, limited to their followers. How then can Knitter suggest that different religions, like Christianity, may have a message and vision for *all* peoples? If all religions are sufficient in guiding the lives and conduct of their believers, where is the need to listen to another message or vision? The same point is expressed by Panikkar about parallelism (a term he uses instead of pluralism). Different creeds, he says, are parallel paths which will meet at the end of our pilgrimage. There is no need to interfere or to convert, but to deepen individual traditions: "Be a better Christian, a better Marxist, a better Hindu . . ." (Panikkar, 1978, p. viii). This assumes self-sufficiency and denies the need for mutual learning. Knitter is, perhaps, suggesting that all religions, although effective salvifically, can still, in Eck's words, "(glimpse) glory as seen by another" (1993, p. 186).

Indeed, the transcendency of God suggests that there is more to God than our idea or knowledge of Him. He cannot be encapsulated in or by any one religious tradition. In Hick's words:

The ultimate divine reality is infinite and as such transcends the grasp of the human mind. . . . he cannot be defined or encompassed by human thought. We cannot draw boundaries round his nature and say that he is this and no more. If we could fully define God, describing His inner being and His outer limits, this would not be God (1988a, p. 139).

It is God's transcendence that "drives us to find out what others have known of God . . . to inquire more deeply into the insights of those Buddhists who do not speak of God at all" (Eck, 1993, p. 186). Pluralism encourages involvement in other faiths and also stresses commitment to one's particular religious tradition. Harold Kasimow, for example, says that his experience with Buddhism has enriched his understanding and appreciation of his Jewish tradition. However, even if he is

immersed in Buddhist meditation during the practice of zazen, he says “this experience is radically different for me than a Yom Kippur service . . . A distinction remains between my tradition . . . and other religious traditions” (Kasimow, 1999, p. 4). Whether or not his enriched understanding and appreciation of his own Jewish tradition also means that now his understanding of it is different in some central or peripheral ways is not clear. The fact, however, that he continues to distinguish his tradition from the other suggests that there is no assimilation of one belief to the other, transforming his beliefs to something other than what it was before or transforming him. There is no change in the substantiality of these two traditions. His enriched appreciation of his own tradition is understandable. Where, for example, the rites and rituals and liturgies of a religion are complicated and sophisticated, evoking awareness of all of one’s senses, one learns to appreciate the utter simplicity and directness of an approach to God only through the purity of His Word, gripping one’s mind as one beholds God’s awesome majesty, holiness, righteousness, and love. Differences could highlight aspects of religions which could be missed, but which are central to religious acts and practices. For example, when one notices how a religion encourages its members, and succeeds in its encouragement to them to be dispositionally given to God in prayers and meditations, the difference could be embarrassing when such practices are nowhere cultivated or even appreciated in one’s religion. Religions could benefit from each other in this way. But, it appears, that even when one’s practice of prayer could be affected, its concept and substance are not necessarily changed so that it now accords with another belief system. Clearly, however, one religion can benefit another in an instrumental way.¹³

Pluralism is not out to make all religions into one uniform system of belief. Indeed, the particularity of one’s religious tradition is not dismissed as the above quote shows. But, says Eck, “it takes away our ability to claim the comprehensive, exhaustive universality of our own tradition” (1993, p. 186). It releases one from feeling obligated to be dead-right all the time on all religious issues to a sense of freedom to admire and appreciate others in our differences, and in our differences

¹³Rami Mark Shapiro, Rabbi of Temple Beth Or in Miami, Florida, relates this moving experience in a small gathering in a monastery. “One morning the conversation turned to Jesus, the suffering servant nailed to a cross. While the Jewish prophet Isaiah introduced the concept of the suffering servant, referring to the people of Israel rather than one Jew in particular, I admit to having trouble with Jesus And yet here was a man I admired and respected telling me of his love for this martyred messiah. At first, I couldn’t hear it Then as the passion of my friend’s convictions broke through the barriers of my own fear, disbelief, and anger, I began to listen and to hear and to know Jesus through the heart of another. Not Jesus the God; not Jesus the Messiah; but Jesus the man, the crucified servant who died for his belief and his right to speak it freely. I sensed the faith of my friend even though I could not share it. I saw through his eyes what I could not see with my own. I cannot pretend to understand the mystery of faith in Christ crucified and resurrected, but I did open my heart to that of another and found there new insight into the human grappling with suffering and meaning, and a renewed sense of purpose and peace I stepped on foreign shores and beheld some of its beauty and grace. And from that brief meeting came a deeper appreciation for Christian faith and a renewed bonding with humanity arising from my having entered the sphere of between” (Shapiro, 1989, pp. 31–40).

find a commonality in our efforts to serve God. They no longer appear to be threatening as potential competitors of God's grace, but as partakers of our limited humanity in need of God.

The pluralist perspective could be, in Knitter's view (as cited in Fredericks, 2004), an essential condition for an authentic dialogue to take place. This, perhaps, is too strong a requirement. After all the Vatican, tending toward an exclusivist-inclusivist theology and not to pluralism has initiated on-going interreligious dialogues for some time now. One need not be a pluralist to enter into an interreligious dialogue.

Pluralism encourages sharing, in the sense of imparting pieces of information, of religious beliefs without passing judgment on anyone of them. The participants bracket their core beliefs and in this way they may be judged neutral. The extent to which this could be true could be questioned, but this is not to deny that it can be done. A problem, however, is the extent to which one can trust oneself in saying one's beliefs are suspended or relegated to limbo, so to speak. Why? It is possible that my fundamental religious beliefs, bedrock of my convictions, that which defines who I am and which definition of myself is inside my head, could be influencing my manner of listening to and hearing of others' beliefs. The capacity to bracket one's beliefs depends upon the closeness of one's identification with one's beliefs, such that to assess my beliefs and their credibility is to assess me. How then does one bracket one's self? If this can be done, what else is left for one to say on matters closest to one's heart and mind? A danger of pluralism, noted by Alan Race (1982),

is that if all religious traditions are made relative (in that each religion is culturally conditioned in their focus of divine reality) it could undermine concern to distinguish good from bad, the spiritually wholesome and profound from the spiritually poor and moribund religion. . . . Stated starkly, it could mean that if all faiths are equally true, then all faiths are equally false (p. 78).

Some of the important points of pluralism are (1) it seeks to understand the other on his own terms and to respect differences and observe commonalities in various religious traditions; (2) it assumes real commitment, but without dogmatism, to one's religious community, and at the same time encourages an open-mindedness; it is an encounter of commitments; (3) it encourages individual distinctiveness, to be who we really are and yet be in relation to one another; it is not syncretism; and (4) it is based on interreligious dialogue (Eck, 1993, pp. 190–199). In sum, pluralism could be described as “a range of options in the reconciliation of a truly Christian charity and perceptivity with doctrinal adequacy” (Race, 1982, p. 69). Pluralism treats all religions on an equal footing, assuming validity of them all (even if all of them may not be clear cases of “doctrinal adequacy”).¹⁴ Real and meaningful encounters encouraged by pluralism are not intended to secure agreements, but to develop relationships based on mutual understanding.

¹⁴What constitutes “doctrinal adequacy” must be explicated and fully argued for.

Responses and Their Limitations

The responses of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism to religious pluralism will not satisfy everyone to the same extent. Difficulties and problems are noted in each of them. Even if they provide a good starting point in identifying central problems pertinent to religious diversity and to focus on them, furthering understanding of them, still it is admitted that the responses, framed within any one of the paradigms, are limited within the boundaries of the paradigm. Answers to religious problems or disagreements are imbedded within the paradigm and in this way answers are always “correct” per the paradigm. The paradigm remains intact even if it fails to satisfy an individual person’s particular, existential questions, or, more importantly, even if it fails to address problems of religious pluralism in its social, political, and historical contexts. An observation for this failure advanced by Terry C. Muck (2007) is that the paradigm is stuck in figuring out how to accommodate interests of Christianity, namely, the soteriological question, “Who will be saved?” and the question of the relationship of the One and the many (raised by John Hick), into the understanding of other world faiths. Unfortunately, however, these questions do not necessarily help in understanding or interpreting the reality of other faith traditions because these are not their concerns. The paradigm deals mainly with interests particular to Christianity, but not necessarily or not at all with the question of how to relate to other faiths creatively such that an attractiveness to or curiosity about each other in the spirit of hospitality is generated. The paradigm, in Muck’s view, must not only be questioned, but it must be replaced by a radical move to “participant theologizing,”¹⁵ which helps people enter into the religious worldviews of others as full participants. But, his suggestion, however, is not devoid of difficulties. For one thing, it is not easy to bracket one’s core religious beliefs if one tries to participate fully in the practices of another religion. And if one could do it, how long could this be done? Is it ever possible to participate fully in another religious worldview without at the same time giving up one’s adherence to his/her beliefs? What, in short, does it take to participate fully in another theological/religious worldview, conversion? asks Amos Yong. “I am still learning how to do so after giving my life to Jesus at the age of five. Can I really enter *fully* into the worldview of Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, etc. and if so, how?” (Yong, 2007, p. 30). These questions must be fully argued and fleshed out, resulting in suggested practices and actions, before Muck’s suggestions can be considered seriously.

Before dismissing the paradigm altogether, consider it again in order to find out if it has a place in deliberations over matters of religious pluralism. Notice that the boundaries of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism are not closed. They should

¹⁵Participant theologizing, according to Muck (2007), has four steps, namely: (1) entering into the other’s worldview as full participants; (2) learning from it for purposes of our own culture’s theology, using compare and contrast critique; (3) using their worldview and structure, religion included, as a platform for telling the story of Jesus; and (4) encouraging them to create their own understanding of the story without giving up on their worldviews, including their religion. For critical comments see Yong (2007, pp. 28–32).

not be viewed necessarily and always as either—or considerations or totalistic in orientation. One, for example, could be exclusive about one thing and inclusive about another thing. It depends upon the particular problem that is being dealt with. To illustrate, consider that I believe that the proposition “Jesus Christ is the Son of God” is true. However, my friend believes that it is false. Obviously, both beliefs cannot be true. I also believe that human beings, created in the image of God, are capable of rationality. Investigating the matter rationally (I assume that we did), how did we arrive at two directly contradictory positions? How is it that equally knowledgeable individuals who have thought seriously about this matter, and given the same relevant data and arguments, still differ on what is true? Rationality does not serve (or it minimally serves) us to be in touch with what is true. I am inclusive about rationality and exclusive about truth.¹⁶ But, I desire for both of our claims to be effective soteriologically. What should I do? I believe that God holds people accountable for the amount of light they have and for how they respond to it. So, if someone responds properly to the grace given to her/him, even if she/he does not know God or Christ personally, salvation is secured for them, that is, God, in His mercy applies the work of Christ to her/him and saves her/him. Unfortunately, this applies only to those who have not heard of the claims of Christ. My friend is excluded. My inclusiveness is not inclusive enough to include my friend. Since, however, only God knows who His true believers are, followers to the end, they could come from all sorts of religions. And although my friend and I do not know this now because we cannot predict the workings of the Triune God among people of various faiths, God, in His mercy and grace, could include, at the end of time, people (including my friend) or groups of people who were not inside the visible structures of the Christian Church. There is, as the hymn says, a wideness in God’s mercy. I have become a bit of an inclusivist regarding salvific matters and have remained an exclusivist about truth. The value of preserving the unity and purity of doctrinal truths and to bear witness to them to others, which undergirds exclusivism, served in considering religious truths. Inclusivism, which heightens the value of accommodation and dialogue, clarified the question of whether my friend could be in or out of God’s saving grace.

Pluralism could be employed when dealing with social projects in which there is common agreement among different religions, for example, working for justice and elimination of racial and religious discrimination, advocating for world peace, enhancing respect for and development of our environment, elimination of poverty, etc. It moves away from doctrinal matters to social practices which when actualized could increase livability in peoples’ lives.

The employment of either exclusivism, inclusivism, or pluralism depends upon the kind of problem being dealt with. In this way, specificity is encouraged when talking about the paradigm, hence, one can be exclusive about something and inclusive about something else and pluralistic about other specific problems. There is

¹⁶This idea is from Linda Zagzebski.

a suggestion of flexibility in the working out of the paradigm and not a rigid application of it in a wholesale manner to the totality of religious matters.

Still, some questions could be raised about this approach. An exclusivist, for example, could interpret justice and peace from her exclusivist religious perspective, while the pluralist, eschewing religious justifications for any of its deliberations and decision, could invoke secular values which may not be congenial to other religious perspectives. The talk could be only on cultural values. This shows that one's attempts to escape the confinement of an accepted paradigm may not always succeed.

Perhaps, it is better to approach religious pluralism and related problems not by way of a fixed system of thought or a so-called perspective which interprets problems within its framework, but fails to take into account the particular context of a person's experience of them. Hence, the interpretation is not accurate and clearly not meaningful to a person undergoing the experience. Believers do not experience and interact with religion in its abstract formulations, but rather in their confrontation with the realities of life, such as suffering, death, separation, betrayal, joy, etc. which could question the reality and meaningfulness of their beliefs. In what ways could one's religion, as it is lived out by her, enable her to understand and make sense of such realities in her life? A particular religious worldview could explain them, sometimes explains them away, so neatly and logically, keeping the purity of the religious doctrines, but leaving the person's heart cold and untouched.

Better to admit that most religious problems and experiences, in their fullness and complexities, cannot be defined by or confined to one perspective or paradigm. Who or what explanation can fully fathom the anguish and heart-wrenching uncertainty of Abraham in coming to a decision whether to obey or disobey God's instruction to sacrifice Isaac, the seed of God's promise? What can fully explain his decision to break conventional wisdom and cultural mores and take a leap of faith, believing that faith is higher than reason? As problems of ultimacy, involving metaphysical beliefs, revelatory experiences, and spiritual intuitions, they transcend the limits of any one academic discipline or paradigm. They require a give and take type of discussion that allows all voices to be heard and eloquent silences encouraged, in an effort to come to an accurate understanding and some mutual agreements about them. Characterized as truth seeking, unlike the paradigms that assume possession of some truths, this discussion is a process in search for truth and to recognize it when it is found. Independent of and free from any paradigm, any questions could be raised and any proposed solutions could be considered. It concentrates on solely knowing and appreciating religious problems as they are and as fully as it is possible to do so, especially in their experiential aspects, discerning and hopefully arriving collectively at some conclusions about them.

In short, the effort and desire is to allow a situation, a problem, or an experience to come forth on its own and define itself in its own terms. The religious life or experience, in other words, has a life of its own and it is this life that generates ideas/interpretations about it. So, their genesis and place are one and the same, namely, the religious experience/problem. Everything, therefore, that is said about the experience is integral to the total religious experience, serving its need. It is

not an interpretation or explanation done by, say, a sociologist or psychologist of religion which interpretation is outside of a religious experience. When it explains a religious phenomenon, its concepts and methodologies tend to transform what was originally a religious experience into a psychological or sociological matter for analysis and investigation. The religious experience as it is, is not explained, but explained away and replaced by either one of them simply because the interest of sociological/psychological investigations is primarily to sharpen their tools and instruments in order to achieve a clearer understanding of their conceptualization of a given problem, for example, religion.

In contrast, the interpretation that is called forth here is one that arises out of a concrete religious experience and reality, an emergent from one's religious experience which may not translate easily into calculable objective measurements. It allows religious problems, experiences, etc. to interpret and explain itself in its own terms, in all of its singularities and peculiarities, even idiosyncrasies. In this way, accuracy of description of them could be secured. Such an exercise is a human activity which could be engaged in by any one who has experienced or experiences religious anxieties, perplexities and doubtful concerns and religious ecstasies, encouraged as he/she is to "tell it as it is." It is a human activity that defines, in part, our limited humanity in need of relationships, thus reaching out to others. It goes by the name of dialogue/interreligious dialogue and is the subject of another chapter in this collection.

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Enlightenment's Wake: Religion and Education at the Close of the Modern Age

L. Philip Barnes

Introduction

It is a commonplace that religious education was reborn in 1971.

The . . . tale of the recent death and miraculous rebirth of religious education is in truth a piece of academic folklore.

These two quotations will be readily understood by most British religious educators and those familiar with the history of religious education in modern Britain: 1971 was the date of publication of *Working Paper 36: Religious Education in the Secondary School*, by the Schools Council (Schools Council, 1971); it is widely regarded as heralding the demise of Christian confessionalism in state-maintained (now 'community') schools in England and Wales and as ushering in a new professional era for the subject of religious education both here and abroad (Copley, 2007, pp. 100–105). The second quotation, which in its original context interpreted 'recent' as denoting post-World War II developments up until 1971, will also be identified by most religious educators as referring to the ongoing debate within religious education on the relevance and strengths of post-confessional religious education. Clearly, the opinion expressed is controversial; even if most educators are aware of challenges to aspects of post-confessional religious education. Of course, for a few critics, Penny Thompson (2004), for example, it is not just aspects of post-confessional religious education that should be challenged, but the whole post-confessional model. For others, there is a range of weaknesses, which while consistent with the retention of non-confessional religious education nevertheless limits its practical and theoretical achievements. In any case, critics of the existing model, however widely or narrowly they direct their criticism, might indeed interpret assertions of 'the death and miraculous rebirth of religious education' and connotations of a sharp contrast between *unsuccessful* confessional religious education and *successful* non-confessional religious education as 'a piece of academic folklore' – a judgement difficult to substantiate from the evidence.

L.P. Barnes (✉)
King's College London, London, UK
e-mail: Philip.barnes@kcl.ac.uk

In point of fact, the original context of both quotations is that of political philosophy and not of religious education; more particularly, they come from the opening chapter of John Gray's critique of Enlightenment liberalism in *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (1995, pp. 1 and 2). In the two quotations 'religious education' has been substituted for 'political philosophy': in the first quotation 1971 refers to the date of publication of *A Theory of Justice* by John Rawls and not to *Working Paper 36*.

The purpose of this introductory exercise, in substituting the name of one discipline (or field of study) for another and in introducing the subject of political philosophy in this context, is twofold. First, it alerts us to the fact that debates within disciplines can take similar forms and raise similar issues. For example, the notion of 'progress' within political philosophy, and the associated idea that the early 1970s marked a decisive shift of orientation and direction within the discipline (see Archard, 1996), is contested in ways (see MacIntyre, 1985, for example) that mirror debates in religious education. Academic disciplines are often subject to the same cultural, intellectual and social influences, and debates in one discipline resonate with debates in other disciplines. Second, and following on from this, there are reasons for concluding that religious education has much to gain from initiating a dialogue with political philosophy. In fact, somewhat surprisingly, although religious educators have sought inspiration from other disciplines, consider the seminal influence of religious studies, as interpreted by Ninian Smart (1968), on religious education or the influence of anthropology of religion as mediated by Robert Jackson (1997, pp. 30–48), for example, the field of political philosophy has attracted relatively little interest. I say 'relatively little' rather than *no* interest because it could be argued that the influence of political philosophy is revealed in the current emphasis by some contemporary religious educators on citizenship and human rights (Chater, 2000; Gearon, 2002, 2004). This may be granted, provided it is appreciated that on occasions this (narrowly circumscribed) interest in subjects traditionally associated with politics and political philosophy is best interpreted as opportunist and uncritical. By opportunist, I mean that the discourse of rights and citizenship, which currently enjoys political esteem and support, seems to be appropriated by some religious educators chiefly to extol the value of their subject to the curriculum and ultimately to advertise its value to their political masters rather than for any intrinsic educational reason. By uncritical, I mean that there can be a limited appreciation by religious educators of long-running debates within political philosophy that focuses on the controversial nature of the justification and application of rights and the extent to which appeals to the discourse of rights can stifle dialogue and thwart deliberative democracy (see Barnes, 2007, for discussion). Basically, there neither has been nor is any *deep* engagement by religious educators with political philosophy. Yet this is surprising, in that since the 1970s political philosophy has been in the forefront of developing strategies to meet the challenge posed by religious and moral pluralism to political society. In other words, political philosophy has been addressing and responding to precisely the same issues as religious educators.

The aim of this chapter is to initiate a critical dialogue with political philosophy, for as religious educators become increasingly focused on the contribution of their subject to the social aims of education, it is imperative that they interact with social theorists and political philosophers who have reflected upon the same broad issues and challenges. The problem is that political philosophy no more speaks with one voice or endorses one particular way of enabling society to respond positively to diversity than does religious education. Any dialogue with political philosophy on this issue requires both acts of interpretation and critical judgements to be made as to which position is best supported and best serves the interests of education. Ideally, religious educators should review the different contributions of political philosophers and assess their relative worth, for only then can a principled decision be made regarding which individual or school of thought provides the resources to help frame an appropriate educational response to the challenge of diversity to civil society and to public institutions. This engagement with political philosophy by religious educators, however, has yet to begin. There is no body of literature or research in which religious educators review and assess the various proposals of political philosophers to effecting respectful relationships between the different cultural, ethnic and religious communities that make up society. It is as a necessary first step in this direction that this essay is offered. An attempt will be made to explore the thought of one particularly provocative and influential political philosopher, that of John Gray (from whom we quoted at the beginning of this essay), and assess its relevance for religious education. Such exploration, it may be conceded, is limited and provisional, in that fuller reflection may well identify better sources of inspiration for policy and practice in religious education. But at least a dialogue with political philosophy will have been initiated; and a dialogue with the thought of John Gray suggests itself as not entirely without promise. This is because his writings on diversity and pluralism in society are predicated on a critique of modernity and Enlightenment liberalism, and as a number of recent commentators have argued, Andrew Wright most notably (2004; see also Barnes & Wright, 2006), much contemporary religious education is built upon Enlightenment assumptions and seeks to endorse Enlightenment values. It is important for religious educators to acquaint themselves with critiques of this nature, particularly when it reveals the extent to which unchallenged assumptions within religious education are widely challenged elsewhere. This complaint is particularly appropriate to much British religious education, where support for a phenomenological approach to the study of religion remains strong, long after its credibility has been seriously questioned, if not undermined, within religious studies (see McCutcheon, 1997; Fitzgerald, 2000). More positively, the political philosophy of Gray provides insights into the kind of educational strategy and commitments that could contribute to the development of respectful and responsible relationships between adherents of the different religions and worldviews within society.

One caveat: the use of the thought of Gray as a dialogue partner to illuminate the nature of religious education and to frame an appropriate educational response to cultural diversity does not entail a slavish following of his position or a narrowly conceived attempt to limit innovation in religious education to precisely those

strategies that are warranted by his position. In the first instance, Gray does not concern himself with education, so any application of his ideas to this realm necessarily requires a degree of creativity. There is no direct link between political philosophy and educational policy, in that a range of different educational policies and strategies may well claim justification by reference to the same socio-political commitments. Simply put, educational policies and strategies are underdetermined by political philosophy. Second, the emphasis is on a *critical* appropriation of his thought for religious education. This means two things: one, that our engagement with Gray is deliberately confined to those areas that are of most relevance to religious education; two, should it be shown that some of the conclusions advanced on the basis of our engagement with him are not fully warranted by reference to his position, this will not be regarded as an insurmountable objection to their worth or validity. The agenda of the religious educator and commitment to liberal social aims in education will determine the conversation and the outcomes of the dialogue.

Our engagement with Gray will take the following form: first, attention will be given to a number of themes and concepts that he uses to characterise his distinctive approach to interpreting and explaining the nature of contemporary society and the intellectual forces that have shaped it; second, his ideas will be used to illuminate and criticise the recent history and the implicit assumptions of modern religious education; and finally, an attempt will be made to outline a form of religious education that both owes its inspiration to Gray and provides resources and strategies for developing respectfulness between individuals and between communities.

Key Concepts in the Political Philosophy of John Gray

There are a number of aspects of the political philosophy of John Gray that are particularly relevant to contemporary religious education and its attempts to contribute to the (legitimate) social aims of education in pluralist democratic states. These are his distinctive interpretation and critique of liberalism; his commitment to value pluralism; and his notion of *modus vivendi*. The first of these will be reviewed more fully, for as well as being a subject in its own right, it provides the necessary context for an appreciation of the two remaining aspects of his political philosophy with which we will be concerned.

Liberalism

The first part of *Enlightenment's Wake* presents a (kind of) summary of the weaknesses of liberalism, that is, liberalism as a political ideology, with its attendant moral and intellectual commitments. Central to liberalism, according to Gray is the 'hope that human beings will shed their traditional allegiances and their local identities and unite in a universal civilisation grounded in generic humanity and a rational morality' (Gray, 1995, p. 2, cf. pp. 124–130). Such hope is typically characterised as

progressive and rational. The core project of the Enlightenment is the displacement of local, customary or traditional moralities, and of all forms of transcendental faith, by a critical or rational morality, which is projected as the basis of a universal civilisation. This hope, however, Gray believes, is unrealistic, not only because people refuse to shed their traditional communal allegiances, constituted as they often are by particular religious and cultural commitments, but also because the notion of a rational morality of universal scope and application is not intellectually credible or politically achievable: two centuries of failure in the quest to find a unifying secular morality suggests to him that the project is impossible: there is no successful version of 'rational' morality (cf. Graham, 2004, pp. 176–179).

In terms reminiscent of Alasdair MacIntyre, Gray argues that moral and political values are intimately related to and grounded in particular traditions of thought and belief. For moral values to retain their justificatory power, they cannot be (entirely) detached from their original context, with its specific epistemic and metaphysical commitments, which in turn are mediated by a particular culture and a particular tradition of thought. This point may not be novel but its force is increasingly recognised. For example, in *God, Locke and Equality* (2002), the American philosopher Jeremy Waldron has recently argued that Locke's notion of basic human equality and the related notion of natural (human) rights, notions from which our more developed modern discourse of rights is derived, are unashamedly religious, and more particularly Christian. According to Waldron, Locke's mature writings present an idea of basic human equality that is grounded in Christian theism (cf. Dunn, 1969); this idea is a working premise of his whole political theory, whose influence can be detected in his arguments about property, family, slavery, government, politics and toleration. In other words, liberal political convictions and contemporary assertions of rights are genealogically derived from Christian commitment to the sacredness of human life, a commitment grounded in turn in the belief that men and women are 'created in the image and likeness of God' (Gen. 1: 26). Controversially, Waldron also argues that contemporary liberalism lacks just such a well-founded and versatile (metaphysical) foundation for the notion of human equality as well as the resources to supply it. Similar conclusions have also been reached by the British philosopher Roger Trigg (2007; summarised in 2008). The purpose of this illustration is not to engage in Christian polemics against secularism but to give substance to Gray's claim that the 'thin' concept of rational morality associated with Kant and the Enlightenment project generally (and of course their contemporary intellectual successors) lacks the necessary metaphysical foundations to ground the notion of the dignity of *human* nature, that is, the dignity of all persons. It may be noted in passing that such considerations pose a serious challenge to those who wish to reconfigure religious education on the 'neutral' foundation of human rights.

According to Gray, the Enlightenment project also conceives cultural and religious differences (with their ethnic and nationalist components) as ephemeral and insubstantial, and as such safely consigned to the private realm (Gray, 1995, p. 65). Again he does not develop this provocative historical point, though it is easily illustrated. The positive idea that the different religions are in essence reducible to a common set of beliefs was widely canvassed among Enlightenment thinkers of the

late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Its origins can be traced to Lord Herbert of Cherbury's idea of universally shared 'common notions' (*notitiae commune*), namely the existence of one God, the necessity of worship, the practice of virtue and so on (see Preus, 1987, pp. 23–39). For Herbert and for deism, of which he is one of the founding fathers, the body of truth about God attainable by reason is sufficiently extensive of itself to generate a religion on its own, though a religion carefully tailored for 'the public square' and supportive of public values. Religious differences, on this reading, to use Gray's term, are 'insubstantial.' Rational religion serves the public interest and includes within itself humankind's natural knowledge of God and morality; the rest of religion is 'irrational' and therefore inconsequential from a social and political viewpoint. There is no need to explore the convoluted history of Enlightenment interpretations of religion (and of their contemporary intellectual successors); the central point is that on such readings religion is, for the most part, regarded either as a vehicle for public, rational morality, the form of which all are assumed to agree upon, following Kant, or as a manifestation of irrational experience, an interpretation that can be viewed either positively, as with Rudolf Otto, or negatively, as with Sigmund Freud. In either case the differences between religions, particularly those differences that were perceived as being most likely to cause division within society, are relegated to a secondary and unimportant status. By contrast Gray affirms that difference is 'a primordial attribute of the human species; human identities are plural and diverse in their very natures, as natural languages are plural and diverse' (Gray, 1995, p. 65). He regards this insight as challenging the suggestion that there is a single universal morality, or for that matter a single universal form of religion.

The final aspect of Gray's interpretation of liberalism to be considered is his critique of liberal toleration. In a number of writings he distinguishes between two forms (or what he prefers to call, two 'faces') of liberalism (see Gray, 2000): that of traditional liberalism and that of agonistic liberalism. The term 'agonistic' is derived from the Greek word *agon*, which has the meaning both of a contest between rivals and of the conflict between characters in tragic drama. Traditional liberalism is the pursuit of a rational form of life, to which all should aspire, and in which agreement between all may be found. Agonistic liberalism is the search for peaceful relationships among adherents of different ways of life on the basis that radical choices have to be made between different social and political goods or excellences and that such choices do not lend themselves to rational adjudication.

In the former view (i.e. traditional liberalism), liberal institutions are seen as applications of universal principles. In the latter [i.e. agonistic liberalism], they are a means to peaceful co-existence. In the first, liberalism is a prescription for a universal regime. In the second it is a project of co-existence that can be pursued in many regimes. (Gray, 2000, p. 2)

Liberal toleration, according to Gray, effectively undermines difference for it posits the truth that difference can be overcome through (rational) consensus. The crucial question to ask of religious education is which interpretation of liberalism it has pursued; to this we will return when we come to consider the relevance of Gray's ideas to religious education.

Value Pluralism

Value pluralism is the idea that there are different values which may be equally correct and fundamental, and yet in conflict with each other. In addition, value pluralism postulates that in many cases, such incompatible values may be incommensurable, in the sense that there is no objective ordering of them in terms of importance and no rational way of adjudicating between them. The notion of value pluralism is associated with the social philosophy of Isaiah Berlin, and the discussion by Gray of this theme can be regarded as inspired by Berlin (Grey, 2000, pp. 31–33), while extending Berlin's notion of incommensurability (Berlin, 2002, p. 216) in a more radical direction (Grey, 2000, pp. 34–68). Berlin recognised that there are conflicts between values, say between liberty and equality (see Berlin, 1990, p. 120), for example, but he also seemed to believe that liberal Western values (whether conflicting with each other or not) were appropriate to societies in a way other values are not. Without exploring his reasons, we may simply note that Gray expresses scepticism regarding the rational superiority of liberal Western values over non-liberal values, religious or secular, in all contexts, though this sits uncomfortably with his commitment to agnostic liberalism, which privileges commitment to peaceful relationships between different cultures, communities and nations. At this point, some critics accuse him of expressing a preference for the liberal value of peaceful coexistence, not as a consequence of cultural appropriateness, but as somehow rooted in human nature and interests, and therefore a value that is relevant to every community, culture and person (see Horton, 2006, pp. 156–159).

Modus Vivendi

Modus vivendi is a Latin phrase which means an agreement between those who agree to differ: *modus* means 'mode' or 'way' and *vivendi* means 'living', hence 'way of living.' For Gray, modus vivendi describes a condition of peaceful coexistence among people who subscribe to different and possibly conflicting values and ways of life. It represents a more contingently based arrangement than the just society extolled by liberal political theorists (e.g. Rawls, 1971), precisely because there is no rational or uncontested concept of justice that can be used to adjudicate between rival claims and commitments 'because conflicts of value afflict considerations of justice as much as other values, the aspiration to ground a plural society on a consensus concerning principles of right is, for Gray, misguided' (Jones, 2006, p. 192). Essentially modus vivendi represents a form of accommodation that allows different communities to live with their differences. In one sense modus vivendi is the political and social implication of value pluralism, for if there really are different and competing values then the best that can be hoped for is some form of compromise between the different communities who subscribe to these competing values. Modus vivendi seeks a pragmatic solution to the challenge of living with diversity.

In the view of Gray, society needs to ensure that public institutions represent and instantiate appropriate compromises among the different values and interests that are found in society.

Liberal Religious Education

For the most part religious educators tend not to ask the ‘big questions’ about their discipline. Most of our energies are expended in developing teaching materials and textbooks, equipping the next generation of religious educators to teach, responding to curriculum initiatives, revising syllabuses, translating policy into practice and so on. There is little time to consider the fundamental assumptions, values and commitments that guide and direct the subject, let alone to ask about their origin and justification. Yet this is precisely the question that we need to ask in response to Gray’s critique of liberalism. His critique challenges us to reassess the extent to which *modern* (by which is meant non-confessional) religious education is predicated on liberal ideological commitments and values that are controversial intellectually, inappropriate educationally and divisive socially.

The Representation of Religions

Superficial acquaintance with modern, non-confessional religious education, and its official rhetoric of achievement in developing respect for diversity, might well suggest that religious education stands over against the Enlightenment project of displacing both ‘transcendental faith’ and ‘local, customary or traditional moralities’ in favour of a universal rational morality. Such, however, is not the case. It is at this point that the limitations of Gray’s critique of modernity become apparent. He is aware that the Enlightenment project seeks to displace the authority of religion, by what he views as an equally tendentious appeal to the authority of secular reason, but what he fails to note is the way in which religion has been reinterpreted by liberally minded theologians so as not to trespass on the domain of secular reason. Liberal (chiefly Protestant, nineteenth century) theologians created a version of religion to accord with Enlightenment values and commitments, and it is this version, I maintain, that is often the object of modern religious education. In other words, modern religious education inducts pupils into an Enlightenment, liberal version of religion, according to which all religions are regarded as equally valid (thus according with the universal pretensions of all Enlightenment ideas and ideals) and all find their origin in inward religious experience (thus acknowledging the rule of reason in the public realm and relegating religion to the realm of private experience). Rather than modern religious educators defending a version of religion that faithfully reflects the commitments and emphases of the majority of religious believers, they have ‘tailored’ religion to fit the Enlightenment confinement of religion to the

realm of private experience. Public knowledge is constituted by an appeal to (secular) reason, which is presumed to be neutral and universal. Private knowledge is the realm of intuition and the irrational, and the origin of sensibility and spirituality. Such knowledge is open to two different and opposing interpretations: on the one hand, there is the positivist wing of the Enlightenment tradition that recognises only the public (and evidentially justified) aspect of knowledge; on the other hand, there is the Romantic wing of the Enlightenment tradition that elevates the private realm of experience to that of knowledge alongside public knowledge, albeit knowledge that is intuitive, deeply mysterious and incommunicable in the language of public reason. Gray's critique of liberalism focuses only on the atheistic, positivist aspect of the Enlightenment and fails to take account of its Romantic, religious aspect, the aspect that has been so influential in religious education.

The background to the spiritually positive side of the Enlightenment tradition was the perceived collapse of natural (rational) theology in response to the criticism of Hume and Kant. Their critique (and historically Kant undoubtedly had the greater influence) convinced many that the path from public and demonstrable knowledge to God was at best inconclusive and at worst intellectually bankrupt. In response, following Schleiermacher (1928, pp. 1821–1822 and 1799, 1958), theology turned inwards, to the experience of the divine within the self. In a sense this move aped the Cartesian foundationalist quest for inner epistemic certainty. Schleiermacher extended the range of justifying experiences to include religious experiences. The heart of religion was relocated in the 'pre-reflective experiential depths of the self,' and the public or outer features of religion came to be regarded as 'expressive and evocative objectifications (i.e. nondiscursive symbols) of internal experience' (Linbeck, 1984, p. 21). The Romantic appeal to religious experience, initiated by Schleiermacher, set the pattern for 'modern' theology (Gerrish, 1984).

The reinterpretation of religion in terms of inner subjectivity and commitment brings obvious advantages to the liberal religious apologist, for if the ground of religion is situated within the self in private experience, free reign can be given to criticism of the public aspects of religion. A lively faith is compatible with a thorough-going scepticism towards the historical, moral and philosophical sources of religious belief. Even traditional doctrines can be criticised, for doctrines, as Schleiermacher insisted, are second-hand and necessarily inexact and inaccurate attempts to set forth the religious affections in speech. The essence of religion lies beyond discursive reason and rationality and is penetrated only by intuition and encounter. Effectively, religion is removed from the realm of public knowledge and the realm of the sacred privatised. Religion becomes concerned with inner experience and the hidden life of the soul and not with rational knowledge. Accordingly, religious knowledge is deeply personal, ahistorical and non-political. Such a reading of religion supports an easy accommodation with culture, for religion is withdrawn from the public world of economics, ethics, politics and science. The appeal to inner experience by Schleiermacher also creates the possibility of reconciling the religions to each other (a possibility exploited by later twentieth century theologians and some religious educators). If religious experience has priority over its conceptualisation

in beliefs and doctrines, then the religions can claim agreement at the foundational level of experience, even though this experience is expressed in different doctrinal ways. God is manifest through all the great religions of humankind.

The intellectual and apologetic commitments of modern liberal, Protestant theology were integrated into the phenomenological approach to religion, and then appropriated by British religious educators in the 1970s. Michael Grimmitt's interpretation of the phenomenological approach in *What Can I do in RE?* (1973) provides a particularly clear example of the way in which the positive side of the Enlightenment tradition towards religion was appropriated within religious education: the equation of the essence of religion with 'inner' religious experience (Grimmitt, 1973, p. 95); the centrality of 'feeling' in religion and the secondary status of doctrines and beliefs (p. 96); religion as a *unique* mode of thought and awareness (p. 215) and so on. What emerges is a non-political, 'pietistic' account of religion that divorces faith from the public realm and perpetuates the Enlightenment notion of the autonomy of morality from religion.

One can recognise the attraction to religious educators of the phenomenological approach and the liberal Protestant theological commitments upon which it is built. Phenomenological religious education can claim to be multi-faith, neutral and 'objective' – no religion is privileged over another. Formally, the critical evaluation of religious beliefs and practices can be set aside, bracketed out as the phenomenology of religion's methodology demands, yet informally the truth of religion is assumed: the irreducible truth of religious experience that reveals itself in *eidetic* (intuitive) vision. Religious believers can be persuaded that their ultimate commitments will be unchallenged in the educational domain and liberal religious educators can persist in their assumption that the different religions participate in or point to some deeper spiritual reality. In this way one of the most controversial issues in relation to religion is sidestepped: that of assessing religious claims to truth and adjudicating between rival doctrinal claims. Religious education is freed from challenge and possible controversy. Following the demise of Christian confession-alism in education, there was a certain embarrassment with the doctrinal element of religion, and the phenomenological approach provides a welcome justification for diminishing the role of doctrine in religion, and consequently the role of doctrine in religious education. Phenomenological religious education is the means by which the liberal Protestant thesis of the unity of religion could be inculcated in the young: 'experience unites whereas doctrine divides' is a common liberal refrain. Of course, many philosophers, particularly those influenced by the 'later' Wittgenstein, regard the divorce between feelings/experiences and concepts (or that between experiences and beliefs) and the epistemic assumptions upon which the phenomenology of religion is built as intellectually discredited and unsustainable; and many scholars of religion trace the inspiration of the phenomenology of religion to liberal religious apologetics (Flood, 1999, pp. 91–116; Penner, 1989).

Although our criticism is educational, it builds upon philosophical criticism of phenomenological representations of religion. The essential point is that if the nature of religion is not as claimed, then phenomenological religious education effectively misrepresents religion. The nature of religion is falsified by educational strategies

that reinterpret the differences between religions as secondary to their underlying unity, diminish the role of doctrine and beliefs in religion and bracket out the issue of truth in order to expedite an encounter with the Sacred.

The Failure to Truly Respect Difference

Much of our criticism has fallen on phenomenological religious education and the extent to which it perpetuates an experientially centred Enlightenment vision of religion that fails to appreciate the public aspects of religion – the doctrinal, the political, the economic and the social. Equally important, however, is the criticism that liberal commitments and values are not particularly well suited to developing respectful relationships between different communities within society, chiefly because they are insensitive to difference and distinctiveness. This criticism is at the heart of Gray's rejection of liberalism; and it does have an application to religious education. Minority groups and religions are alienated by educational attempts to foist liberal religious identities on them that effectively falsify their deepest indigenous beliefs and values.

Much of John Hull's writing throughout the 1990s focused on the themes of social exclusion and religious intolerance. His interest was first signalled by a provocative, programmatic editorial article in the *British Journal of Religious Education* entitled 'The Transmission of Religious Prejudice' (Hull, 1992). In this article he introduced the word 'religionism' to refer both to the view that one religion is true to a degree denied to other religions and to the attitude of superiority that expresses itself as intolerance towards adherents of other religions (Hull, 1992). Religionism, he affirmed, includes the view that 'we are right; they are wrong' (p. 70). Moreover, religionism is like racism – there is the racist belief that one's own race is better than others, and there are racist attitudes that show themselves in acts of discrimination against individuals from other races; there is the religionist view that one's religion is superior to others and religionist attitudes that reveal themselves in acts of religious discrimination.

According to Hull, it is the denial of the truth of other religious traditions than one's own that is the cause of religious bigotry and intolerance. In his view religions are complementary. Different traditions may quite properly witness to different aspects of religious truth, but when this witness extends itself to criticise and (explicitly or implicitly) challenge the truth of other religions, then the spirit of religionism is released, with deleterious effects for the individual and for society. 'It is not enough for religious education to encourage a tolerant attitude towards other religions. . . What is necessary is the deconstruction of the religious consciousness and its theological structure' (Hull, 1992, p. 71). Religious believers should be disabused of the notion that religious truth is unique to their particular religious tradition: no religion should be presented in education as *regarding itself* as true in any way that is denied to other religions. This interpretation, he believes, should also become part of the self-identity and self-understanding of the different religious communities themselves; it is for this reason that he urges the setting up of

(what he calls) adult anti-religionist educational programmes in ‘mosques, temples and synagogues’ (Hull, 1992, p. 71). This basic position was repeated and expanded upon in a string of influential publications (e.g. Hull, 1995, 1996).

There is no doubt that challenging religious intolerance and developing respect for others who belong to different cultures, communities or religions are entirely appropriate aims for religious education and aims to which the subject can make an invaluable contribution. Equally no one can question the sincerity of Hull’s motives. But for all this his programme of anti-religionist education is an expression of the unifying, hegemonic, vision of the Enlightenment that ultimately erases difference and distinctiveness. The problem is that the true appreciation of the differences between religions and between religious adherents is compromised by commitment to an underlying theology that postulates essential unity. Traditionally and historically, adherents of the major religions have regarded themselves as advancing alternative claims to truth and as sustaining rival identities. In Hull’s educational programme, traditional religious believers are invited to relinquish the claim that their own particular religious commitment is uniquely true and are encouraged to espouse the ‘educational’ view that each of the different religions is true in its own distinctive way. What presents itself as a neutral educational programme for the advancement of mutual understanding and inclusion in schools on closer inspection reveals itself as having radical implication for ‘orthodox’ believers who regard their own tradition as uniquely true. Of course, there are many within liberal Western societies whose religious identity is not exclusive, it is hybrid, inclusive and shifting; and there are others who eschew religious labels and religious commitments, however attenuated. Such hybrid religious identities, however, are not typical, particularly of adherents of minority ethnic communities. The point is that religious identities in the West can be exclusive and that individuals may ‘convert’ from one to the other. To present the different religions in the classroom as acknowledging the truth of each other is to falsify the self-understanding of many religious adherents; it also presents to pupils a picture of religion that is often contradicted by their experience elsewhere – in the home, where religious commitment is regarded as exclusive, and in the media, where attention is given to religious conflict and the contrary claims of different religions.

In a straightforward sense religious believers who recognise that their cherished religious values and convictions are being misrepresented in education (in order to square them with the equal truth of other religions) will conclude that their views and beliefs are not respected. They will conclude that there is no real respect for difference. If there were true respect for difference, then the differences between the religions would be faithfully acknowledged and not ignored or reinterpreted to fit with the equal truth of all other religious traditions.

Agonistic Religious Education

The challenge for religious educators is to develop strategies that develop respect for others, while acknowledging their right to be different, to believe different things and to follow their own particular conception of the good. Respect for those of

a different religious viewpoint does not require those who are to be respected to first relinquish any claim to religious superiority or uniqueness. Respect should not be predicated on an assumed underlying spiritual unity among the religions. True respect acknowledges the existence of deep intractable religious differences. Gray's notion of value pluralism is relevant at this point, though it needs to be reinterpreted somewhat to be of service to educationalists. Gray speaks of the incommensurability of values, but as we have already noted there is a tension between his assertion of incommensurable values and his commitment to *modus vivendi*. My own view is that even if the ambiguity in Gray's position could be ironed out, his declared preference for a 'strong' account of incommensurability ultimately ends in a form of relativism that undermines the existence of (and the quest for) truth and knowledge; and to the extent that religions make propositional claims to knowledge, as they undoubtedly do, then such a interpretation is incompatible with a responsible educational representation of the teachings of the different religions. There is also the problem of the extent to which different values relate to and are justified by reference to different beliefs, a problem overlooked by Gray. It is certainly philosophically plausible to argue that values are justified only to the extent that their supporting beliefs are justified. In other words, beliefs are foundational to values; and consequently a difference in values represents a more fundamental difference at the level of belief. Gray seems to assume that values are foundational and therefore he gives little attention to the justifying web of beliefs that sustain particular values.

A more coherent and educationally relevant account of value pluralism can be given if we interpret it as referring to the independent character of the different religions, that is, to the fact that they teach different things, espouse different ideals, recommend different practices and so on. To acknowledge this does not mean that the religions have not interacted and influenced one another: they have and continue to influence and interact with each other. Moreover, there are overlapping beliefs and values among the religions. Some religions, such as Christianity and Islam, are monotheistic; Judaism and Islam share a belief in the afterlife; Hinduism and Buddhism both believe in reincarnation (*samsara*) and so on. An acquaintance with all these features of religion should be part of a pupil's education. But, as Gray warns us, we must beware of explaining the differences between religions away as secondary and unimportant, and imposing a liberal theological identity on religious believers because from 'our' liberal perspective the differences seem unimportant. For traditional believers the differences are rooted in history and revelation; this means they are important.

The religions are distinctive and different, and religious education needs to develop methodologies and strategies that represent this difference in a sensitive and respectful way to pupils.

The implication for religious educators of taking the matter of religious diversity seriously is equally to take the matter of religious truth seriously. Pupils in secondary level education need to be provided with the skills and aptitudes to evaluate the different religions and religious phenomena. Our societies confront young people with a rich kaleidoscope of religious ideas and practices, yet frequently education fails to help them develop a critical perspective that can recognise the arguments used by

religions to defend their beliefs and practices and the considerations that are relevant to their assessment. In a pluralist society pupils must be equipped with the knowledge, understanding and evaluative skills to enable them to choose wisely from the rich variety of religious options that are culturally available. The implication of this is that there needs to be an element of philosophy incorporated into religious education at secondary level, for it is this discipline that traditionally provides the means and the framework for assessing and evaluating competing truth claims. Pupils need to be educated to think critically about religion and their claims to truth.

Finally, religious education must engage with the need to establish peaceful, respectful relations between the different communities and groups that make up our modern pluralist societies: religious educators must work towards, what Gray calls, a *modus vivendi*, a form of accommodation within society that allows different communities both to live with their differences and to co-operate with each other despite their differences. The nature of value pluralism cautions us against liberal, and historically secular, schemes of inclusion in society that privilege (tendentious and culturally specific) values and commitments that effectively alienate religious believers. There is no doubt that in Britain, the context with which I am most familiar, the perceived secularism of schools and of religious education (see Copley, 2005) by many religious parents has resulted in them withdrawing their children from 'community' schools and either establishing or taking advantage of existing faith schools, where their religious convictions will (in their opinion) be more faithfully represented and appreciated. It is ironic that secular policies of inclusion have effected greater divisions in society by alienating from (what are intended to be) 'common' schools many Christians and others from minority religious communities. A more accommodating stance towards the concerns of minority groups needs to be taken by state schools if their profession of inclusion is to be taken seriously by those religious parents who currently feel that the language of inclusion can sometimes disguise the pursuit of policies that minimise the role of religion in the public sphere and overlook the moral teaching of the different religions. This means that schools need to be more sensitive to those aspects of the curriculum that are perceived by religious believers as hostile to their beliefs and values; the issue of sex education is a case in point.

Much more could be said about the positive application of Gray's ideas to religious education, and I readily acknowledge the all-too-brief nature of my positive comments. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which Gray's own political philosophy cautions against drawing too many conclusions of a general nature. In contradistinction to traditional liberalism, Gray's version of agonistic liberalism accentuates the contextual nature of values and claims to knowledge. The implication of this is that religious education is always conditioned by place and circumstance. Consequently, it is up to religious educators to apply his ideas in different geo-political contexts. It may even be that the common aims of challenging intolerance and fostering respect for others are best achieved in different contexts by different forms of religious education. There may be no single methodology that best secures liberal educational aims in all contexts. Such conclusions while inconvenient and embarrassing for traditional liberals, who presume to universal conclusions, should encourage those

who entertain the belief that *in different ways* and on *the basis of different beliefs* we can all contribute to a diverse and respectful world community.

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Interreligious Education and the Question of Truth

Brendan Carmody

Introduction

With globalization, societies are becoming increasingly diverse. Peoples of different backgrounds and religious orientation now live side by side, share the same space, so that as Jurgensmeyer (2006, p. 4) puts it, almost everyone is everywhere with important social consequences. Thus, there is need to review the kind of education – religious or other – that is provided. Religiously, for instance, the days when Britain could speak in terms of a Christian education program for public schools are probably over, so that today there is focus on such things as nondenominational, interfaith, and interreligious education (Priestley, 2006; Barnes & Kay, 2002; Hull, 1982). In any such review of religious education in a multifaith context, there will be the challenge not only to be pluralistic but also to sustain the integrity of religious education.

Religion in the Curriculum

It is no surprise then that the adoption of an acceptable model of religious education for use in non-private schools, not only in England and Wales but also elsewhere, remains a challenge (Ouellet, 2006; Chidester, 2006; Kaymakcan, 2006; Grelle, 2006; Estivalezes, 2006; Nipkow, 2006; White, 2004; Hand 2003; Meakin, 1979). Finding an appropriate type of religious education can become so controversial that people even propose that it is better to drop it from, or at least make it optional in, the national syllabus. As White (2004) noted:

Religion has no place as an independent subject, either as a vehicle of moral education or in order to promote an understanding of religions. (p. 162)

B. Carmody (✉)
The Milltown Institute, Dublin, Ireland
e-mail: carmodybp@yahoo.com

This is one perspective, but in places like France and the United States where religion is not part of the public education system, it is argued that:

The spiritual aspect of the self gets almost no attention in today's public schools. Most young people have a host of questions that could be discussed without violating the establishment clause: Is there life after death? Is there a God who cares for me? Am I connected to anything beyond the phenomenal world? Are there spirits with whom I can commune? Will such communication enhance my life? (Noddings, 2005, p. 49)

Yet, these are among the questions that thoughtful human beings everywhere ask and so not addressing them could be a kind of educational malpractice (Noddings, 2005, p. 250; Nord, 1995, pp. 209–235). As Wright (2005) puts it:

An education that fails to equip children to address world view questions in an appropriate breadth and depth will simply end up imposing one or other prevailing world view by default. The result will be at best a benign educational paternalism and at worst a religious exercise in indoctrination: either way, schools will end up imposing preconceived answers to fundamental questions about ultimate reality and human flourishing. The task of enabling pupils to appropriate their world view wisely and critically is not one that an open society can afford to reduce to a mere optional extra. Each of our pupils has but one short life span, and if they are to flourish as human beings they must be empowered to develop appropriate levels of religious literacy. (p. 27)

Wright further argues that religion should be included in the national curriculum, not primarily because of any moral or social imperative but on account of its intrinsic value.

Religion raises fundamental questions about our place in the ultimate order of things while religious education attempts to enable pupils to engage in a search for responses to such issues. If education fails to do this there is a danger, as we have noted, that the spiritual dimension of the self may get little attention while schools impose preconceived answers about ultimate questions, worldviews, lifestyles, and reality. Thus, for Wright, the development of appropriate levels of religious literacy should not be seen as an optional extra. They are essential to an education system so as to help people to make the kind of decisions that impact on every aspect of their lives (Wright, 2005, pp. 26–27; 2004, pp. 198, 221; Kay, 2005; Noddings, 1997; Meijer, 2006).

The Nature of Religious Education

Nonetheless, even if, as in England and Wales among many other places, it is agreed that Religious Education should form a central part of a national curriculum, its nature becomes highly contestable (Barnes & Kay, 2002; Carmody, 2006). In England and Wales, for instance, where the population is roughly 71.8% Christian, 2.8% Muslim, 1% Hindu, 0.6% Sikh, 0.5% Jewish, 0.3% Buddhist, and 15% non-religious (Jackson & O'Grady, 2007, p. 181), what form of Religious Education is appropriate?

Attempts to find an acceptable type of religious education reach back perhaps to the late 1960s. The context is moreover colored by a legal framework from 1870

when state-funded schools could opt for Bible teaching without denominational instruction. Modifications followed when the agreed syllabuses composed by largely Protestant denominations with no space for non-Christian faiths emerged from the 1944 Act. However, by the time of the 1988 Act, it was seen that representatives of faiths other than Christianity should be included. This also reflected a developing concern that an appropriate religious education should be progressively more educational in nature (Jackson & O'Grady, 2007, pp. 183–186; Jackson, 2003; Gearon, 2001).

The struggle to wrench Religious Education from its confessional to a more educational base in England and Wales entailed methodological experimentation giving much emphasis initially to phenomenology in the 1970s. While undoubtedly this broadened the basis for Religious Education, phenomenology reached perhaps the nadir of its influence in the mid-1980s as it began to be overshadowed by an emphasis on religious experience probably not greatly different to phenomenology except that it directed more attention to pupils' own religious experience (Wright, 2004, pp. 181–194).

Even then the methodology was not seen to be entirely satisfactory because of a perceived over-concern with pupil-centeredness. A conceptual approach followed bringing to attention the need for including theological concepts in the teaching of religion (Barnes & Kay, 2002, pp. 39–51). More recently, the interpretive approach moves a step forward methodologically when it highlights tendencies toward reunification of culture and religion (Jackson, 1997). In this approach, doctrinal and historical dimensions of religion can be downplayed, as comparing, contrasting, or evaluating religions becomes less desirable (Jackson, 2004; 1997, pp. 49–71; Jenkins, 2007; Nesbitt, 2006; Erricker, 2006).

In the journey to make Religious Education more educational for the increasingly pluralistic context of England and Wales, it is therefore not surprising that how one teaches religion has become highly problematic. At one end of the spectrum 'learning about religion' seems best, while at the other 'learning from religion' can also be seen as crucial (Attfield, 1996). This raises the question of what constitutes education and in this case what makes the study of religion educational? (Hindman, 2002; Cohen, 2006, pp. 201–237; Noddings, 2006, pp. 238–242; 2003, p. 158; Kay, 2005; Heilman, 2003, pp. 247–274; Hunt, 2006, pp. 635–650). As these matters are complex and debatable, efforts by governments and others to achieve social harmony through religious education can downplay differences between forms of religion, thereby undermining the integrity of the subject (Erricker, 2007).

The Question of Truth

In attempting to be inclusive, there then has been a tendency to unduly seek social harmony with the result that the impression created can be that all religions provide valid roads to the religious centre of life and that in some ways they are all equally

valid (Jurgensmeyer, 2000; Wright, 2004, pp. 109–123). Claims to religious superiority are misrepresented while hard and intelligent questions about existing religions are often evaded resulting in acceptance of nonsense confusing indifference with respect (Noddings, 2005, p. 49). There is, therefore, a need for an approach that moves both beyond the romantic-postmodern celebration of subjectivity and the Enlightenment ideal of pure objective knowledge (Wright, 2004, p. 60; Teece, 2005, pp. 29–40; Donoghue, 1998, pp. 34–53). While it may be attractive to downplay objectivity in the interest of some form of social cohesion, religions:

do differ and contrast. The religions provide conflicting accounts of what it is to be human, the way to achieve human fulfillment, the nature of the divine, and so on. God is either triune or not. Salvation is through Christ or through Krishna, and so on. (Barnes & Kay, 2002, p. 56)

Thus:

To present the different religions in the classroom as not in competition with each other would be to falsify the self-understanding of most adherents of the main religions. (Barnes & Wright, 2006, p. 72)

If religious education is to truly address people's religious viewpoints, it appears that it must be ready to recognize, not bypass, differences that are part of the reality of the other (Wright, 1998, p. 86; Kay, 2006; Hull, 2006; Engebretson, 2006; McGrath, 2007, p. 46). Adequate recognition of the other as other entails:

being receptive to what another has to say, and open to possibly hearing the other's voice more completely and fairly. Caring about another person. . .requires representing the other as a separate, autonomous person. (Thayer-Bacon, 1997, p. 249)

In that sense, perhaps, there is some truth in the assertion that much religious education in its attempt to accommodate does not sufficiently include treatment of the self (Conroy & Davis, 2007, p. 5; Wright, 2004, 1996; Hunt, 2006). This is not to say that the authors who affirm this are unaware of the 'learning from religion' dimension of much religious education. What rather concerns them appears to be what might be termed a return to the subject with a loss of objective theory (Cassidy, 2006; De Souza, 2006).

Within religious education it is recognized that even for Smart whose method was highly phenomenological, 'objective' meant more than looking at temples, churches, and so on, and that teaching of religion should move from inside other traditions (Conroy & Davis, 2007, p. 5). The conscious shift away from what was called 'learning about religion' to 'learning from religion' which uses various methods to more adequately include the personal aspects of Religious Education is acknowledged (Conroy & Davis, 2007; Kay, 2005; Wright, 2000, p. 173; Hobson & Edwards, 1999, p. 19; Florence, 2006; Moran, 2006; Miller, 1979; Jackson, 1997; Geertz, 1999).

Nonetheless, the process, which focused on reaching within, struggled to move beyond a certain immanence and thus failed to adequately recognize and listen to the other, where the key to unlock the door to either one's own heart or to the presence of God may indeed lie (Cassidy, 2006, p. 883; Noddings, 2007, pp. 231–234).

In attempting to reach the other, there is need for objectivity. Otherwise, ‘we’ can quickly become the plural of ‘I’ (Noddings, 1996, p. 257). This means that one does not respond to the voice of the other in a neocolonial way, where the other simply reflects the countenance of one’s preestablished expectations (Wright, 2004, p. 159).

There is need to move from immanence to some form of objectivity. In speaking of objectivity, there is, for instance, the kind of objectivity connected to functional literacy which enables somebody to read Hamlet as one might read a newspaper but be unable to enter into the deeper meaning of the text (Mecado, 1993, p. 203; Kay, 2005, p. 46; Wright, 1996, pp. 166–180; 2004, p. 225; Grelle, 2006, pp. 464–468; Donoghue, 1998, pp. 73–79; Phillips-Bell, 1983; Carmody, 2004, pp. 83–84). Put somewhat differently, there is need for individuals to focus critically on their relationship with their own selves in relation to others and so rescue his/her real personal self from the jaws of collectivism which devours all selfhood (Buber, 1955, p. 110).

The question, however, remains: how can the self be rescued from being seriously dwarfed? In this context, Conroy and Davis (2007) argue:

There is a need for the student qua observer to place herself, through the execution of the phenomenological epochè, in the frame of perception as part of that which is apprehended. The common sense self, with its inbuilt prejudices, needs itself to be part of that which is to be apprehended and grasped. If I wish to examine a particular religious practice or belief, it is not that I stand outside, examining the liturgical practice of communion and how the believer sees and relates to the practice; rather, I place my own perceiving into the frame for apprehension. (p. 6)

How, we ask, do I apprehend my own perceiving with some sense of objectivity? In subjecting one’s perceiving to investigation, the religious educator is being called to introspection, where:

The subject is within but does not remain totally within. His knowing involves an intentional self-transcendence. But while his knowing does so, he has to know his knowing to know that it does so. (Lonergan, 1974, p. 76)

To know one’s own knowing, however, entails not simply looking inside oneself, but:

1) experiencing one’s experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding; 2) understanding the unity and relations of one’s experienced experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding; 3) affirming the reality of one’s experienced and understood experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding; and 4) deciding to operate in accord with the norms immanent in the spontaneous relatedness of one’s experienced, understood, affirmed experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 14–15)

In some ways, everybody knows and observes this patterned process of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding in so far as he/she is attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible in any sphere of life. Yet, to heighten one’s consciousness by objectifying it in the way that is being proposed in striving to know one’s own knowing is a difficult and intensely personal endeavor. It means distinguishing between consciousness and knowledge:

We are all conscious of our sensing and feeling, our inquiring and our understanding, our deliberating and our deciding. None of these activities occur when one is in a coma or a deep

sleep. In that basic sense they are conscious. Still they are not properly known. They are just infrastructure, a component within knowing that in large part remains merely potential. It is only when we heighten consciousness by adverting not to the objects but to the activities, when we begin to sort out the activities, to assign them distinctive names, to distinguish and to relate, only then we move from the mere infrastructure that is consciousness to the compound that is man's knowledge of his cognitional process. (Crowe, 1985, p. 117)

While acknowledging the subjective infrastructural component in the movement toward knowing one's cognitional process more objectivity, this approach does not necessarily claim that there is no absolute truth, as some argue (Hobson & Edwards, 1999, p. 79). Rather, one is identifying a pattern which is normative and not open to revision because the activity of revising cannot bypass that same pattern. Any revision rejecting the pattern is rejecting itself (Lonergan, 1972, p. 19; Kelly, 2006; Carmody, 1988). In this way:

Not only are the "I" and its cognitional operations to be affirmed, but also the pattern in which they occur is acknowledged as invariant, not of course in the sense that further methodical developments are impossible, nor in the sense that fuller and more adequate knowledge of the pattern is unattainable, but in the sense that any attempt to revise the patterns as now known would involve the very operations that the pattern prescribes. (Lonergan, 1974, p. 273)

Method thereby shifts from being something one uses. Rather, it is oneself as he/she becomes aware of his/her experiencing, understanding, and judging, thus gaining self-discovery and control over such operations (Gregson, 1985, p. 11). The process provides the locus of truth so that the basic discipline is not metaphysics but intentionality analysis (Gregson, 1985, p. 37; Noddings, 2007, p. 117).

Although, as noted, the process itself of self-affirmation of the knower does not admit revision, its objectification remains contingent and partial. This is not, however, the contingency of proclaiming the truth that there is no truth (Wright, 1998, p. 64). The self-affirmation of the knower recognizes that truth emerges not primarily from understanding but from judgments whose veracity and objectivity are based on the degree of the subject's authenticity and fidelity to the canons: be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible (Lonergan, 1972, p. 37; 1974, pp. 69–86; Hardy, 1985, pp. 101–115; Wright, 2006, p. 342).

This method of introspection entails a distancing of oneself from what is nearest to one and requires one to objectify what most fully belongs to one's subjectivity (Sutherland, 1985, p. 140; Lonergan, 1972, pp. 153–173; Noddings, 2007, pp. 107–132). Among other things, it includes:

An interruption of reliance on external sources of authority. The 'tyranny' of the 'they' – or the potential for it – must be undermined. In addition to the kind of critical reflection on one's previous assumptive or tacit system of values, there must be a relocation of authority within the self. (Fowler, 1981, p. 179; Mezirow, 1998; Clifford, 2006)

As such, the emergence of the self as knower is not shorn of choice and commitment in a way that personal search becomes private while the self strives toward some feigned neutrality (Conroy & Davis, 2007, p. 7; Rossiter, 2006). Rather, as in what is termed critical realism:

The epistemological role played by informed judgement allows our knowing to embrace the realm of meaning and values as well as that of scientific fact. By placing a hermeneutic of faith alongside a hermeneutic of suspicion the critical realist proceeds directly from the fact that we indwell in a world with which we are already intimately related. Because we are bound up with the world, and because our own knowledge is always a greater or lesser extent provisional, our understanding always proceeds from the givenness of what we already know. Consequently the reified and abstract knowledge of modernity is replaced with a personal knowledge that engages the whole self: mind and body, action and reflection, reason and experience. It follows that our pursuit of knowledge entails a struggle for more authentic forms of life, more appropriate ways of being in the world, and more truthful ways of relating to ourselves, to others in community, to the natural order of things and to the presence or absence of that which is sacred, transcendent or divine. (Wright, 2004, p. 167)

From this perspective, the self and the other are discovered through an objectivity not of logical, scientific, and academic concern but of the subject in so far as he/she is authentic (Lonergan, 1972, p. 37, 265). Such objectivity is not that of the other merely as seen, but as affirmed in true judgment emerging from the critical self-reflection which we have noted. It is rather the objectivity or self-transcendence, based on conversion which is:

A fully conscious decision about one's horizon, one's outlook, one's worldview. It deliberately selects the framework, in which doctrines have their meaning. (Lonergan, 1972, p. 268)

Conversion in its different dimensions forms the basis for research, interpretation, history, dialectic, and selection of doctrines (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 267–70). It thus also provides the framework for dialogue that can truly hear the other, however different, even painful this may at times be (Laubscher & Powell, 2003, pp. 203–224).

Implications for Interreligious Education

For the religious educator, then, agreement about material content of the curriculum and appropriate methodological procedures remain important but they need to emerge from a self that affirms herself/himself as knower, and in so doing remains faithful to the canons: be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible (Lonergan, 1972, p. 37; 1974, pp. 69–86; Wright, 2004, p. 222; 2006, p. 338). In his/her educational endeavor, he/she will need to be radically respectful of the learner for:

The teacher must not forget the limits of education; even when he enjoys confidence he cannot always expect agreement. Confidence implies a break-through from reserve, the bursting of the bonds which imprison the unquiet heart. But it does not imply unconditional agreement. A conflict with a pupil is the supreme test for the educator. He must use his own insight wholeheartedly; he must not blunt the piercing impact of his knowledge, but he must at the same time have in readiness the healing ointment for the heart pierced by it. Not for a moment may he conduct a dialectical manoeuvre instead of the real battle for truth. (Buber, 1955, p. 107)

Evidently, the so-called battle for truth assumes different dimensions linked to the age and context of the pupil.

Initially, there is concern for what might be called basic religious literacy which focuses on allowing the pupil to articulate his/her own religious or secular viewpoint in as much of its ambiguity as possible (Jackson, 2004, p. 85, 124; 2006; Grimmitt, 2000, pp. 207–227; Schweitzer, 2006; Streib, 2006). This will have a highly relational nature, while the degree to which existential issues are included will vary (Jackson, 2004, p. 85; Boschki, 2006; Noddings, 1996, p. 261). Yet, in religious education as perhaps against religious studies, is there need to facilitate the formation of a basis out of which the pupil begins to move toward a critical dimension as she/he is presented with comparing and contrasting his/her own and others' beliefs, values, assumptions, and practices? (Jackson, 2004, p. 125; Cush, 1999).

It seems evident that pupils need to move from a recognition of the nature and source of their pre-understanding of religious issues to engage in dialogue with the narratives and language of relevant primary traditions as owned and home colored by faith communities and secular traditions (Barnes, 2007b; Wright 1996, p. 174; Grimmitt, 2000, pp. 207–223; Noddings, 2002, p. 174). The degree and extent to which this is done may be somewhat different in faith schools where balance between nurture and challenge will vary (Jackson, 2003, pp. 89–102; Wright, 2003, pp. 142–152; Noddings, 2003, p. 250; Beer, 2006; Arthur, 2006; Parker-Jenkins, Hartas, & Irving, 2005). Whatever the setting, the overall objective entails encouraging students to gradually appreciate the moral significance of grounding their religious beliefs on rational foundations, rather than merely on authority, custom, prejudice, or superstition (Hobson & Edwards, 1999, p. 98; Wright, 1998, p. 97; Cooling, 1994).

While the ability to empathize is pivotal, critical thinking, not only of a personal but social nature, needs to be close behind. For as Wright (2004) notes:

The child uses the ongoing learning process as a means of reflecting on, reassessing, and confirming or revising his or her own prior beliefs and commitments. (p. 177)

Sensitivity to the learner's worldview is important, but when strangeness and difference are evident, it should not lead to burying one's head in the sands with forms of chosen amnesia (Buckley-Zistel, 2006; Gearon 2006, pp. 71–82; Jackson, 2004, p. 125; Freire, 1993, p. 73; Renehan, 2006, p. 1078; Kay, 2006, pp. 559–576; Weisse, 2003; Jenkins, 2007, p. 36).

In the presentation of curriculum content with sensitivity to pupils, is the teacher expected to be neutral? Is such possible? Wright argues:

It is now generally accepted that such a privileged perspective (neutral vantage point from which religion can be explored without prejudice) is unobtainable. The way to constrain the imposition of ideological bias is not to pretend that it does not exist, but rather to draw it to the surface and openly acknowledge it. (Wright, 2000, p. 178; Nord, 1995, pp. 236–36, 304–319)

Neutrality, as sometimes advocated by secularist approaches (Mabud, 1992), seems more idealistic than real, and from the viewpoint of religious education which

attempts to authentically reach the depths of the person as here proposed, the most appropriate approach is:

not to disguise (disputed questions of faith, value and commitment) under a veil of neutrality but to make them as visible as possible so that pupils may make judgements based on knowledge rather than ignorance. (Wright, 2004, p. 186)

This does not, however, mean that the teacher takes his/her own perspective as standard but strives to take alternative viewpoints with utmost seriousness avoiding any imperialistic imposition of an alien view (Wright, 2004, p. 219; Skeie, 2006; Williams, 2006). Such an approach endorses the concept of religious literacy the aim of which is that students:

be able to think, act and communicate intelligently about the ultimate questions that religion asks and to be able to do so whether the students are believers, agnostics, or atheists. (Hobson & Edwards, 1999, pp. 59–60)

Religiously literate students should be enabled to critically perceive their situations – religious and other – and so better discover their potential as human beings. They should moreover possess the critical means to examine their own particular lived experiences so as to illuminate the processes by which they were produced, legitimated, or disconfirmed (Giroux & McLaren, 1986, p. 234; Bassey, 1999, pp. 105–123; Diez, 2006, pp. 259–275). Religious Education should thus include the desire to present religions fairly and sensitively and to follow the evidence where it leads, in deciding for oneself whether or not one religion is superior to another (Wright 2004, pp. 220–231).

Religious Education of this kind may affect personal beliefs and values of students and may lead to what Jackson (1999, pp. 213–214) has termed edification. In this:

there are no guarantees that students, exposed to alternative world views and beliefs, will choose the path of their parents, but one thing is certain, if they are not given viable alternatives, the students will have no choice at all. (Vold, 1974, p. 109)

This Religious Education is not purely cognitive or scientific, but strives to:

actively engage the student in thinking through the question of meaning of life, with the religious studies instructor engaged as facilitator of the process of ‘forming’ the student, she or he takes the place of the religious educator and theologian. (Wiebe, 2005, p. 119)

Enhancing intelligent and rational choice in the matter of religious beliefs and values constitutes part of the aim of the religious education we have outlined and it would concur with the view which states that:

It is better, whether one espouses atheism, agnosticism or religious belief, to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible in assimilating and developing one’s ultimate belief systems and commitments. (Wright, 2000, p. 180)

Religious literacy should emerge through facilitating the promotion of intelligent and rational choice in the light of ultimate concerns as well as in the context of recognizing the other as other and not as an extension of oneself. The approach to religious education presented here should form the basis of dialogue that addresses

the other with utmost care. In turn, this should help create community, not a society of homogenized consensus or safe-distance tolerance (Baratte, 2006, p. 245; Wright, 2006; Noddings, 2003, p. 224). Rather, it would engender a true good of order, where patterns of relationships are no longer preponderantly contractual, legalistic, and formal, but are truly personal and just, ensuring that the jaws of greed and collectivism are less evident. As part of this it should confront religious intolerance and prejudice by explicit challenges to religious and secular sources of intolerance, violence, and injustice (Buckley-Zistel, 2006; Gearon, 2006; Barnes, 2007a, pp. 29–30; Hytten, 2006).

Conclusion

This chapter has proposed that there is need in the present environment of rapid globalization for an interreligious education that deeply respects the faith, religious or secular, of the other person whoever she/he might be. It argues that this requires an epistemology that adequately differentiates subject from object particularly when the object is another subject. From an interreligious education so constituted, do we not have the basis of true community?

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Philosophical Reflections on Dialogue

John L. Elias

There probably has rarely been a time in recent memory when interreligious dialogue is more important than it is at the present time. The enthusiasm generated in 1991 with the fall of the Berlin Wall has given way to worldwide pessimism with the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and the continuation of hostilities in many parts of the world. Moreover, many who thought that the religious had safely been relegated to the private sphere now recognize that religion is both at the heart of many conflicts in the world and a necessary part of their solution. On almost every continent there are conflicts in which real religious differences are at least one of the major causes: Muslim–Christian conflicts in Nigeria; Hindu–Muslim conflicts in India; Jewish–Muslim conflicts in the Middle East; perceived threats to Christianity in Europe; increased immigration of Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus into North America. Growing globalization has led to further mixing of populations, especially in Western countries. These are just a few of the actual and potential areas of conflict among religious groups.

In this modest attempt to add something to the furtherance of interreligious dialogue in religious education in this worldwide context, my aim is to review philosophical discourse on dialogue and to relate it to interreligious dialogue and education. My focus is primarily on the nature of dialogue, its risks, limitations, and processes. I will draw selectively on the rather extensive tradition of Western philosophers who have written about dialogue as a method for arriving at knowledge and truth.

The philosophical tradition began with the dialogical method used by Socrates to encourage notable citizens of Athens to examine their own lives and the life of the city. Medieval Christendom witnessed the dialogical or dialectical method of the scholastics used in their disputations on debatable questions in Christian theology. Prominent among the scholastics was the most popular teacher of his time Peter Abelard, who came under papal condemnation for some of his theological view and

J.L. Elias (✉)
Fordham University, New York, USA
e-mail: jelias33@yahoo.com

teaching methods. In modern times interaction and dialogue based on the scientific method were at the heart of the democratic social, political, and educational philosophy of John Dewey. The Jewish existentialist philosopher Martin Buber lifted dialogue, which he termed “real meeting”, to the heights of human experience to include human relationships with natural objects, persons, and spiritual beings. Hans-Georg Gadamer built on Buber’s concepts and notions from the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger to present a hermeneutic approach to determine what it means to listen and be educated by the other. The critical philosopher Jurgen Habermas placed communicative discourse or dialogue at the center of his philosophical analysis of the deficiencies advanced by capitalist societies. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire developed a social, political, educational, and even religious philosophy with dialogue at its center. Finally, postmodern and postfoundational (poststructural) scholars including feminists have raised questions about neglected aspects of dialogue among contemporary philosophers, especially the danger of hegemonic domination.

Of course, other academic disciplines (psychology, social sciences, and literary studies) offer valuable contributions to the practice of interreligious dialogue. Yet the long and substantive tradition of philosophers on dialogue can make a significant contribution to our understanding of dialogue among persons and across cultures and religions. Philosophers can help us understand the various ways in which the word dialogue is used. They point out the different risks, dynamics, aims, and processes of dialogue. They examine the exaggerated claims that are often made for dialogue, criticizing them from liberal, conservative, or radical perspectives. Philosophers of education apply these ideas to the theory and practice of education.

This short chapter has a number of limitations. It does not take into account the historical situation within which these philosophical ideas on dialogue were formulated. Thus the treatment appears to be ahistorical. Socratic–Platonic dialogues were literary fictions developed within a society of free persons and slaves. Scholastic disputations were set with the universities of the medieval world and assumed the truth of the Christian faith. John Dewey proposed a dialogical approach to social and political life at the flourishing of the modern world committed to the values of science, technology, and industrialization. European societies in the mid-twentieth century were the contexts for the notions of dialogue found in Buber’s existentialism, Gadamer’s hermeneutics, and Habermas’ critical analysis of postindustrial capitalist societies. French postmodernist or poststructuralist thought as appropriated by scholars in the United States provides the basis for the postmodern and feminist critique of dialogue. Notwithstanding this limitation and the possible charge of essentialism that might be leveled against the following analysis, I believe it to be helpful to bring these ideas into discussions on interreligious dialogue.

Generally speaking, my focus in this chapter is on education only in an indirect manner. However, any discussion about dialogue is important for understanding education. Many educators, including religious educators, place dialogue at the heart of the educational process. All modes of education are dialogical even the lecture and presentation since the lecturer or instructor is at least involved in an implicit dialogue with students, which becomes explicit when students pose

questions or have directed discussions among themselves. Liberal progressive educators as well as educators committed to critical pedagogy strongly recommend dialogue as a primary mode of instruction. At the heart of all humanistic forms of education is the dialogical encounter. The political educator Paulo Freire, in recommending dialogical education, made the now well-known distinction between banking education and dialogical education.

Religious educators in the twentieth century advocated dialogical or interactionist methods of education as privileged ways to conduct religious education. Liberal Protestant educators from the beginning of the century were greatly influenced by the educational philosophy of John Dewey. Prominent theorists such as George Coe, Sophia Fahs, and others advocated an extensive and intensive use of dialogical methods. Among Catholic educators, beginning with the neo-progressive writings of Gabriel Moran (1970) to the traditioning method of Mary Boys (1989), and notably the shared praxis approach of Thomas Groome (1980), various forms of dialogue have been advocated. Jewish educators, such as Sara Lee (Boys & Lee, 1996), have long embraced dialogue as a privileged form of learning. One can also refer to the Buddhist *koan* as promoting though provoking dialogue.

Personal Experiences of Dialogue

I begin in the concrete with the experiences that I have had over the years with inter-religious dialogue. My theological education did not prepare me for such ventures. I was educated in Roman Catholic institutions and was taught that since this was the one true religious faith I did not need to look elsewhere. So strict was this tradition in the 1940s and 1950s that we were forbidden to enter a non-Catholic church or even to join such quasi religious associations as the Young Men's Christian Association. In catechism and high school religion classes as well as in seminary halls the sole curriculum was the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. In seminary theology classes, which were taught through approved manuals, Protestant theologians were almost always the adversaries: Martin Luther, Philip Melancton, John Calvin, and Friedrich Schleiermacher (always pronounced in a disdainful manner), Adolph Harnack and Albert Ritschl.

Thus intellectually formed I was not ready for the winds of change that entered the church during the pontificate of John XXIII, the theological and pastoral changes of Second Vatican Council and the beginnings of Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement. Theological language became more conciliatory and Catholics started to meet with Protestants in Living Room Dialogues, in which I participated as a young priest. The council documents on other Christian churches, non-Christian religions and religious freedom introduced a whole new agenda into the church. I earnestly embraced and promoted all of the movements begun around this time: ecumenical, liturgical, catechetical, and theological. I was a member of the diocesan commission on ecumenism and was honored to participate in many ecumenical activities, once preaching on the theme "A Time to Rend and a Time to Sew"

before gathered Roman Catholic and Episcopal clergy in an Episcopal Cathedral in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Catholic life began to embrace ecumenical commissions, sharing of pulpits and prayer services for Christian unity. Interreligious dialogue with Jews was inaugurated with the publication of the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*. Many colleges and universities set up centers for promoting ecumenical relationships.

I will recount three significant instances of interreligious dialogues in which I was engaged. For about 3 years in the 1960s I participated in dialogues among Roman Catholic priests and Lutheran pastors. These dialogues were instrumental in changing a number of my theological attitudes and even beliefs. I began to read Protestant theologians: Martin Luther, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Reinhold and Richard Niebuhr, Martin Marty and Robert MacAfee Brown. I became close friends with pastors who were married and had children. These dialogues gradually changed my views on the value of the word as compared to sacrament, biblical authority as contrasted to traditional and ecclesiastical authority. I began to accept the Lutheran attitude toward married clergy and the legitimacy of divorce in some cases. A Sunday dinner with a Lutheran pastor and his family gave me a premonition that one day I too would be married and have a family. One of the risks of dialogue is that one might have to consider making fundamental life changes.

A second experience of interreligious dialogue occurred when I was teaching world religions in a Catholic high school. A rabbi and I brought our young people together to dialogue about their respective faiths. What the Catholic students and I learned was the careful and scholarly approach that the young Jewish students took to their study of the Hebrew Scriptures. We learned that Judaism was not an old religion but a present and vibrant faith. Jewish students knew much more about the Christian faith than the Catholic students knew about Judaism. An abiding lesson was that study is a religious activity. These lessons and others were confirmed a few years later when I moderated a study retreat for Catholic and Jewish teachers and, many years later, a 2-day conference that I gave to Jewish adult educators. I experienced my first Seder in the home of a rabbi where I was welcomed as the long-awaited Elijah. A memorable impression was that one of the chief festivals in the Jewish religion took place at a family celebration. I saw as if for the first time the continuity that exists between the Jewish and Christian faiths.

I have participated in only one dialogue in which Muslims were involved. The Center for Christian Jewish Understanding at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, sponsored a symposium on "What we would like the other to teach about our views on moral teaching." I gave the talk on Christian Morality, with the other talks being given by a Jewish and a Muslim scholar. The exchange was lively and the proceedings became part of a book on the broader topic of exchange of views among Christians, Jews, and Muslims (Coppola, 2006).

Other dialogues with Muslims have been informal dialogues in classes and in conversations after classes. The presence of one student led me to purchase the Koran to make sure that I included readings from it in all of the sessions of my 5-week course on preparing politically sensitive and active religious leaders in New York's South Bronx. Unfortunately, I never met his imam to whom he recounted

all that happened in the class. A Turkish Muslim in a course on Religion, Church and Society forced all of us, especially Nigerian priests, to break down some of the caricatures we had of Muslims and their faith.

In recent years at Fordham University an increasing number of Protestant and Orthodox students take our courses. These students have compelled my colleagues and me to take seriously Protestant scholarship and attitudes. In a significant way the presence of the “other” has transformed my teaching to such a degree that at times Catholic students are critical of the “Protestant” orientation of many classes. Balance in this area is rather difficult to achieve.

Philosophical Reflections on Dialogue

Socratic and Platonic Dialogues

It is fruitful to examine dialogue in the history of philosophy. First of all, dialogue can be a risky and dangerous activity. The annoyance that Socrates caused with his dialogical method was no doubt one of the causes of his death. As portrayed by his disciple Plato, Socrates used questioning dialogue to examine all aspects of Athenian life. In the Plato’s *Apologia*, an account of Socrates’ trial on impiety to the gods and corruption of Athenian youth, Socrates presents himself as knowing nothing, even though the Delphic oracle in its usual genre of riddles language stated that no one is wiser than Socrates.

In searching for the meaning of the riddle about his great wisdom, Socrates questioned those thought to be wise and found that a general did not know what courage was and a religious fanatic did not know the meaning of piety. Even though his embarrassing of citizens made Socrates unpopular, he thought that in doing this he was following the command of his *daimon* to search for wisdom by engaging in dialogue with others, being a gadfly. Through questioning he showed that others were not wise, contrary to what they thought, and that he was wiser at least because he knew that he was not wise. Socrates conceded that though many were wise in knowing particular skills, they were not wise in what was really important. He, Socrates, was better off since while he did not have their knowledge of particular skills, he did not have their ignorance of truly important things. Thus he came to the conclusion that the meaning of the oracle is that human wisdom counts for little; he, Socrates, is wise who admits his own ignorance.

For Socrates the truly important things to know were the real meaning of such ethical concepts as courage, piety, moderation, justice, and love. Here is where Plato appears to interject some of his own views. Socrates could not find these notions because he was looking in the wrong places; these are found in the world of the “forms”. This introduces us to another philosophical lesson about dialogue, to be treated below.

The Socratic dialogues also warn us about the difficulty in clarifying language used in dialogue. Religious words like all other language have historical and cultural

contexts. They often mean different things to members of different faiths. Words like God, faith, salvation, and morality have long histories. This makes all dialogue difficult. Though there are some common beliefs among religious groups, these are often expressed through different words.

I have alluded to another risk of dialogue found in Plato's dialogues, that of *dogmatism*. Dialogue can be a fiction in which dogmatic views are propounded under the guise of an honest search for truth. In the *Republic*, the classic dialogue from Plato's middle period, Plato through his mouthpiece Socrates propounds all the right answers on what the just society is and what type of education this society should foster. Through the Allegory of the Cave Plato teaches that a few philosophers can arrive at what are the true "forms" or essences and what are the forms that human existence should take. Most of the people trapped in a cave see only shadows of these forms. They think that in knowing these shadows of reality they really know things as they are but they are mistaken, as his mouthpiece Socrates proves through long and often tedious dialogues. The ascent to true knowledge is a long and arduous one to be accomplished only by the few.

Many critics from John Dewey (1916) to Karl Popper (2006) have pointed out the undemocratic and even totalitarian conception of society that this dialogue contains. Dewey attributed this to Plato's limited view of individuals and possible social arrangements as well as lack of appreciation of the uniqueness of individuals (1916, pp. 88–91). Although some philosophers have attempted to defend Plato against the charge of dogmatism, many others contend that it is truly present in his dialogues (Vlastos, 1991).

The attempt to inculcate dogmatic beliefs would ultimately seem to make interreligious dialogue a fruitless or even impossible venture. Can Christians with their firm beliefs in the divinity of Christ and the Trinity as fundamental to their faith truly engage in dialogue with Jews, Buddhists, and Muslims? Can theists truly engage in interreligious dialogue with nontheists? Of course, dialogue is possible on a wide range of religious issues that the groups share in common. There are also many good reasons for dialogue among religious individuals or groups besides ultimate agreement. But if one sets as the ultimate goal of dialogue, essential agreement, then the matter is much more difficult. What could possibly be the ultimate point of dialogue when it is known that ultimately beliefs held dogmatically will bring an end to any possibility of real agreement?

Two philosophers of religion have dealt with this issue. John Hick (1980, 1985) has argued that there is a Reality that all religions accept. It appears as a person in some religions and as impersonal in other religions. For him this ultimate reality is the basis upon which all interreligious dialogue can take place. Hick deals with the Christian "exclusivist doctrines" of the Incarnation and the Trinity by interpreting them as myths, thus removing them as the most serious obstacles to Christian involvement in interreligious dialogue.

Most Christians do not accept this reinterpretation of basic Christian doctrines. The French philosopher Simone Weil provided another way of interpreting the Incarnation that might render interreligious dialogue ultimately possible for

Christians. In her “A letter to a priest” written in 1982, Weil offered a strict interpretation of the reality of the Incarnation. Through her study of Greek religions she came to the conclusion that all religions were empowered by the Christ event even before it took place. For many her argument appears the same as Karl Rahner’s interpretation of anonymous or crypto Christians. Weil universalized the Christ event by focusing on three aspects of the Incarnation. It points to the universalization of suffering by presenting a suffering God. It urges believers to take material life seriously. Third, it urges them to take the material considerations of religious life seriously (Weil, as cited in Springsted, 1992, pp. 30–31).

Scholastic Disputation and Dialogue

Dialogue is especially risky and dangerous in theology and religion. This is illustrated by the trials and tribulations of Peter Abelard (1070–1142), one of the great medieval scholastic philosopher-theologians. Abelard introduced the dialectic or dialogic method into philosophical discourse on theological issues, especially the doctrine of the Trinity. In his *Sic et Non*, which he began by stating that “by doubting we come to inquiry and by inquiry we perceive the truth” he presented contradictory opinions on matters of Christian faith. These made up the content and method of his teaching. This scholastic method of dealing with disputed questions through the structured *disputatio* allowed its more skilled practitioners to save the appearances of the ancient authorities while, at the same time, putting forward original solutions of their own whenever the sources of Christian faith, the Bible and the writings of the early Church fathers required further explication, which was extremely often (Clanchy, 1997, p. 34).

Abelard, anticipating by centuries the far-ranging probing of the Enlightenment philosophers, insisted on the priority of understanding over faith, reversing the axiom of Anselm of Canterbury: “I believe so that I may understand.” It was Abelard’s view that nothing should be believed unless it is first understood and that it was of no use for anyone to tell others something which neither he nor those he taught could grasp with the intellect. He was a Socratic teacher in the classroom. Faith for him was a best estimate.

The essence of the scholastic method of education was not to explicate spiritually the Scriptures line by line, as monks did in their sermons and commentaries, but to pose wide-ranging questions and then answer them from logical principles as if for the first time. The most famous scholastic question was Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo?*: Why did God wish to redeem mankind by becoming incarnate, when it could have been done by any prophet or angel?

Abelard’s use of this dialectical method, especially on the doctrine of the Trinity, and the results to which it led was one of the reasons for his condemnation by the pope of the time who heeded the call of the monk Bernard of Clairvaux calling for this action. Bernard, rejecting the scholastic dialectical or dialogical method in his attack on Abelard, wrote to the pope:

Away, away with any idea that the Christian faith should have its limits in the estimates of those academics who doubt everything and know nothing. I go secure in the sentence of the Master of the Gentiles, and I truly know that I shall not be confounded. (As cited in Clanchy, 1997, p. 35)

To Abelard he wrote “You whisper to me that faith is an estimate and you mutter about ambiguity to me, as though nothing were certain” (p. 35).

The dialectical scholastic method has also been charged with dogmatism. Those who make this charge contend that while the method seemed to foster inquiry and discovery, since it ultimately depends on truths found in the literature of scriptures, it accepted their authority and not that of reason. Truths are known before a true effort to discover them. If there was freedom of discussion and inquiry, it was in areas that were not central to Christian faith, such as the number of angels on a pin.

John Dewey (1916, pp. 280–281) was particularly critical of the scholastic dialectical method in education. He considered it merely an effective way to organize and present an authoritative body of truths. In Dewey’s view while the method defined, expounded, and interpreted received doctrine, it did not lead to inquiry, discovery, and invention. While this may be true of later scholastic, it certainly was not true of Abelard who contended that all Christian doctrines could be proven by rational argumentation. One only has to examine the range of issues debated and argued at the medieval universities to see the freedom that this method allowed. The fact that the scholastics were severely criticized by traditional monastic educators like Bernard and were often condemned by popes and councils attests to the freedom of inquiry that this dialogical method allowed. Many debates on doctrinal issues took place in public places. Martin Luther’s challenge to debate publicly 95 theses must be seen in this scholastic context, even though he was not sympathetic to the scholastic methods.

Whether charges of dogmatism against Plato and the medieval scholastics are true or not is not particularly germane to this discussion. The point is that it is possible that dogmatism can intrude into dialogue. This is especially the case when the ultimate authority for religious truth lies in the authority of particular writings, traditions, or teaching authorities to which is ascribed divine assistance, whether infallibly or not. This problem would seem to affect all religions, except perhaps those that base their fundamental beliefs solely on a rational basis such as natural or rational religion of John Locke and deists. People within dogmatic traditions can enter dialogue but not in such a way that they are truly open to a search for truth, which they already have in their professions of faith.

Scientific Dialogue in a Democratic Society: Pragmatism and Process Philosophy

In Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy the goal of individuals and societies was growth, which was to be achieved through freedom, creativity, interaction, and dialogue. His conviction was that democracy as he defined it was the way of life that best promotes

this growth. All social groups, and here we can include religions, grow through interaction and communication with other social groups. Dewey (1954) argues that a society whose members and groups converse in diverse ways is a healthy society:

The first actuality is accomplished in face-to-face relationships by means of direct give and take. Logic in its fulfillment recurs to the primitive sense of the word: dialogue. Ideas which are not communicated, shared, and reborn in expression are but soliloquy, and soliloquy is both broken and imperfect thought. (p. 371)

Though he rarely uses the word, the concept of dialogue is at the heart of Dewey's epistemology, social and political philosophy, and educational theory. For him, science most adequately describes how we think and arrive at knowledge. To think and to know is to observe, experiment, inquire, discuss, discover, and invent. We examine what is happening in our experiences, develop hypotheses or theories, gather and assess the evidence, draw conclusions, and subject these conclusions to additional questions. There is no end to the process; as many as want can participate in the process. Progress comes by overturning what has been thought and concluded in the past.

Dewey applied this mode of dialogical thinking to his understanding of the social and political bases of society. For him there were no readymade ideal societies that are known only to the few or that are found described in the literature the past. There is no ideal republic, no ideal Christendom. A society of people, a democratic society, is fashioned first of all by examining individual and social experience in their fullness. Building a democratic society is a grand experiment in which all can be involved and in which there is a need for continuing dialogue, conversation, and discussion.

Education according to Dewey is also interactive and thus dialogical. Like science, it begins with experience but aims at the reconstruction of experience which leads to further reconstruction of that experience. There is really no end or aim to education except growth. There are no fixed ideas but only a fixed method, the scientific method. All are invited to participate in the dialogue, conversation, or reconstruction.

Dewey's ideas have been carried into the debate about the nature of a liberal democratic society by Richard Rorty. For him, "A liberal society is one whose ideals can be fulfilled by persuasion rather than force, by reform rather than revolution, by the free and open encounters of present linguistic and other practices with suggestions for new practices" (Rorty, 1989, p. 60). A free society is one in which people of conscience and morality deliberate and use language not as God given but as contingent upon the situations that are faced. For Rorty, the liberal democratic society depends on arriving at truths not defined as correspondence with reality but "with what comes to be believed in the course of free and open encounters" (p. 68).

It would appear on first hearing that this form of dialogue as such is off limits or of limited value in interreligious dialogue since religions accept fixed ideas found in sacred literature and history, all of which are authorities to be accepted. Dewey can, of course, be enlisted for this point of view. He abandoned his Christian faith and in *A Common Faith* (1974) described religious faith as the achievement of the

fullness of humanity. However, there is a philosophical system of thought that has accepted the challenge of reinterpreting religious beliefs in a way that is consonant with scientific thinking. This is found in the process philosophy and theology of A. Whitehead (1996/1926).

Whitehead was a mathematician and a physicist who came to religious faith by a desire to investigate objectively and accurately a fuller explanation of the world. He employed the scientific method of reasoning in his religious speculations: formulating hypotheses, testing, and modifying them. His religious system of thought has been used by many Christian theologians to present a view of God and the world that is consonant with scientific thought. His ideas have also been influential for persons involved in interreligious dialogue between adherents to the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism).

John B. Cobb (2002) is a notable scholar of Whitehead who has applied the latter's ideas in attempts to make connections between Abrahamic faiths and Eastern religions. Dialogue with Buddhism has been a special interest of his. He has often pointed to the fact that many Catholics in Japan consider themselves both Christian and Buddhist. He finds in Whitehead's philosophy reasons for this possibility. Both reject the concept of substance and permanence, asserting the reality of change in persons and the universe.

Obviously, the dialogue between Buddhists and believers in God must deal with the rejection of a personal God by Buddhism. But Cobb contends that Buddhists might accept the reality of God as conceived by Whitehead since this God is not substance, as in most Western theology, but an all-inclusive instance of "dependent origination", an accepted Buddhist concept, with some dependence on creatures. Cobb (2002) finds in some interpretations of Buddhism a movement in the direction of such a God. He contends "a Whiteheadian theist sides with some forms of Buddhism against others. My only claim is that there is nothing in Whiteheadian theism that is fundamentally in conflict with the deepest and most widely accepted Buddhist insights" (p. 6).

Dialogue and Listening: Buber and Gadamer

A philosopher of dialogue in recent memory was Martin Buber who described the various kinds of relationships that persons enter into. There are two fundamental relationships: *I-Thou* and *I-It*. We can enter into relationships with the world of persons and the world of discrete objects (Buber, 1923, p. 4). Humans can have an *I-Thou* relationship with nature, and also with people and spiritual beings. A real dialogue, however, can take place only in relationships among persons. Though Buber recognized that "all real living is meeting", he also spoke of the indispensability of the *I-It* relationships, which is the ordinary mode of existence. The existence of this relationship has the potential to awaken us to the possibility of moving to *I-Thou* relationships.

Though I do not believe that I have achieved the depth of an *I–Thou* relationship in my limited experience of interreligious dialogue, I came close with Pastor Robert Schultz. His acceptance of a call to minister in another country cut short the development of our relationship. I am sure that others have had deeper experiences than I have had. Buber reminds us that in all dialogues it is people meeting people, whether this be at highly academic and formal levels or in more informal encounters. There always exists this potential for deepening of relationships. I believe that Buber offers a goal of trying to achieve at least the beginnings of friendship in interreligious dialogical relationships.

The difficult task during dialogue is to really listen to others. Gadamer (1960) offered an excellent analysis of listening in his work, *Truth and Tradition*, which has great relevance for interreligious dialogue. He was dependent in this work both on Martin Heidegger and Martin Buber. For Gadamer, people who engage in dialogue face a world of strangeness and familiarity; they share some things with others but must also listen to strange and different things. When we meet others we engage as persons shaped by our traditions, beliefs, and prejudgments, which include cultural, religious, and political experiences. We are able to make sense of others only if we consider them as persons to whom we relate and attempt to understand their actions on the basis of our experiences.

According to Gadamer, we should listen to others with the understanding that we can understand them despite our prejudgments. We should attempt to understand others on their own terms, trying to bracket our own beliefs and prejudgments. However, we must acknowledge that our situatedness makes it difficult for us to fully understand others. Gadamer explains the highest form of listening in Buberian language:

To experience the Thou truly as a Thou, i.e., not to overlook his claim but to let him really say something to us. Here is where openness belongs. But ultimately this openness does not exist only for the person who speaks; rather, anyone who listens is fundamentally open. . . . Belonging together always means being able to listen to one another. When two people understand each other, this does not mean that one person “understands” the other. (1960, p. 361)

Reflecting on Gadamer’s analysis of the difficulty of engaging in sympathetic listening, one wonders why one would ever want to take these risks, especially when one is satisfied with one’s own situation. From a personal perspective, we should listen to others since we live in a greatly changing world where it may be necessary for us to listen, understand, and learn from others. At other times we have no choice but to listen to others since developments within our own lives and institutions may require us to listen to others. Through listening and dialoguing with others, we may actually learn more about ourselves, our traditions, and our religious faith. In fact, through dialogue we often learn what we truly believe. Furthermore, we at times listen to others when we find that our own life stories and trajectories do not seem rich enough for the lives we want to live. Critical self-reflection or group reflection may bring about the changes needed. It is a common experience that listening to others broadens our own horizons and perspectives. While those who are satisfied with what they are and with what their traditions and institutions convey may

find no reason to engage in sympathetic listening, those who seek a richer life for themselves or their institutions should be willing to take the risks.

This discussion on dialogue is written primarily from a personal perspective. There are to be sure many political and social reasons for forms of dialogue including interreligious dialogue. History shows us how religious differences have led to killings, wars, conflicts, and the loss of many lives. To do anything to avoid this is reason enough for entering dialogue. I have taken the vantage point of the individual more in consideration in this chapter.

Dialogue as Communicative Action

Jürgen Habermas has offered an influential interpretation of mutual understanding or dialogue in the tradition of the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory. He modified certain concepts of earlier formulations by Marcuse, Horkheimer, and others, criticizing the notion of instrumental reason and presenting a critical theory of democracy in which communicative action through public debate and discussion is essential, though he did not deny the importance of experts.

In his highly influential *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas (1968) developed an emancipatory theory of society in which he distinguished three cognitive interests: instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory. He argued for the notion that critical reason must go beyond mere negation of particular societal arrangements and processes to include a process of understanding among persons which highlights critical reflection on how selves and society are formed. Such reflection, in his view, would be emancipatory in freeing individuals and societies from prevailing forms of dominating control and reigning false ideologies.

In *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984), a work most relevant to a critical understanding of dialogue, we find a more systematic and mature theory of society. Habermas here distinguished between two basic forms of social action: instrumental and communicative. The first is action oriented toward accomplishing a concrete practical goal. The second is action oriented toward mutual understanding.

Habermas contends that in modern societies dialogue among individuals has often been replaced by imposition of laws and institutions from above without sufficient debate and discussion. Economic and political decisions are made by experts without adequate public discussion. The imperatives of a system have replaced human debate and dialogue. Modern democracies and capitalist systems suffer from a lack of communication among publics.

In his later work Habermas, in developing a discourse ethics, was critical of Kantian ethics. He criticized Kant for proposing an ethic that applies only to the individuals and not to broad social units. Kant asked us to act in such a way that what we do can become a universal norm. Habermas' discourse ethics demands that we also take an intersubjective and social perspective. Only those norms are actually valid in his view which could be accepted by all who are involved in the discourse and dialogue.

Many critics, however, see Habermas' moral and political theory as a return to a Kantian moral theory. It can be viewed as an attempt to fuse Kantian insights into Hegelian notions of concrete intersubjectivity. In addition, poststructuralists reject the idea of an inclusive intersubjective foundation for ethics, politics, and law. For Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), for example, law is a closed system instituted through violence. Genuine intersubjectivity is rooted, in contrast, in care and compassion for the other, which is always beyond law and justice. On this reading, Habermas replays the earlier notion of a unified social subject. Habermas' (1984) use of systems theory in *Theory of Communicative Action* has also been criticized by interpretive social theorists who believe that Habermas' theory of society is inconsistent with his general commitment to interpretive and critical social science.

Postmodern Rejection of Dialogue Across Differences

Postmodern thought has challenged accepted assumptions in philosophy as well as in many other academic disciplines. Postmodern educators have extended their criticisms to dialogue across differences especially where there are potential differences in power. Some consider such dialogue not only not worthwhile but actually impossible. The postmodern emphasis on differences is such that it is contended that many voices, perspectives, and opinions should be allowed to be expressed without any attempt to reconcile them or to bring them into any consistent account. Attempts to do this will almost always entail domination of some groups by others.

This is not the place to review the many conflicting themes of postmodern thought. Suffice to state that at least three themes dominate this thought: the rejection of absolutes or metanarratives in social, political, economic, and moral theory; the belief that all political and social discourse is suffused with domination and power; and the celebration of differences in race, gender, culture, and religion as well as in other areas of life.

Many postmodernist educators contend that dialogue across differences is impossible because understanding among people with differences is not possible and also because discourses across differences necessarily entails that individuals or groups will impose their values and beliefs on others. Postmodern critics contend that dialogue is often not sufficiently sensitive to the various conditions of differences that exist among groups. It also at times ignores the serious conflicts and historical incidents of oppression that groups have experienced at the hands of others. Some postmodern critics reject the view that such discourse can be reasonable and that alternative points of view will not be treated fairly. Dialogue in a society is impossible since relations between people in different groups such as races, genders, cultures, and religions are unjust (Ellsworth, 1989).

This postmodern approach has been subjected to criticism for its inconsistencies in seeming to reject dialogue but also accept it in a modified form. Also, differences can be respected and maintained in dialogue for practical reasons: so that people

can exist in a peaceful manner in which their lives are enriched and invigorated. As Burbules and Rice (1991) have noted:

There is no reason to assume that dialogue across differences involves either eliminating those differences or imposing one group's views on others; dialogue that leads to understanding, cooperation, and accommodation can sustain differences within a broader compact of toleration and respect. (p. 402)

Furthermore, all differences imply that there is still some sameness among groups, difference is a relative term, and all groups can be divided into subgroups, with dialogue being possible with at least one of the subgroups as is often the case.

The value of examining postmodern thought on education is that it acts as a critique of other philosophical approaches to dialogue and education (Elias & Merriam, 2005, chap. 8). Most commentators do not feel, however, that it makes a significant contribution to dealing with the many issues that it raises. It is powerfully deconstructive but not equally reconstructive.

Conclusions for Interreligious Dialogue

First of all, interreligious dialogue is important for a number of reasons. All dialogue has the potential of strengthening the identity of those who engage in it, as argued by Dewey in his description of the democratic society. Through dialogue we come to a clearer understanding of our own beliefs, values, and attitudes. We also recognize that we belong to multiple subgroups with different interests. While Dewey discussed dialogue within the context of one country, his ideas are equally applicable on a global level. Second, participants in dialogue are enriched by taking into consideration the somewhat different perspectives that others have of them and being challenged into incorporating those perspectives into their own or their group's understanding. Third, dialogue across religious differences may foster our capacities to listen to others with both patience and tolerance. It can make us less dogmatic about our own prejudices. These outcomes, of course, are not guaranteed but they certainly make the practice of dialogue desirable for individuals and groups.

It is important to recognize that dialogue is not always possible, and also, unfortunately, it can lead to more harm than good. A realistic caution has been voiced by Burbules and Rice (1991): "There are contexts of hostility, resentment, or domination in which only further harm can be done by attempts to communicate across conflicts and gulfs of misunderstanding" (p. 408). Notwithstanding this dialogue should still be pursued to attempt to reconcile differences and achieve common meanings and understandings as proposed by Freire, Gadamer, Habermas and many others. Another goal of dialogue, no less important, is to foster respect and tolerance across differences.

Participants in interreligious dialogue might benefit by reflection on the spectrum of results that might be achieved through dialogue:

- (a) agreement and consensus, identifying beliefs or values all parties can agree to;
- (b) not agreement, but a common understanding in which the parties do not agree, but establish common meanings in which to discuss their differences;
- (c) not a common understanding, but an understanding of differences in which the parties do not entirely bridge their differences, but through analogies of experiences or other indirect translations can understand, at least in part, each other's positions;
- (d) little understanding, but a respect across differences, in which the parties do not fully understand one another, but by each seeing that the other has a thoughtful, conscientious position, they can come to appreciate and respect even positions they disagree with; and
- (e) irreconcilable and incommensurable differences (Burbules & Rice, 1991, p. 409).

This spectrum of possible results of dialogue is a realistic appraisal of possibilities. They ring true to the experience we have as individuals in our relationships with others and the experiences we have had in groups. There are enough good possibilities to warrant taking a pragmatic approach to all dialogue opportunities.

Like all other human activities the practice of dialogue requires what Burbules and Rice (1991) call communicative virtues. They identify these virtues as:

tolerance, patience, respect for differences, a willingness to listen, the inclination to admit that one may be mistaken, the ability to reinterpret or translate one's own concerns in a way that makes them comprehensible to others, the self-imposition of restraint in order that others may have a turn to speak, and the disposition to express one's self honestly and sincerely. (p. 411)

The educational task is to aid in the development of these virtues within families, schools, and religious bodies. If these virtues are present in the life of adults, they may well develop in children and young people. Like all virtues, they are achieved through imitation and practice. The one virtue that may be most difficult for those in interreligious dialogue to act on is to admit that one or one's group may be mistaken. An honest study of the history of all religious bodies reveals, however, that all have been mistaken at some times in their history. This awareness should make all groups and individuals open to participate in interreligious dialogue. It should also alert educators to teach in such a way that they prepare and encourage students to live a life that is open to dialogue with the other.

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The Search for a Common Epistemological Ground Within the Inter-religious Framework: A Concept-Centered Approach

I.L. Hacinebioglu

Meaningful inquiry into the nature and meaning of life is a rational – if not inevitable – undertaking for any consciously functioning human being. What we term “life” must include within it the notion of the individual’s experience of the world around them; from this experiential viewpoint, “life” might be described as nothing other than the human response to the sphere that surrounds them. This surrounding environment is composed of a variety of factors of experience, a large portion of which we might categorize under the headings of personal and social preferences. The shaping of those preferences within the context of the individual and collective life process is itself a key ingredient in the process of “making” and “defining” ourselves in a meaningful world. Through applying the questions “what”, “why”, “who”, “where”, “when” is a basic mental skill which is nevertheless absolutely essential if the realities of life are to be discovered and reflected upon. Asking the right question is as important as finding the right answer. “Who am I?”, “where did I come from?”, “where am I going?”; asking questions of this nature relates a person to a sphere of things through conscious experience. These questions demand meaningful and logical explanations. Religion has historically sought to respond to similar questions during the history of humankind while also establishing beliefs, rituals, and personal and social codes for enhancing the experience and understanding of life. In this chapter, I will explore the possibility of a concept-centered approach on epistemological common ground for religious judgements about a mutually held set of values of humanity. In order to achieve a concept-centered understanding within an inter-religious framework, the emphasis of logical analysis will be placed on the relations between certain concepts, epistemology, truth-values, and religion.

A concept is a package of particular mental ideas capable of expression within a given language. Analyzing any conceptual problem involves grasping concepts in their proper conjunctions. Concepts could be derived from our understandings of reality. Senses, perceptions, images, and even background knowledge of things that are stored from nature could coalesce to form certain mental ideas that are

I.L. Hacinebioglu (✉)

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta-Turkey
e-mail: hacinebioglu@yahoo.com

in turn capable of expression as particular concepts. According to T. Cooling and M. Cooling,

concepts are often general ideas or ways of thinking about things. For example, the concept of “special” is a way of thinking about a range of things and helps us to sort things into “ordinary and everyday” and “treasured or set apart” (2004, p. 3).

Concepts are dynamically developed and reproduced or even terminated in mind (Bolton, 1977). Concepts are expressed in terms. As J. Pearson suggests,

the terms are labels for concepts which are abstract entities isolated from text. In traditional terminology, the emphasis is on defining concepts, on isolating meaning prior to agreeing upon an appropriate label (i.e. term) for a concept. The term which is agreed upon may be a single word or a multiword unit. In the context of standardization, the label becomes the approved term (1998, p. 16).

Those approved terms are produced by discreet spheres of thought such as religion and science within a framework of concept-producing faculties of mind with the help of language. Concepts cannot be right or wrong *per se*, but the assertions for or against the definition of the concept can be judged on the basis of rationality as right or wrong. Instead of judging concepts on a *prima facie* basis, assertions could be evaluated in relation to their content with a view to establishing an epistemic justification; from this point a decision could be reached as to whether they can be expressed through real world terms.

Religion is one of the richest sources of conceptual production since it connects the mind to personal, social, and global needs of human beings in various dimensions of life. Culture and society affect personal preferences, providing the matrix out of which the broad variety of thought patterns emerges. As with any concept-based institutional phenomenon seeking truth via a particular linguistic medium, religious understanding is concerned with theories of truth that are based on epistemological justifications (Read, 1995, pp. 18–25). Theories of truth are systems concerned with the accurate symbolic representation of reality. These systems necessarily assert certain values through the medium of language in connection with the reality being observed and described. For Murphy and Medin, “people’s theories and knowledge of the real world play a major role in conceptual coherence” (1999, p. 453). The epistemic justification of a particular thought is essentially a decision as to that thought’s truth-value, an attempt to discriminate between what is true and what is false, and to find out how we know what we know. When one does apply epistemic justification to a matter, the need arises to establish certain ground concepts (Schlesinger, 1985; Audi, 1998). Ground concepts within a religious context would most likely be learned and transmitted through a codified pedagogic institution since religious knowledge normally exhibits an epistemological justificatory rationale shared by the group of people who comprise its followers. Justification of thought can only begin when there exists a common usage of the concepts involved (Long, 2000, p. 10). It is, therefore, evident that language is the most important element in establishing conceptual understandings for epistemic justifications of truth (Freeman, 2005). Insensitivity to the justification of truth-values could lead to confusions about the epistemic basis of religion and an understanding of the meanings

of concepts involved. Regarding this point, reality and validity of the usage of concepts cannot be separately understood from the common knowledge of religious justification. Thus, abstraction of any idea should seek some sort of connection to a framework of epistemic justification in that particular religion. Nevertheless, this does not mean that any concept is understood without any value judgement. It is rather to say, epistemic judgements produce their own concepts, and their system of thought is not value free.

Religion with its unique way of using language creates ground concepts to produce conceptual understandings. Language itself is part of the process that takes place within the limits of mind and truth-claims to produce any meaningful thought. Language in this context is an essential tool to communicate between one another for thinking activities. J. Nuyts states,

by the virtue of the communicative function of language, a no doubt considerable part of human's acquisition of information is achieved through language. Hence language is likely to be an important player in constituting conceptualization, and may have quite some influence on the latter's characteristics (2001, p. 13).

Similarly, N. Bolton explains that “the concept is characterized by there being an agreed name for the experience. This means that language plays an indispensable role in concept formation” (1977, p. 47). Concepts are not only the dynamic result of these thinking processes but also cells of statements that allow for the construction of meaningful assertions from which a meaningful communicative discourse can emerge.

Establishing Concepts

Establishing concepts means establishing thoughts and world-views, with arguments resting upon those concepts. Then, an inference follows what is consistently expressed in the statements which are composed of concepts and other features of the assertion (Shaw, 1981, p. 15). The construction of any concept in the mind requires certain processes of thought. During this process the mind carries out the function of accepting or inserting certain concepts as ground beliefs, and these ground beliefs in turn produce the truth-claims and truth-values of religion. In fact, this process as truth judgement frames a meaningful statement in connection to truth-values (Lepore, 2000, p. 276). Truth-claims are core elements of any religion that are demonstrated in certain ways such as core creeds or dogmas. Demonstrating truth-claims may come through the inner processes of a religion itself. That is to say that every religion has historical, philosophical, or social preferences to teach their own truth-claims to their followers and new generations; this is only possible through the teaching of right and common concepts. “Right” in this sense refers to those concepts most suitable and logically reasonable for conveying the general teachings of religion. However, these claims should be consistent with the other concepts that are in use for the assertions (Baggini & Fosl, 2003, pp. 79–81).

Coherence in thought could be shown primarily in the usage of the association of concepts in use. Religious concepts are particularly indebted to the history to the progress of thoughts in the particular religion. This history helps to improve certain understandings about worldviews. Truth-claims are established on the basis of the epistemological preferences of the given religion to determine what the source of truth is and how the evaluation of the perceived truth is possible. The epistemic ground of a religion rests on justification of truth-values through religious assertions and experience, which together inform and shape the concepts and express them in language.

The most basic thought process starts with a conceptual imagination of things in conjunction with mind processes. Instructional universal concepts are very crucial for establishing a coherent ground for understandings of issues. Any kind of educational structure needs to start with a clarification of concepts, bridging knowledge, and evaluating sense-data in mental processes. Learning is an experience that seeks compatibility of humankind and the universe. Thinking, pondering, and evaluating on the raw material of life are in themselves indicative of an understanding of this compatibility and this can be learned and thought about.

Concept Education

When one talks about religious education, certain concepts become a more initial part of the question of human beings, the universe and their relation to the divine. The main concepts in religious education can be collected and discussed through evaluations on the role of persons in the universe and their relation to the divine. One might analyze various approaches to reach a general framework for analyzing the philosophical and theoretical aspects of universal education. In fact, the best possible way of communication among believers is to reach agreement on a common set of concepts. Thus, a correspondence would be established concerning thoughts which are derived from their metaphysical, religious, and philosophical statements. Logical understanding recalls conscious commemoration of language-thought relation so as to produce certain judgement values for generating common concepts for inter-religious education. P. Flach writes that “the goal of logic is to provide a catalogue of reasoning forms”. Logic plays an essential role for this process of inferences (Flach, 2006, p. 693). In the context of inter-religious communications, people’s minds are already structured through their language and culture, and religion is one of the main sources of this thought process. Furthermore, the most advanced and sophisticated thoughts also need to be analyzed on such conceptual grounds. The search for a meaningful correspondence regarding the truth of religious assertions should be a basic aim of any paradigm of religious interaction. A quest for epistemological and methodological co-operation will allow for the possibility of a conceptual inter-religious unification of understandings. Nonetheless, the reality of the world does not allow us to ignore the fact that there are limitations and obstructions to this process until truth-claims are clearly discussed and understood.

Inter-faith dialogues improve the language that believers commonly use for their religious understandings. The need for sound communication becomes more evident in multi-religious groups especially in multi-cultural classes in schools. In the modern age, communication and connection among cultures and religions seem to be much easier than before. This should lead to a better understanding of how and why people think and act as they do. Understanding of this nature should help to make the world a better place to live for everybody.

Any particular religion that is ready to encounter a dialogue with other religions in any environment to improve its conceptual understanding of the big issues may produce a clear way to search for a common epistemological ground. It is affirmed by T. Cooling and M. Cooling that “beliefs are a form of *religious* concept that people commit themselves to. For example, ‘holy’ or ‘sacred’ is the religious equivalent of general concept of special” (2004, p. 3). The notion of the *concept* suggests a common idea among a given set of people that allows for communication and reflection within an identifiable logical-linguistic framework. If a concept does not carry this feature of commonality, it is questionable whether to call it a proper concept at all. Although the language and methods employed in establishing epistemic preferences are not the same in every religious epistemology, religions need to be based on clear and concrete understandings of certain concepts for their truth-claims to open to common methods of evaluation. Thus, clarity of concepts and demonstrating their justification of truth-values on ground beliefs in argumentations are very crucial in inter-religious education teaching.

Argumentation

Religious statements are mainly truth assertions not only about the world and affairs of the world but also the world as a metaphysical sphere of existence. Religious statements are not value-free statements. They assert certain truth-values to call followers to believe in and act upon them. Religious statements might be seen in positive and negative ways. Positive statements assert that a concept or a phenomenon is based on right and good judgement. Negative statements serve to nullify any idea that might go against basic teachings, and assert the falsity of any ground belief that is unacceptable for followers of the particular religion. In both cases, concepts are key elements for analyzing whether a statement utilizes the truth judgements that are also common features of that understanding of religion. In other words, in any argument one has to use or find common concepts to communicate. Inconsistent usage of meanings and understandings in concepts leads inevitably to misunderstandings and conflicts. Conversely consistent usage is essential for inter-religious communication and understanding. Arguments contain two dimensions for utilizing concepts for this communication. First, the composition of an assertion with concepts should be clearly demonstrated, explained, and understood. To establish an assertion, language should bridge concepts and ideas to claims and then, second, the other dimensions of the argument such as inference and validity appear to be

an evaluation for an acceptance or denial of the claim/s in the form of judgements. Arguments start by establishing a claim through concept building *before* becoming an issue of judgements of validity. Validity is determined as a result of any judgement process that is based on mental and logical preferences on truth-values of knowledge (Meyer, 2005, p. 183). Accepting or denying certain realities is part of this decision making process.

Religious language imposes certain aspects of the religion on assertions such as symbolism or creating different spheres of reality that might indicate a different usage from that employed in daily communication. Appreciating this unique characteristic of religious expression might help toward an understanding of the patterns and varieties of argumentation and to grasp concepts within the horizons of the language that might allow more people to communicate through them in different spheres. In inter-religious environments these patterns might be utilized as a means of common understanding of issues. In spite of the fact that problems occur within their own theological and philosophical package, religions indicate physical and metaphysical dimensions of problems to discover a way of understanding for everyone. This phenomenon can be observed in different religions. Developing conscious awareness of concepts starts with awareness of a certain conceptual framework of religious matters. Creating a conceptual ground is a starting point for a common understanding of problems especially with regard to multi-religious environments. Talking about certain concepts requires not only a proper way of speech, but also a proper way of expressing problems logically through concepts.

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts of judgements of truths are generally the main reason for conflicts among people. Moreover, conflict about choosing proper language to express those judgements or discuss those problems might sometimes cause uneasy situations. Religions with their powerful expression of language might sometimes become a cause or effect of these potentially flammable discussions. However, drawing attention to concepts and enhancing knowledge and thinking about concepts will reduce tension and will increase the possibility of sharing certain values vis-à-vis certain concepts. In any system of religious education, teaching a set of common grounds and concepts will allow space for reasonable analysis of the possible justification of religious thought. Critical analysis is only possible and fruitful when there is knowledge and understanding of common concepts among the participants who would have conceptually understood and analyzed all of their own truth-claims. Without this precondition, closing the doors to potential conflicts will be much more difficult in multi-religious environments. The efforts should be expended primarily on establishing a set of common concepts to assist toward the greater understanding of problems. Instead of drawing attention to divisive points and opinions, one needs to emphasize what is the main ground from which a better evaluation of issues might be attained.

It is important to maintain awareness of the fact that the justification of religious statements includes an element of personal preference. Justification of truth to the satisfaction of all parties, especially in an environment of competing and conflicting truth-claims, is not an easy task. However, the task is worth pursuing to the extent that it could help communities to express their own approaches to the realities of life and develop their ideas in a more coherent way. For most individuals the question of personal identity, and particularly religious identity, cannot be decided exclusively by a purely social criterion; it also involves the conscious and mental elements which religion appears best suited to fulfill. Conscious preferences may cause or require changes in identities for those that are ready for it. Religion is often considered primarily as a form of social learning, but it also involves a process of mental structuring and self-development (Jarvis, Holford & Griffin, 1998). During the mind structuring process, once again, concepts are structured as well. This process, in fact, is one of learning about thinking.

Logical Thinking and Concepts

Developing logical thinking in religious thought could be possible with systematic teachings on concepts and their relations to epistemic justifications of truth-claims. Conceptual developments of mind might be variable due to factors such as age, culture, environment, and so on, but the most important factor accounting for differentials in progress would be that of education. Logical, systematic, and critical thinking are important for religious understanding as for any other sphere of understanding. However, religious epistemology might interfere with other areas that involve justifications of their truth-claims. Therefore, in any religious evaluation of thought, justifications need to be carefully analyzed with a view to identifying their conceptual grounds.

Conceptual consciousness requires logical awareness. Increasing levels of logical analysis will assist in the understanding of the concepts. Logic is the classification of concepts and assertions. Distinctions between concepts like physical and meta-physical dimensions should be reflected in assertions that are based on truth-values. Therefore, any teaching should involve the composing or compiling of a composition of concepts. Changing the content of the concepts is crucial for producing a certain ground to bring about a concrete understanding of religion. That is the reason why every school of thought refines or redefines certain concepts. I suggest that there are three ways of doing so:

- (a) Clarification of concepts,
- (b) Classification of concepts, and
- (c) Simplifications of concepts.

Clarification of concepts includes clarification of thoughts and expressing them in proper terms. Classification of concepts is necessary to analyze their connection

to truth-values and understand their links to the depths of thought. Simplifications of concepts would allow their connections to truth-claims to become much clearer. These are three ways of allowing inter-religious dialogues to take place on firmer grounds.

Common Concepts

There are certain concept-producing areas that are related to truth-claims. Concepts in those areas are ground concepts that allow for the elucidation of further concepts used within an inter-religious framework:

- Concepts of epistemology
- Concepts of logical analysis
- Concepts of metaphysics
- Concepts of ontology and cosmology
- Concepts of ethics and action
- Concepts of justice and peace

There are surely many other categories that could be added to this list, but for the sake of argument I put forward certain concept-producing areas in their relation to the process of the justification of religious thought for truth-claims. Therefore, these areas are for certain concepts to produce ground concepts to develop further conceptions. When the ground concepts of the above areas are found and clearly expressed for common usage, a possible ground for communication is established from which to judge their connection to truth-claims. At this point, I would like to emphasize that the following concepts are raised on justified truth-claims of the above areas. Those areas of conceptions comprise actual concepts that are practically used and generally discussed straightforwardly among people before proper analysis of the above concept-producing areas. Building a thought gradually, a concept from one of the topics listed below will also be gradually formed and developed.

- *Belief concepts*: such as God and the after life.
- *Moral concepts*: such as good and evil actions.
- *Social concepts*: such as values pertaining to social order and peace.
- *Spiritual concepts*: concepts related to finding inner peace and formulating ways of practicing it.
- *Concepts of rights*: personal, social, global; and human and animal rights.
- *Concepts of mutual understanding*: concepts on common grounds of thought such as different ways of appreciating reality.
- *Concepts* which are related to human contribution to *civilization* such as productivity and sharing.

- *Concepts of preferences*: Religious, philosophical, and personal preferences on truth-judgements.
- *Concepts of critical thinking*: concepts on differences and understanding each other.

There might be many obstructions working against arriving at a mutually acceptable or understandable set of terms and unifying concepts. On occasion a monolithic conceptual approach may occur, but there is still a chance to establish a unifying framework as an umbrella for understanding differences. Conflicts of interests, clashes on epistemic grounds, collision of cultural backgrounds, collision of certain practices, and differences and varieties of age and culture in any teaching environment might act as an obstruction to the development of ideas. Common levels of differences might be overcome, but the need to ascertain the validity of judgements should be considered as a task involving the evaluation of concepts. In this perspective sometimes inter-religious education of children could be more difficult to develop conceptual understanding than inter-religious teachings for adults (Wallace, 1965). T. Cooling in his “concept-cracking” methodology suggests that the best possible way to teach religious concepts to children is to focus on meanings of concepts and allowing them to have experience of active usage of the concepts in their learning processes (Cooling, 1994, p. 19). There is a way to respond to differences through finding possible unique concepts among people through teaching of concepts and their relations to truth-claims.

Inter-religious Conceptions

Religion involves questioning the meaning of life and big issues of life that occur between life and death. Life necessitates asking certain questions. Meaningful questionings about the arguments from religious experience, the problem of evil, the attributes of God, miracles and revelation, the nature of the soul and mystery lead people to build systems of thought to identify appropriate concepts for making discriminative judgements relating to truth-values. The following questions might be raised to expand the search for common grounds through conceptualization: Is there a need for universal conceptualization? How can we distinguish differences between religious, irreligious, non-religious, and anti-religious education through “concept” analysis? What are the main logical concepts to be taught? Is there a common ground of logical analysis for religious learning and teaching? How can one draw a line between worldly and metaphysical statements and understandings? What are the inputs of language and culture for religious education? Does secular education (however, this may be understood) offer anti-religious or inter-religious education?

In the Islamic tradition, the concept of the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*) refers to those who have a similar conceptual understanding along religious grounds. The People of the Book are the followers of very similar divine scriptures like Jews,

Christians, and Muslims. The term indicates that there is a divine verbal and textual tradition for grounding conceptualization of thoughts, and it could be employed with great benefit in the area of inter-religious communication. To achieve inter-religious education, there is a primary need for mutual understanding and co-operation to find out the epistemological and methodological roots of value-judgement of concepts such as freedom, justice, and many others that are mentioned above.

Exercising a Judgement

Utilizing the practical side of religion is the most important part of teaching religious concepts. Demonstrating the practical goodness of religious concepts is much more powerful than attempting to verbally communicate what is good or evil. Being a practical example or role-model is arguably a more effective means of affecting the minds of lay people than asking them to observe and digest merely abstract thought. Regardless of whether the conclusion is correct or not, judgements are influenced very much by those experiences. Picturing goodness in social life allows people to think it is a fact and possible to demonstrate in reality. The practice of goodness speaks for itself. One action is more evaluative for judgements than thousands of words and terms. Within the course of time religious concepts may attract some doubts about the truthfulness and factuality of their connection to truth-values. Are those concepts about religion just rhetoric? Rhetoric versus action always results in a favoring of practice of the conceptual understandings in the real world. How are concepts demonstrated in real life? Religious examples demonstrate how it is possible to bring into actuality that which appears as a merely conceptual analysis; demonstrating the truth-values in practice becomes an important task. Legends and religious stories are effective tools in this process. They demonstrate that if it was possible *then*, it is possible *now*. But, stories of this nature might sometimes suggest the impossibility of making these practices a reality. If a practice becomes impossible to perceive in the real world, it tends to be seen as a fictitious product of the imagination. Religious figures should ideally be a bridge between the reality and ideal goodness of the world; they should embody an actual practice of those ideal elements in the real world.

Final, preparing a ground for conceptualization in the teaching of any concept, and visualization of those concepts are also importing certain elements of justifications for thoughts. Creating any teaching environment does not allow any discrimination. Religion is not only verbal experience of concepts, but it is rather the personal, social, and cultural experience of demonstrating the reality of concepts and their connections to truth-claims in the daily practice of life. Teaching religion is to show how value judgements could be demonstrated in a unique way in which mind and action go together in a holistic structure. Then it may be possible that personal experience, through varieties of thought process, might communicate to other spheres of judgements of various people.

There is a need and urgency to reach this level of understanding and peace. Sharing the thinking process of judgements on truth-claims of religious assertions, in connection to concepts, is basically to bring about the sharing of peace for everybody.

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Toward a Theoretical Framework for Participating in Interreligious Dialogue and Education

Joseph H. Ehrenkranz and David L. Coppola

Introduction: Dialogue and Education as Moments in History

Interreligious dialogue and interreligious education are privileged moments when God calls human beings to greater fidelity to their commitments and covenants. People of good will have the ability to dialogue with others and seek peaceful and persuasive strategies to turn the tide of the tragedies and violence of our time. To engage in interreligious dialogue, to learn about another religion, and to teach about those beliefs goes well beyond what is ordinarily required of a believer. In our view, the opportunity to talk with those who were formerly considered strangers and enemies for centuries by our traditions is like a dream come true and yet comes none too soon.

The beginning of many graced moments between Catholics and Jews (and more recently, Muslims), was the sustained theological and pastoral reflections of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the implications of which are still greatly discussed by theologians and educators alike. The Christian church’s historical posture toward Judaism was appropriately called “the teaching of contempt” by Jules Isaac, whose ideas were accepted by Pope John XXIII and formed the basis for the writing of Vatican II’s “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions,” *Nostra Aetate* (1965). This document called for the revision of all texts and teaching to remove any anti-Jewish bias, repudiated that the Jews had killed Jesus (the notorious charge of deicide), and began a gradual change in teaching and practice between Catholics and Jews. *Nostra Aetate* is properly understood in the context of subsequent statements by the Holy See, the Popes, and the conferences of bishops that are working to implement it. Official Vatican documents such as the *Guidelines* (1974), the *Notes* (1985), *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997), and *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (1998) all follow the lead of *Nostra Aetate*. A passage from *Nostra Aetate* is especially noteworthy here:

J.H. Ehrenkranz (✉)

Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, USA

In our age, when people are drawing more closely together and the bonds of friendship between different peoples are being strengthened, the Church examines with greater care the relation which she has to non-Christian religions. Ever aware of her duty to foster unity and charity among individuals, and even among nations, she reflects at the outset on what people have in common and what tends to promote unity among them . . . Indeed, the Church reproves every form of persecution against whomsoever it may be directed. Remembering, then, her common heritage with the Jews and moved not by any political consideration, but solely by the religious motivation of Christian charity, she deplors all hatreds persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism leveled at any time or from any source against the Jews (*Nostra Aetate*, 1965, p. 4).

Wrestling with these new ideas has led to a growing mutual respect and trust between Christians and Jews and a posture of dialogue has developed where Jews and Christians allow each other to define themselves. Meetings that were formerly adversarial and exercises in apologetics are now genuine encounters of people seeking greater understanding and truth. One follow-up document to *Nostra Aetate* noted above, the 1974 *Guidelines*, published by the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, presents authentic dialogue as a process where each participant (a) genuinely wishes to know the other; (b) respects the other as the other is; (c) respects the other's faith and the other's religious convictions; and (d) respects the other's legitimate claim to religious liberty.

As we stand at the edge of hope and possibility through dialogue, we are confronted with the fact that those of us who live in wealthy countries and have the luxury of dialogue are permitting and even contributing in morally significant ways to hunger, poverty, disease, wars, ethnic cleansings, economic oppression, pollution, unrestrained consumption of resources, and violent cultural clashes. Yet, we cannot stand back and watch in helpless frustration or remove ourselves from the stream of life and wallow in cynicism. We must do something. Fortunately, Jews and Christians all around the United States regularly meet to discuss educational and moral values, and work together to aid the poor, hungry, and homeless, as well as those in need of health care, immigration assistance, and protection from unlawful elements in the community.

Acting on the local level is admirable and required, but the task of religious educators is to discern the moral meaning of such praxis, events, and history, and seek a methodology or models to serve the larger community. As such, interreligious dialogue and education is a developing theory-in-practice and practice-in-theory. For example, one project that we undertook for interreligious dialogue and education suggested categories and methodologies originally assumed to be broad and inclusive for study and discussion. However, after sponsoring five international conferences over a 4-year span on the general theme, "What Do We Want the Other to Teach About Us?" all such assumptions were rightly challenged by the participants as being skewed on the side of western Christianity (Coppola, 2006). The result is that what we propose here is a tentative theoretical framework which is intended to be descriptive theory, not a prescriptive one.

There are undoubtedly many other ways to understand participating in interreligious dialogue and education to arrive at a theoretical framework that is meaningful

for our time. Our reflections are based on persistent conversations and testing our assumptions with our colleagues and friends. The religious leaders, educators, and scholars with whom we have shared our lives illustrate several philosophical convictions that are rooted in moral and religious beliefs and have profound implications for the religious education process. These religious leaders and scholars are inclusive, open-minded, and yet deeply committed to their religious traditions. That may appear to be contradictory, since one can observe in religious traditions that promote self-disciplined fidelity and commitment to dogma, a propensity toward fundamentalism and self-righteousness on the part of some fervent adherents. Similarly, to outsiders, religious leaders may appear to be inconsistent or insufficiently critical of some of their radical or unorthodox members. To the community members, however, religious leaders and educators are unique and beautiful especially because of their compassion, inclusiveness, and human idiosyncrasies. In short, they have a style. Elias (1989) aptly writes:

The moral person is interesting, imaginative, and distinctive as are works of art. The conventionally pious do-gooder lacks style and is uninteresting. Style refers not only to what is done but also to how it is done. Just as painters and novelists have a distinctive style which presents the beautiful to us, so persons through their moral behavior reveal a distinctive style (p. 190).

We acknowledge that there is a certain amount of self-selection by those who participate in the process of dialogue and interreligious education, and perhaps some may charge that what we pose here are merely illustrations of rare exceptions. Nonetheless, experiences of dialogue with exemplary religious leaders and scholars—especially with Jews, Christians, and Muslims, members of the so-called Abrahamic faiths—has led the authors of this article to posit the following theoretical framework for participation in interreligious dialogue and education. From the dozens of qualities and habits we observed in religious leaders and educators, we are suggesting six philosophical convictions that are strongly rooted in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religious traditions that form a framework for productive interreligious dialogue and education. We will focus primarily on the Jewish and Christian perspectives for this article hoping that recent progress in our two traditions can be a model for dialogue and education for many faiths. As such, an emerging theory is being born from the practice of people of good will and their desire to live together in mutual respect by seeking to: (1) create a safe place for peaceful coexistence and friendship; (2) cultivate community by valuing the dignity of human life; (3) be committed to dialogue and to sharing their religious worldviews; (4) work for the repair of the world (*tikkun olam*) through justice; (5) consistently propose a realistic vision of peace and hope; and (6) be committed to life-long learning in the pursuit of truth and wisdom. We conclude this article with some broad theoretical applications for interreligious dialogue and education based on this framework.

To Create a Safe Place for Peaceful Coexistence and Friendship

It is apparent that all must live together in peaceful coexistence or all will perish. Sadly, the use of atomic and chemical weapons, ethnic cleansings, terrorism, world wars, and genocidal plans implemented by totalitarian regimes reveals the past century to be unmatched in the scope and destruction wrecked by violence. The Nazis, for example, killed 11 million people, 6 million of whom were systematically murdered simply because they were Jewish. Elie Wiesel once commented, “Not all the victims were Jews, but all Jews were victims.” Abraham Heschel (1966) called the *Shoah*: “The altar of Satan on which millions of human lives were exterminated to evil’s greater glory” (p. 117).

We contend that peaceful coexistence is the most important condition for religious education to flourish, which in turn, allows for individuals, families, and communities to grapple with ideas and the values that foster human dignity, the common good, and authentic moral choices. When a nation or community is at peace, the possibility for individuals to live happy and fulfilled lives is made possible because of an environment of security, tolerance, freedom of religion and speech, meaningful work, art, music, dance, drama, leisure, and just law (Ehrenkranz & Coppola, 2000; Coppola, 2004).

A central conviction of the Abrahamic religions is that of promoting ethical living in love of God and neighbor which can result in peace. Such peaceful coexistence requires people of good will to put aside their divisiveness and seek reconciliation and understanding, especially by learning about and teaching respectfully about the other. Religious leaders and educators of good will point to the task at hand as one where we make room in our theologies and traditions for a practical and respectful teaching about and peaceful coexistence with “the other” (Cunningham, 2001). There is no easy or quick solution to healing past hurts and cultivating peace. Every person and religion has inherited stories, traditions and memories that cause them to be cautious and even resistant to ideas of trust and peaceful coexistence. On the other hand, one strength of religion is that people are encouraged to work for peace and equal justice for all.

One way to live in peaceful coexistence is to promote a respectful and healthy tolerance for diversity, pluralism, and equality, especially by studying together and living together in the same neighborhoods with the security to be free and the ability to express one’s opinions responsibly. Peaceful coexistence presumes enough space and freedom for communities to live together. The earth, the land, one’s historical community is the stage upon which the deeds of God are revealed and human action is played out. Similarly, human culture is grown in the soil of peaceful coexistence and in the pursuits of the common good, including the preservation of sacred spaces. Lane is correct in saying that we are driven to ground our religious experience “in the palpable reality of space” (Lane, 1988, p. 3). Without security for one’s life, property, and possessions, fear and violence will grow like thorns obscuring the potential beauty of peace.

Religious educators and leaders have a special opportunity to create space for learning and teaching about the other and finding common ground to do God’s

will together. Participants in interreligious dialogue agree to trust and respect each other enough to entrust each other with their most important stories, experiences, beliefs, mysteries, questions, paradoxes, and uncertainties. Those who have engaged in such shared education attest that as trust and friendships grow through learning and reflection, the benefits have far outweighed the struggles (Greenberg, 2004).

Religious educators also have a special role to play in developing programs and providing resources that promote dialogue. These programs safely gather people together in religious, educational, social, legislative, and cultural concerns, while helping to overcome prejudices and heal past hurts. Educational efforts that promote peaceful coexistence and friendship will necessarily challenge former intolerance and presumed ways of doing things and will help to define and deepen pedagogical and theological categories, especially when considering the context of the theologian or educator in the neighborhood and schools of the other. Religious educators and religious leaders in the content they teach and in the practice of their pedagogy have a privileged responsibility to future generations to create a foundation for peaceful coexistence.

Cultivate Community by Valuing the Dignity of Human Life

A second conviction that many religious leaders and religious educators bring to dialogue is a commitment to cultivate community and to safeguard and celebrate each member's dignity within and without the community. Religious leaders and educators frequently assert the absolute sanctity and dignity of human life due to the bedrock belief that all people are created in God's image (*Tzelem Elohim* or *imago Dei*) found in Genesis 1. When we affirm that humans are created in the image of God, we mean that our essence—our likeness—originates in our ability to create and make the world a better place for all. The Genesis passage continues to affirm that God created both man and woman in the divine image, offering equal responsibility to men and women to be responsible co-creating partners with each other and with God. *Imago Dei* is still the most valuable theological starting point in cultivating communities to partner in dialogue, but this assumption needs to be supported with other beliefs since it is clear that some people now reject it, given their destructive acts as suicide-homicide bombers.

Respecting the value and dignity of human life implies a high esteem for human rights and all religions and cultures have some process by which to teach their highest aspirations and values. One's duties to God necessarily connect with one's responsibilities toward others. God invites believers to love one's neighbor, to act with justice toward others, follow the commandments, and be responsible stewards of creation, among others. Accordingly, all people share God's image and are able to imitate how God acted in the Bible (*imitatio Dei*) by clothing the naked, feeding the poor, visiting the sick, comforting those in sorrow and pain, extending mercy and compassion to those in need, and performing acts of loving kindness (*hesed*). The rabbis of the Talmud, in their discussions of Deuteronomy 13:5 ("After the

Lord your God you shall walk”), also emphasized that we must conduct ourselves in relation to the world as we believe God would do today (*Sages of the Talmud, Tractate Sotah*, 14a).

By its very nature, the process of religious education seeks to cultivate a community of teachers, students, colleagues, and supporters. At the core of religious education—especially interreligious education—is that teaching is a noble vocation that reveres human dignity. We have all been brought to deeper belief, compassion, and ethical insights by our teachers, mentors, and sages. Any pedagogical processes of humiliation and master-servant models are no longer appropriate. Similarly, although Judaism, Christianity, and Islam ultimately assert truth claims that are mutually exclusive, it is not essential that each community expresses such beliefs in triumphal, demeaning, or violent ways. Religious education presumes that students are of greatest value and the content, covenant, and moral lessons learned are what make for a meaningful religious and social life.

The dignity of human life also implies a conscious effort to secure a place for individuals to live in community protected by just laws and ethical leaders. At the heart of law, and the religious values contained in the practice of law, is that community is a place where all are made in God’s image and have the right and responsibility to live virtuous and religious lives. Law helps to safeguard what DePree (1989) describes as “the sacred nature of relationships” (p. 51). Those who engage in interreligious dialogue and religious education have the intention to cultivate meaningful relationships that create strong communal and institutional identity in covenants. Integrity and honesty form a basis for virtuous living where people can trust each other and reach beyond self-interest to engage in communal pursuits.

The fact that religious education is a consciously communal activity may also be a most significant contribution to the theory construction of interreligious dialogue and education. In other words, although the process of interreligious dialogue draws on philosophical and spiritual underpinnings, it is expressed primarily in relationships with others thereby making it a way of life as well as a pedagogical process. A vital endeavor tied to meaningful and committed relationships, religious education cultivates community by celebrating human dignity.

Commitment to Dialogue and to Sharing a Religious Worldview

A third value that religious leaders and religious educators consistently model is a commitment to dialogue and to sharing their religious worldviews. Perhaps the latter seems self-evident; however, it is not a requirement of religions to ask members to dialogue and share their religious worldview with those of other religions. It is unclear why people take the risk to enter into dialogue. But commitment to dialogue is evidenced when participants make time for this holy work in their very demanding schedules. When they gather, they seek to be present to the moment and focused on the person or people they are speaking with. Remi Hoekman (2006) centers dialogue in the communicating nature of God:

God is a relating God indeed, and I believe that this is what He wants us to be too: relating people, people of dialogue with Him and with one another A dialogue can only and truly take place between persons of informed faith, between people who know their religious tradition, are nourished by it, feel secure in it, and who, therefore, are able to respect the faith tradition, and the faith experience, of the other (p. 4).

The kind of dialogue that we think is most fruitful is where the participants are freely invited into dialogue to learn about the other in a safe, respectful, and trusting way. Debate, argument, and intellectual competitiveness are not helpful motives for dialogue. The primary motive is to learn, knowing that one's dialogue partner is a son or daughter of God seeking also to learn more of God's ways. The people engaged in dialogue are expected to speak the truth as best as they know it with appropriate sensitivities without over-simplifying fundamental beliefs. This is the highest form of respect: to share one's beliefs with another in a way that "proposes" truth rather than "imposes" it (John Paul II, 1993, n. 12, 35, 91, 110). The shared blessing that arises out of dialogue is that each understands himself or herself in a deeper and richer way by understanding and teaching about the other. Diverse insights and traditions assist each partner in dialogue to clarify his or her own understandings and also help to clarify the others without demonizing or persecuting the other.

Leonard Swidler's "The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious, Inter-ideological Dialogue" offers an excellent description of appropriate expectations for those who wish to be engaged in dialogue. His ideas are summarized briefly here:

First Commandment: The primary purpose of dialogue is to learn, that is, to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality, and then to act accordingly.

Second Commandment: Interreligious, inter-ideological dialogue must be a two-sided project—within each religious or ideological community and between religious or ideological communities.

Third Commandment: Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity. Conversely—each participant must assume a similar complete honesty and sincerity in the other partners.

Fourth Commandment: In interreligious, inter-ideological dialogue we must not compare our ideals with our partner's practice, but rather our ideals with our partner's ideals, our practice with our partner's practice.

Fifth Commandment: Each participant must define himself. Conversely—the one interpreted must be able to recognize herself in the interpretation.

Sixth Commandment: Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-and-fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are.

Seventh Commandment: Dialogue can take place only between equals, or *par cum pari* as Vatican II put it.

Eighth Commandment: Dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust.

Ninth Commandment: Persons entering into interreligious, inter-ideological dialogue must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious or ideological traditions.

Tenth Commandment: Each participant eventually must attempt to experience the partner's religion or ideology "from within"; for a religion or ideology is not merely something of the head, but also of the spirit, heart, and "whole being," individual and communal (Swidler, 1984).

To share one's religious and spiritual worldview with others requires trust and humility. A set of deep commitments, traditions, history, and culture are brought to the dialogue table by the participants. Religious educators and theologians engaged in interreligious dialogue must begin with those individuals choosing to be present, seeking to foster trust and mutual respect with them first. This is a process that cannot be hurried or manipulated and as such, all religious, philosophical and theoretical discourse will be grounded in the process and complexity of building human relationships. Only after listening to the other's lived experiences and commitments, can participants realistically discuss meanings of religion and theology.

By its very nature, religion is a journey of belief and praxis, that is, there are values and beliefs that have a significant impact or consequence in daily life. Humans have an amazing opportunity to communicate with others, including those of different faith traditions, to discover the wisdom of each tradition as well as the revelation found in all noble religions. All communication is now world communication implying that every person is our neighbor. Religious educators are poised at this point in history to educate the whole person while also utilizing technology to communicate a world curriculum that promotes religious and spiritual learning and engages students in the pursuit of goodness, truth, beauty, and peace. Such an effort will be successful by those who lead by an example of selfless service, not by mandates or clever marketing. Religious educators of each faith tradition need to develop together appropriate theological, philosophical, humanistic, and political ethics that advance the common good in ways that do not exclude other traditions and at the same time maintain the distinctiveness of their own.

Work for the Repair of the World (*Tikkun Olam*) Through Justice

A fourth value that religious leaders and religious educators exhibit is a commitment to work to repair the world through justice. Often the reason why religious leaders and educators initially gather before any kind of dialogue or interreligious education takes place, is to stand together for some just cause or support each other in times of crisis or loss. Perhaps this section should be proposed first in this theory construction, since it seems to be a catalyst for a great deal of dialogue. Yet it makes sense both as a start as well as a developmental learning goal for religious education and civic responsibility.

Clearly, all is not well with the world or with the universe. One may recall that the passages in Genesis 1 describe creation as “good.” At the same time, we know that there has been a deep rupture with God in the universe and with the world that needs to be repaired (*tikkun olam*). Hints of this rupture have been evidenced again and again in humanity’s cruelty and violence throughout history. The possibility of repairing the world through acts of kindness and charity is open to all God’s creatures and comes as a gift from God. Because of the freedom God has given us and also placed into the world, we do not know the outcome of such efforts. It is our calling to serve God and to be co-creators and as such become more human as God intends. Religious educators must also cultivate an environment of freedom that is open to the inspiration of the young as well as the power of tradition.

The cries of the weak, poor, widow, orphan, and stranger cannot go unheeded by religious people. Religious educators can call communities to reach within and beyond themselves to challenge injustices and form bonds and interconnections based on the earlier observed principle, *imago Dei*. Religious people have a responsibility to repair the world and leave it better when they leave. By working together to contribute to the common good, religious leaders and educators can help to shape public policy and contribute to the ethical consensus of society by promoting equitable access to political, cultural, economic, medical, and educational goods.

Repairing the world is often focused on social justice concerns, but the way of life such a principle encourages is also a deep and abiding commitment to improving the quality and meaning of life. The art and profession of teaching and mentoring, as well as the practice of law or medicine or ministry, are all ways to repair the world. Similarly, writing is an ethical action inasmuch as careful thought written down to benefit others is holy work and helps to repair the world as is any expression intended to bring hope such as art, music, poetry, prayer, and even politics. Those religious educators and leaders who participate in meaningful dialogue are open to assisting in the repairing of the world, while at the same time recognize their limitations and dependence upon God.

Consistently Propose a Realistic Vision of Peace and Hope

Religious leaders and religious educators consistently propose a vision of peace and hope. A central teaching of most religions is that faith in God and love of neighbor will bring people closer to live together in peace. Regrettably, there are far too many examples in history of religious people and religious groups that initiated, acquiesced, or ignored violence committed in the name of God. In our time, peaceful coexistence seems more difficult than ever, in part due to the resistance and obstruction by some who claim to be faithful religious adherents. However, the capacity to offer ethical and humane solutions and to work through divisions and past transgressions to promote peace for the greater good is also a forte of religious

leaders and educators. Both Judaism and Christianity value the telling of history as a fundamental religious and civic responsibility to pass on the community's memory within a moral framework. Great leaders and educators present their historical memory in a truthful light. Teaching genuine faith and living accordingly is the best assurance of peaceful, mutual relations between people. Religions have the ability to unite people and live out in their daily lives the commandment, "Thou shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13).

Religious leaders and educators who consistently propose a realistic vision of peace and hope are able to articulate fundamental human values about the importance of individuals and the community in fostering religious education and can inspire others by modeling commitment and enthusiasm to those values. They consistently teach and preach that when one acts violently, one fails to reverence God's gift of life. They also invite participation and empower followers to be leaders in a vision that includes personal and communal goals that translate into positive and reasonable expectations for living in a diverse and pluralistic world. Interestingly, actions to advance equality and the common good—even when some religious structures may seem to impede equality—are understood to be expected paradoxes of any belief system, especially concerning peace and self-defense. As examples, "They will beat their swords into plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3) versus "Beat your plowshares into swords" (Joel 3:10) or the well-known passage from Ecclesiastes 3 where there is a season and time for everything: "A time for killing, a time for healing; A time for tearing down, a time for building up . . . A time for war, a time for peace."

Religious educators and leaders can offer a word of hope that confirms that peaceful coexistence is not naïve but is a promise of God that can be achieved with careful planning, and a concerted prayerful commitment to speaking and teaching truth, promoting just laws, and teaching ethical values. The oral Torah, (*Mishna Pirkei Avot-Ethics of the Fathers*, from the third century CE, affirms this vision:

Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel said: On three things the world is sustained: on truth, on judgment, and on peace, as it is it says (Zechariah 8:16): "Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace" (1:18).

Many excellent groups are working to bring peace through justice and education by sharing in common pursuits. One such effort is the Global Ethic Foundation begun in Tubingen, Germany, which was stirred by Hans Kung's 1990 book, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*. The Global Ethic Foundation fosters inter-cultural and interreligious research, education and encounter through its programs and publications. Kung (2002) describes the task appropriately: "No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions. No dialogue between the religions without global ethical standards. No survival of our globe without a global ethic."

Commitment to Life-Long Learning in the Pursuit of Truth and Wisdom

It is part and parcel of the religious journey for individuals to seek truth and meaning in their lives which often leads them to seek security and community with others of similar beliefs and convictions. No individual or one group has all truth and all wisdom. People have made decisions throughout history for significant and intelligent reasons that were different from one's own choices, and these are worth learning about inasmuch as they will shed light and insight into one's own tradition. The integration and application of knowledge and truth can lead one to a humble recognition that many in the world are intelligent, morally sensitive, and want to do things right and good. In short, we all have things to learn from others. Interreligious dialogue and by extension, interreligious education, reaches to the heart of the questions of human existence, and can lead one to greater moral responsibility including a deeper commitment to the ongoing quest for truth.

We have observed that leaders and scholars in interreligious dialogue and education are able to draw out deep moral meaning from history, texts, and current events. They are life-long learners and are eager to share the insights of their own faith as well as listen with genuine enthusiasm to the insights of colleagues of other religious traditions. Happily, the practice of interreligious dialogue often provides opportunities or dilemmas to heighten a person's intellectual and moral insights. Often, conversations of an interreligious or theological nature are directly connected with the autobiographical experiences of the participants, making the exchange of learning one that includes also building up of trust and friendship. The subtexts of respect and rights are expressed in mutual trust, cooperation, and profound care for ideas and people.

On the surface, one may be tempted to think that the pursuit of truth and wisdom are quite similar for both traditions. We believe that the emphasis of each tradition is striking, and when studied together, makes for a rich understanding of the meaning and purposes of life in the context of an ethical journey. Since religious education is *per se* concerned with learning and seeking truth, this section will be explored in more depth.

For the Jewish tradition learning is a *mitzvah*, a duty, a command to learn and follow the Law. Every morning, Jews are called to study as a way to reaffirm their faithfulness to the covenant with God. In this way, Jews remember to seek wisdom in all situations and align their lives accordingly. Jewish sensibilities and stances toward the communal study of Torah and seeking of wisdom tend to be active, often characterized by open debate and wrestling with texts and others. Two examples follow:

Blessed are thou, Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and commanded us to study the Torah. Lord our G-d, make the words of thy Torah pleasant in our mouth and in the mouth of thy people, the house of Israel, so that we and our descendants of thy people, the house of Israel, may know thy name and study the Torah for its own sake. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who teaches the Torah to thy people Israel (*Talmud Berakhoth* 11a; 60b).

These are the things for which no limit is prescribed: the corner of the field, the first-fruits, the pilgrimage offerings, the practice of kindness, and the study of Torah. These are the things of which a man [*sic*] enjoys the fruits of this world, while the principle remains for him in the hereafter, namely: honoring father and mother, practice of kindness, early attendance at the schoolhouse morning and evening, hospitality to strangers, visiting the sick, dowering the bride, attending the dead to the grave, devotion in prayer, and making peace between others; but the study of the Torah excels them all (*Mishnah Peah* 1:1; *Talmud Shabbath* 127a).

Clearly, the study of Torah is most highly esteemed as a sure path to wisdom. At the same time, we draw again from Chapter One of the *Pirkei Avot-Ethics of the Fathers*, which is recited on the Sabbaths between *Pesach* and *Rosh Hashanah*, and which reveals the healthy tension in seeking wisdom and doing good deeds. Three examples follow:

Shimon the Righteous was among the last surviving members of the Great Assembly. He would say: The world stands on three things: Torah, the service of G-d, and deeds of loving kindness (n. 2).

Shammai would say: Make your Torah study a permanent fixture of your life. Say little and do much. And receive every man with a pleasant countenance (n. 15).

His son, Shimon, would say: All my life I have been raised among the wise, and I have found nothing better for the body than silence. The essential thing is not study, but deed. And one who speaks excessively brings on sin (n. 17).

For the Christian tradition, learning is a process of deepening one's relationship with Jesus, the Master Teacher (rabbi) and ultimate Law-giver. Every day is an invitation to holiness by growing in love and knowledge of Jesus and the church: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thes. 5:16–18).

Christian learning and prayer has been strongly influenced by Hellenization and has developed a tradition of integrating and balancing faith and reason. The influence of philosophy and the resultant theological dogmas play strong roles in contextualizing and articulating spiritual and intellectual truths. Christian sensibilities and stances toward the communal study of the Christian Scriptures or spiritual writers tends to be more reflective and passive than the Jewish tradition and is characterized more by venerating texts and plumbing their hidden truths, focusing on intellectual distinctions, and interacting in measured and often reserved discussions, usually based on traditional philosophical or theological principles.

One well-known example of the influence of Greek thought in the Christian Scriptures is from the "Prologue" of John's Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it . . . (John 1).

One should note, however, that akin to the Jewish tradition, the Christian also must integrate appropriately his or her study of philosophy and theology with good deeds. Two examples follow:

You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father (Matthew 5:13–16).

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Indeed someone might say, “You have faith and I have works.” Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works (James 2: 14–18).

In our years of participating in dialogue, we have observed also that Jewish education has a tendency to engage the physical world and healing its ills through deeds of justice as noted above (*tikkun olam*), as well as a focus on the importance of the family, law, and local community in education. Christianity often has a propensity to engage the metaphysical and focus on the family as part of the larger community and each person’s responsibility to evangelize and work for peace and justice. We contend that interreligious education should provide opportunities to cultivate deep learning in truth and wisdom-seeking. Therefore, religious educators in an interreligious setting would do best to provide opportunities for rich spiritual and theological study, while also providing opportunities for joint action in helping the poor, widow, stranger, and orphan. Further, the immeasurable fruits of joint study trips, retreats, and pilgrimages create space for learning and trust. In these and other ways, our practice will lead us to holiness, as our study will lead us to wisdom.

Implications for Religious Educators

The bishops of the Catholic Church in Vatican II wrote that “the ties which unite the faithful together are stronger than those which separate them: let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is doubtful, and charity in everything” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, par. 92). Although this exhortation to participate in ecumenism and social justice may still be far from realized (Elias, 1994; Fiorenza, 2007; Freire, 1970, 1973; Gutierrez, 1973; Hayes, 1996; Holland & Henriot, 1983), there is much that we can do together. We suggest that religious educators actively highlight those things that unite us, such as aspects of our spiritual and moral traditions so that our partnership for the common good and peaceful coexistence may be more nearly realized. Drawing on the six philosophical convictions of religious leaders and religious educators that we have suggested above, we now offer some broad theoretical applications and a concluding practical example for interreligious dialogue and education based on this framework.

First, the obvious place to begin is close to home. Religious educators can create a safe place for peaceful coexistence and friendship both in their classrooms and in

the community. Effective religious educators are leaders and teachers in a dialogic relationship with their communities by preserving, developing, and passing on their traditions. Pedagogy that models deep respect for students, learning, commitments, friendship, community, and honesty imbues in students the knowledge, skills, strategies, sensibilities, and manner for respectful dialogue. Intra-religious dialogue and education should come before interreligious dialogue so that dialogue partners can share a mature depth and insight of their own tradition in relationships with the other. Mutual respect and security is then best fostered by understanding the other in the context of his or her community and commitments.

Each religious community has its own valid and unique religious character and communal organization that results in asymmetry. Despite worthwhile efforts on the part of international meetings and leading scholars to arrive at authentic truth-sharing and teaching pedagogy, interreligious education is most productive on the local level with active involvement of the believing participants who are living, working, parenting, and as such, teaching members of God's community. Further, there are no comprehensive educational resources that will ever be an adequate substitute for human interaction and dialogue between religious people. Truth is most nearly discovered and shared in the experiences of individuals in their journeys toward holiness and wisdom in dialogic relation with learned theological insights. It is to be expected that whenever people of good will risk wrestling together with profound questions of faith and religious practice that mistakes will be made. Nonetheless, the more one is in the presence of other believers, the more one has the potential to deepen one's own religious beliefs while supporting the beliefs of others.

Second, religious educators can cultivate community by valuing the dignity of human life. As with the first point, the classroom is the place to begin by clearly communicating a profound respect for all people who are made in God's image. This reverence and honor is shared with those in the classroom experience as well as toward those being discussed who may not be present. In this way, religious educators provide an important voice in the moral and cultural discourse of a community and society and have a right and responsibility to help form consciences, shape public values, and contribute to the moral consensus of the citizenry. Teaching is a commitment to the common good and when religious educators teach about the dignity and worth of every human being, they challenge those acts of aggression or violence that might seek to harm others in the name of religion or religious tenets.

Third, religious educators are well-suited to participating in dialogue and sharing their religious worldviews with their students in age-appropriate learning environments. They are in a unique position to promote understanding within their classes as well as participate in forums for dialogue and study in the larger community to advance greater knowledge, understanding, and harmony among people of good will. Religious educators are in an ideal role to advocate for a respect for the dignity of all people, while acknowledging a special relationship between Jews and Christians to further interreligious dialogue and the vision of a friendship and peace rooted in God. On a practical level, religious educators are obvious resources to evaluate textbooks, media, and other teaching materials to ensure they speak respectfully

and accurately of the other and sufficiently depict the complexities of the relationships of the past. Similarly, they are able to critically appraise problematic and harmful texts that are a part of each religious tradition and place them in context of the ongoing relationship between Jews and Christians.

Fourth, religious educators in their teaching and daily living can work for the repair of the world (*tikkun olam*) through justice and education. Numerous issues that formerly divided Jews and Christians have been overcome, so that regular inter-religious meetings have taken on an attitude of cooperative learning and solidarity. People have been able to move beyond the sad history of the past and prepare the ground for friendly relations based upon mutual respect and a common commitment to ethical principles and just law. Religious educators and leaders can look to these examples of positive progress and teach that *tikkun olam* is not a facile slogan or unrealistic ideal, but is a way of life and even more is possible when the local church, synagogue, congregation, or school learn and work together. By reading and teaching about the revelation of God in our own and other faith traditions, religious educators are privileged to participate as God's partners in repairing the world in our time. Of course, people of good will and faith often arrive at different answers when seeking God's revelation and the truth for their lives. Nonetheless, religious educators have an essential role to call the community to responsibility in words and actions, including research and teaching. Such responsibility will help to advance a community of hospitality and wisdom.

Fifth, religious educators can propose a realistic vision of peace and hope, especially in the face of secularism, skepticism, and crisis. There are no ideal dialogue participants, but religious educators have the opportunity and the proclivity to recall the past with a moral memory while also realistically renewing hopes for future associations. A vision of peace and hope must include engaging the difficult questions of religious diversity and religious particularity as part of God's will, since creation is diverse as are humans. A realistic vision of peaceful coexistence will be more nearly realized when respect for diversity and pluralism is seen as a strength, rather than a threat. This also includes the right to religious dissent. The best mark of a great religion is its ability to self-correct in response to God's continued revelation. Through their prophetic, pastoral, and spiritual traditions, Judaism and Christianity are able to renew themselves in every era to find new ways to remain committed to the poor, speak truth to power, engage the culture and world in a way that is open to all sources of wisdom, care for individuals at odds with the community, and remain humble and open to God's inexhaustible mystery. It should be noted here that prayer and liturgy are also powerful experiences of religious education and celebrations of peace and hope, where the entire community may be inspired and sent forth to serve.

Finally, religious educators can be examples of life-long learners in the pursuit of truth, holiness, and wisdom and encourage such habits in others. Continuous learning and teaching can free the mind and body to humbly seek God and imagine a better world. Time, space, and financial support are necessary for religious educators to adequately provide educational resources on all levels especially libraries, online services, and websites. Faculty exchanges as well as scholars-in-residence can be planned on the university level between Christian and Jewish institutions.

Similarly, religious educators can support meaningful continuing education for teachers, catechists, clergy, and lay leaders through lectures, courses, seminars, and visits to religious sites of the other. The time is also mature for people of different religious traditions to participate in joint scripture study. Admittedly, insiders can most genuinely apply scripture passages—especially problematic or violence-ridden ones—to today’s circumstances, but even outsiders can benefit from these profound and classic expressions of faith integrated into the lives of everyday people.

One exemplary program that promotes life-long learning that we respectfully offer here as a model is an annual Institute for seminarians and rabbinical students sponsored for the past 10 years through the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut (www.ccju.org). The participants are provided with books and resources in Christian-Jewish understanding months before they arrive at Sacred Heart University. During their 3-day stay, the Center provides lodging on campus, kosher catering, and reimburses the participants for all travel-related expenses. At the Institute, students hear presentations on issues in Christian-Jewish relations, study sacred texts together, discuss the history between the two faiths, observe each other’s prayer and liturgical traditions, visit houses of worship, and begin dialogues on theological and pastoral concerns important to both faith traditions. The interaction between the seminarians in an educational setting fosters trust, deepened understanding, and strong friendships between the future leaders of Jewish and Christian communities.

After the Institute concludes, the CCJU corresponds with the alumni/ae regularly and sends articles and books of note, suggests self-study resources, and encourages continued collaboration among the participants through its website. The number of alumni/ae from the Institute has now grown to more than 250 which prompted us to begin an annual meeting 3 years ago, called *Colleagues in Dialogue*. At these 3-day meetings, the young religious leaders who are now responsible for parishes and synagogues gather to study, pray, discuss important issues of concern, and plan joint ventures together. These religious leaders and educators are able to reach tens of thousands of people in their congregations through preaching, teaching, and appropriate liturgical celebrations.

This ongoing program is one effort to promote interreligious dialogue, education, and understanding among religious leaders and religious educators. In this way, we hope that we can contribute in a small way to the expansion of a world of increased tolerance, respect, cooperation, and a deeper commitment to the ongoing pursuit for truth, wisdom, justice, and *shalom*.

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Interreligious Dialogue: Ecumenical Engagement in Interfaith Action

Douglas Pratt

Interreligious dialogue has become, since the 1960s, a major activity engaging the Christian Church in many and varied contexts. It has not been without its detractors and opponents, of course; nor has the way been smooth for those who have advocated interfaith détente as an alternate to deprecation and diatribe with respect to the Christian attitude towards other faiths. How did this development come about? What have been the salient features? In this chapter I shall outline some of the background, initial impetus and rationales whereby the Christian Church has engaged in interreligious dialogue. The focus will be on the respective central agencies of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). Particular attention will also be given to the various models of dialogue that have emerged. In and through this comparative study, the contours of an ecumenical Christian stance towards – and so engagement in – interreligious dialogue should emerge.

At the end of the nineteenth century a momentous event in the history of religions occurred: the Parliament of World Religions. Held in Chicago in 1893, it was a gathering of those “who believed in the cooperation of religions and who hoped that their respective insights were convergent” (Braybrooke, 1998, p. 9). It marked a development within the nineteenth century that was to become a defining feature of the twentieth century: the fostering of mutually appreciative interactive relations between religions. This was spurred on by the great World Missionary Conference, held at Edinburgh in 1910, since when a multiplicity of events, organisations and movements aimed at fostering beneficial interfaith relations have blossomed. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, as the ecumenical movement was getting underway, re-appraisals of the traditional missionary stance towards other religions emerged alongside concerns over secularism and materialism (cf. Hallencreutz, 1971). Together these prompted, at least from some quarters, the idea of a common cause for religions in respect to addressing such shared concerns. Alongside unambiguous evangelical proclamation typical of early twentieth-century ecumenical discourse, there were admissions of “spiritual values” in other religions and

D. Pratt (✉)
University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand
e-mail: DPRATT@waikato.ac.nz

calls for cross-religious sharing in the quest for justice and community. A muting of Christian imperialism went hand-in-glove with the emergence of an ecumenical humility. As early as 1912, in the aftermath of Edinburgh 1910, A.E. Garvie (1912) articulated a bold yet cautious and careful approach to other faiths: “To disturb and to destroy the religious beliefs, rites and customs of any people is to make an attack on the sanctuary of the soul” (p. 659).

Although seemingly a modern development, the dialogical option has ever been available and, in fact, has come to the fore from time to time in the history of Christianity. As a *modus operandi* dialogue was advocated and used in the early Church: St Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19:8–10), and at Athens (Acts 17:12), for example. Dialogue had long been a discursive mode within the ancient Greek intellectual world and it has informed Christian intellectual engagement down through the centuries. However, notwithstanding some notable examples of Christian interreligious dialogical approach in the Middle Ages – St Francis in the thirteenth century engaging the Muslim leader Saladin, for instance – by and large Christianity did not take a dialogical stance towards other faiths until well into the twentieth century. The first few decades, as already indicated, displayed some notable openness towards other faiths and their peoples, at least from some quarters of the nascent ecumenical movement. Even as this burgeoning rapprochement was becoming a source of major challenge to all forms of missionary praxis and thinking, a reaction was soon to set in. For as war clouds gathered once again, and a new darkness descended upon Europe then fanned out across the globe, the emerging light of a new dawn in interreligious relations dimmed: resurgent neo-orthodoxy and a reactive Christian exclusivism vied with ecumenical openness and the quest for interreligious détente.

Following the twentieth century’s Second World War, the pressing question of a Christian response to the *Shoah* (destruction) of European Jewry, and of rethinking the relationship of Christianity to Jews and Judaism, both eclipsed (at least initially) and then prefigured (by way of implication) the wider question of the relation of Christianity to other religions and their peoples. At this stage, however, a reactive concern for syncretism and relativism was juxtaposed with the primacy of evangelistic outlook and the priority of affirming the lordship of Christ. This led to the situation that, *vis-à-vis* other religions, exclusivism continued as the dominant paradigm of Christian self-understanding, tempered only by early intimations of inclusivism.¹ With the advent of the 1950s and the emergence onto the global ecumenical scene of Asian Christian leadership, for which people of other faiths and their religions were not so utterly “other”, the inclusivist paradigm became more evident: interactive relationship with other religions was promoted in the context of an ecumenical Christological vision. An inclusive Christocentric theology of religions was enunciated, albeit without implying the outright supplanting of other religions

¹Exclusivism is the paradigm that says, in effect, my religion is the only true religion; everyone else is wrong. Inclusivism is the paradigm that acknowledges some truth and value in other religions, but that nevertheless my religion is the only fully right or wholly true religion. Further, whatever truth or value there is in other religions is in some sense already included in mine, thus in respect to ultimate meaning other religions are effectively subsumed within my religion.

by Christianity. All religions – including Christian – were seen to be subject to the divine transformation; the Christ-event offers a new salvific opportunity for all. Openness to other religions remained premised on this overriding Christocentrism and was accompanied by an allied priority on discharging the missionary imperative. Nevertheless, even though a clear missionary concern remained to the fore, the emergence of wider interreligious interests became unstoppable. Before the close of the 1950s, interreligious dialogue was well underway within the life and work of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and a parallel mood was emerging within the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

Paul Devanandan, a keynote speaker at the 1961 WCC Assembly, affirmed other faiths as manifesting authentic responses to the creative activity of the Holy Spirit: “The only alternative is to confess either the Christian ignorance of God’s ways with people or the Christian blindness in refusing to believe in God’s redemptive work with people of other faiths” (as cited in Thomas, 1987, p. 89). The conjoining of the International Missionary Council with the WCC in 1961 marked a critical juncture for the ecumenical movement, for it reinforced the primacy of evangelical witness: the chief task of ecumenical Christianity, vis-à-vis other religions, was then understood to consist in the witness to the truth of Christianity, not to engage in dialogue *about* religious life and truth. Nevertheless, dialogical interests and activities already underway could not be dismissed; indeed, the pace of dialogical engagement seemed to increase – as did the concerns and resistance of those opposed, or at least sceptical of it. And even as these ecumenical developments were taking place within the orbit of the WCC, the RCC had begun, in its own way, to join in this wider engagement of Christianity with peoples of other faiths.

Following the second Vatican Council (i.e. Vatican II: 1962–1965), the RCC accentuated the notion of the human being as *homo religiosus* on the one hand whilst, on the other, it acknowledged that the “history of religion (was) being interpreted theologically” such that “inter-religious dialogue (became) a discussion of salvation” (Hallencreutz, 1977, p. 20). The decrees and documents of Vatican II – most notably *Nostra Aetate* – that addressed relationships with other religions and the understanding of the place of those religions within a Catholic theological worldview marked the beginning of the Vatican’s commitment to dialogical relationship with people of other faiths. Indeed, the opening up of the RCC to interreligious dialogue took place in the context of the “building of a dialogical church”: the embracing of dialogue as a relational modality of practice was applied not only with respect to interaction with other religions but as part of wide-ranging ecclesial reform and development initiated by Vatican II (Hinze, 2006; Nolan, 2006).

The seminal *Nostra Aetate* (NA) gave succinct focus and clear direction: the former history of exclusivity and rejection was overturned in favour of acceptance and regard of other faiths. Critical recognition of the propensity of other religions to give evidence of the Divine at work within them – albeit in some limited fashion in contrast to that which obtains to Christianity, but nevertheless sufficient for such religions to reflect rays “of that truth which enlightens all” (NA, clause 5) – was forthcoming. The possibility of modalities of salvation obtaining within other, or at least some other, religions was also granted. *Lumen Gentium* (LG), which

preceded *NA*, affirmed that universality whereby all peoples are bound together in and through “the reconciling and in-drawing mission of the Catholic Church” (*LG* cl. 13). A further direct challenge – on the basis of the advocacy of religious liberty – to the previously prevailing ideology of religious exclusivism was given in *Dignitatis Humanae* (*DH*). Catholic thought in respect to other religions was undergoing significant development across a wide front.

Initial concern for a reappraisal of the relation of the Church to the Jews had featured in the thinking of Pope John XXIII who had convened the Second Vatican Council. But it was under the leadership of his successor, Paul VI, that significant innovations were undertaken. His 1964 encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (*ES*), sounded a note of respect for “the moral and spiritual values” of other religions, advocating openness to them “and a willingness for practical dialogical engagement” (*ES*, cl. 107–108). In *ES* dialogue is seen as denoting “a whole new way of thinking, a way of seeing and reflecting on the world and its meaning” (Swidler, 1990, p. xi). As the work of – and in preparation for – engaging in interreligious dialogue got under way, a distinctive propaedeutical task emerged; that of creating the conditions necessary for dialogue properly speaking (cf. Humbertclaude, 1967). Later, for Pope John Paul II, the pre-eminent role of dialogue would be found in creating a greater unity and friendship among Christians and the followers of other religions: dialogue is a *modus vivendi et operandi* that applies to the Church’s relations to the religious other – be that in the ecumenical realm of other Christians or the interreligious realm of other religions per se (cf. Orsuto, 2002). Certainly, dialogue was regarded as necessary in the quest for an improved, more just, free and humane world. This Pontiff was very much an advocate of the dialogues of life and action for whom “dialogue is a matter of acting, an attitude and a spirit which guides one’s conduct” and which involves “concern, respect, and hospitality towards the other” (Gioia, 1997, p. 575). Meanwhile, the ecumenical rationale for interreligious dialogue was articulated in terms of

God’s concern for all: the divine love and salvific purpose is universal; human solidarity and human community, born of the *Imago Dei* motif, constitute a further basis for dialogue, as does the universality of the Christ who died for all and the eschatological expectation of the rule and reign of the Kingdom of God as fully encompassing of human diversity, including religion and culture. (Van der Bent, 1986, p. 46)

The purpose of dialogue was not just a matter of co-existence. A deeper theological relationality between Christians and people of other faiths was being sought: a Christian concern for a theology of religions that would embrace the question of God’s plan for salvation for all – including those of other faiths – in contrast to engaging in dialogue with the intention, in the end, of incorporating the “other” into the Christian fold of faith as the sole efficacious means of obtaining salvation. So, by the late 1960s – and ever since – the global Christian Church, as represented by the WCC and the RCC, had become actively engaged in interreligious dialogue, both separately and, as it turned out increasingly to be the case, co-operatively. Of what did this latter consist?

The Vatican and the WCC: Ecumenical Co-operation

The Vatican and the WCC as equally, yet differently, meta-structures of Christian church life are quite dissimilar in form and ethos; they have different modes of authority and accountability. They each constitute a different sort of dialogical partner from the perspective of putative interlocutors from other religions. Their distinctive structures and forms of governance make for significant differences to their views of Christian interreligious dialogue. The centrality of the Holy See for Catholic engagement means that lines of authority and representation are strongly hierarchised; parameters of engagement are effectively set from the centre – the relative freedom of Orders of Religious to take their own initiatives notwithstanding. There is clear papal teaching and overarching Church policy to follow. Furthermore, unlike other Christian Churches and organisations, the RCC has, at its structural heart, the Vatican State which is engaged in formal diplomatic relations just like any other sovereign state, and so is subject thereby to the necessary demands of, and adjustments to, wider political considerations. By contrast, for the WCC, as an organ of the ecumenical movement, lines of authority and representation are subject to more diffuse bureaucratic processes in the attempt to maintain a complex set of ecclesial relationships in balance.

For the Catholic participant in interreligious dialogue the primary responsibility is to be cognisant of, and in effective submission to, the Magisterium of the Church; indeed, “No matter how fully open they may be to mutual understanding, they must never yield on any point of doctrine” (Sheard, 1987, p. 37). For WCC participants, however, a mixture of fidelity to denominational representative status and empathy to ecumenical emphases and considerations, which may sit in some degree of tension with each other, will prevail. There is no comparable central teaching or policy reference point. There is no ecumenical magisterium. Of course, this could be taken rather positively. Wesley Ariarajah, for instance, considers that “the WCC, with no theology of its own to protect or defend, was free to explore more boldly what it means to confess Jesus Christ in a religiously plural world” (Ariarajah, 2000, p. 173). This may have been the case in terms of workshops and discussions; the fact remains that it has not issued in any clear and authoritative ecumenical theology as such. Indeed, Ariarajah notes that openness to interfaith exploration was more the province of keen and alert individuals rather than the faith communities that make up the WCC as “. . . the churches themselves, by and large, were stuck with the theology that had been handed down in their specific tradition or of a particular interpretation of the Matthew 28 missionary mandate as non-negotiable” (Ariarajah, 2000, p. 172). Such policy and guidelines that have been produced by the WCC have been designed for the benefit of member churches in *their* interreligious engagements – should they be so inclined to make use of them. Whereas the Vatican may issue policy in expectation of compliance, the WCC is not able to do so. Further, it is not possible for all member churches of the WCC to be directly represented at any given WCC-sponsored interfaith event; hence officers of the WCC, necessarily mindful of that, must ensure that outcomes – by way of Statements, Messages and the like – are able to speak to the widest possible constituency. In the absence of

any clear and substantial ecumenical magisterium vis-à-vis interreligious engagement, WCC participants would seem to be at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to RCC participants.

In respect to the practicalities of ecumenical co-working, the Vatican and the WCC have had shared a history of co-operative activity since the 1960s in the area of interreligious affairs. The Roman Catholic Church is not – and in a technical theological sense cannot be – a member of the World Council of Churches. However, the Vatican has maintained close and cordial ecumenical relations with the WCC since the time of the Second Vatican Council: co-operation between them emerged strongly in the aftermath of that event. As early as 1965 a WCC/RCC Joint Working Group was established. Contacts, exchanges of information and invitations to share in each other's events have continued at different levels and across various functions and programmes, not the least of which has been in respect to interreligious dialogue and relations. Even as its own specifically mandated work was evolving, the ecumenical dimension of Christian interreligious dialogue was being experienced, and actively advanced, by the Vatican's Secretariat for Non Christians (SNC). The SNC had been created by Paul VI during the course of Vatican II. By the end of the 1980s its name was changed to "Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue" (PCID).

Throughout the 1970s there was evidence of a "rapid development" of the *aggiornamento* of the RCC, "and the growing interchange of views, on the question of dialogue as on so many others" between the RCC and the WCC (Hallencreutz, 1977, p. 33). In 1976 it was proposed that these two bodies, through their respective designated offices (the Vatican's PCID and the Dialogue Sub-Unit of the WCC), pursue "a process of mutual theological discussion" with a view to exploring

their respective understandings of the nature and scope of dialogue and to look for possible common approaches. Given the asymmetry between the two bodies, and the differences that mark both their understanding and method of dialogue, this must be a priority in developing closer collaboration. (Joint Working Group, 1976)

Thus a decade after the collaboration of the WCC and RCC on the work of engaging other faiths began, three main reasons for this ecumenical co-operation could be discerned: for the sake of the world community; for the sake of the Christian community; and for the sake of common witness to the love of God in Christ. Plans to strengthen this avenue of collaborative relationship were laid: the momentum to attain an even closer and more meaningful degree of co-operative effort was growing. It was a living, ongoing exercise in inter-Christian dialogical relationship where the cultivation of inter-personal friendships played an important role. Although bureaucracies and institutional contexts were recognised as being quite different, close collaborative effort was advanced, especially in respect to addressing pastoral needs and issues arising out of the arena of interreligious dialogical engagement. In 1984 a Catholic observer noted a level of ecumenical theological rapprochement to attitudes of Vatican II which would have been unthinkable even at the outset of collaboration. But by 1986 it was noted that pressure of other work was hampering close co-operative activity (Sperber, 2000, p. 19). Nonetheless, at the time, Pope John Paul II stressed his support for interreligious dialogue and for

ecumenical co-operation in this regard. Joint staff meetings, alternating between Geneva and Rome, were held on an annual basis.

Collaborative studies and other growing ties also signalled a strengthening of ecumenical co-operation in respect to interreligious engagement and issues. By 1988 “the sustained relationship” between the Sub-unit and the Secretariat was affirmed within the WCC “as a model that other programmes should seek to emulate” (Director’s Report, 1988, p. 3). Following reorganisation of the WCC in the early 1990s, the strengthening of the working relationship with the Vatican was placed high on the agenda priorities of the Office on Interreligious Relations (OIRR), which was newly constituted to replace the Dialogue Sub-Unit. Consequently, at the annual joint OIRR and PCID meeting in 1992, it was decided to undertake a combined study-exercise on two issues: interreligious prayer (Ucko, 1995) and interreligious marriage. The details of such co-operative engagements need not detain us; the important fact is that this ecumenical co-operation has been both evident and significant. Indeed, for the sake of an authentic ecumenicity in respect of Christian involvement in interfaith engagement, it is to be hoped that such co-operation will long continue. But the ecumenical dimension is not only a function of modalities of co-operation: in respect to the reasons whereby the Vatican and the WCC have become engaged in the interreligious dialogical enterprise there has also been an impressive complementarity, to which we now turn.

Rationales for Dialogue: Ecumenical Complementarity

Throughout the process of the development of interreligious dialogue, key basic theological rationales and endorsements have emerged and have been expressed as part of the overall apologia for dialogue. There are six in respect to the perspective of the WCC and ten – in two broad groups, viz., five of a somewhat general nature, and five more specifically doctrinal – with respect to the RCC. I would not wish to claim this is an exhaustive listing; only that these seem to stand out both in their own right and as illustrative of wider trends. And, of course, these trends are often intermingled in terms of their expression in official documents and allied pronouncements. In respect to the WCC, I identify the quest for community, the universality of God as Creator, the inclusive love of God, salvific universality in and through Christ, the motif of service, and responding to plurality as leading motifs of the ecumenical rationale for interreligious dialogue and interfaith engagement.

Quest for Community

The quest for community, in both localised and global senses, was an early reason offered in support of Christian engagement in interreligious dialogue; one which interlinked the dialogical modality to both other religions and ideologies, as well as connecting the dialogical dimension to other agenda elements of the overall work of the WCC. A necessary link between the Christian community and other faith

communities was clearly given in the promotion of “dialogue in community”. The statement of theological basis of faith in the Triune God, who calls Christians to human relationship with their many neighbours, adds weight to this quest and so the rationale for dialogue. This relationship is marked by listening and speaking: in both attending to the other, and also bearing witness to self, are dialogue and proclamation properly and in a balanced way equally involved (cf. *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies*, 1979).

Universal Creator

The motif of the One Creator responsible for the creation in all its fullness and diversity can also be said to be a consistently advanced element of theological rationale for dialogue: all are equally creatures of the same Creator. Wesley Ariarajah, in articulating a WCC perspective, once outlined “a potential framework for the development of a theology of and for dialogue” in which the motifs of God as Creator and Sustainer were to the fore (Ariarajah, 1990). On the one hand, “the whole of human life subsists in God’s being”; on the other, “the destiny of all is also in God”: both are crucial theological motifs. The assertion that “God as creator of all is present and active in the plurality of religions” is understood to lead inexorably to the inconceivability “that God’s saving activity could be confined to any one continent, cultural type, or groups of peoples” (Ariarajah). The singularity of creation and the salvific universality of the Creator are drawn upon, implicitly at least, as part of the supporting rationale for interreligious dialogue.

The Inclusive Love of God

The ecumenical rationale for interreligious dialogue has been often articulated in terms of the idea of the encompassing love of God (*My Neighbour’s Faith*, 1987). It is a logical corollary of the Creator motif, yet the two are not identical. As Van der Bent (1986) remarked, this impetus and rationale for interreligious dialogue is very much an expression of “God’s concern for all: the divine love and salvific purpose is universal” (p. 46). This love is of universal scope; all are included. It comprises the greatest challenge to Christian praxis for, in terms of applied values, even that which is deemed “enemy” is subject to the commandment to “love neighbour”.

Salvific Universality in and Through Christ

The purpose of dialogue is not just a matter of co-existence. A deeper theological relationality between Christians and people of other faiths has been sought: a Christian concern for a theology of religions that would embrace the question of God’s plan for salvation for all – including those of other faiths – in contrast to engaging in dialogue with the intention, in the end, of simply incorporating the

“other” into the fold of Christian faith as the sole efficacious means of obtaining salvation. In this regard, “the universality of the Christ who died for all”, together with “the eschatological expectation of the rule and reign of the Kingdom of God as fully encompassing of human diversity, including religion and culture” yields a further basis for interreligious dialogue (Van der Bent, 1986, p. 46).

Diaconal Imperative

Following the 1991 Assembly of the WCC there was a distinct shift in the rationale for interreligious dialogical work: the fostering of relations took precedence over critical theological reflection and even dialogical engagement (although these did continue). A focus on pragmatic benefits, especially in respect to situations of conflict, came very much to the fore. The Central Committee asserted the role of the Church in seeking resolution to situations of conflict by way of recourse to interreligious dialogue, especially when such conflicts possess inter-confessional or interreligious dimensions (Kinnamon, 1991). The effect of this was deeply felt by the OIRR: interreligious dialogue was seen as a tool to be applied to the goal of conflict-resolution and peace-making. The lead rationale for engagement in interreligious dialogue had become, in essence, diaconal: dialogue is in the service of a greater end – whether in terms of community or in the cause of evangelical mission. The former, more pragmatic, arena of service was given graphic exemplification by a 1994 interreligious team visit to Fiji, organised through the OIRR (Ucko, 1994). Apart from the specific outcomes achieved, it was observed that the success of such a visit, “comprised of people of different faiths, travelling and working together, having the same objective in mind as a common agenda”, could well provide a model of interreligious co-operative work for the future (*From Canberra to Harare: OIRR Report*, 1997, p. 6). The promotion of better inter-communal relations as a fundamental rationale for dialogue is here exemplified: the diaconal motive of dialogue concretely enacted.

Responding to Plurality

It is quite clear that the context of religious plurality, and with that the issue of religious pluralism as a paradigm for comprehending and dealing with diversity, has been a longstanding component in the overall rationale for dialogue even as it is also a continuing issue within, and as a consequence of, dialogue (Ucko, 2005). In a 2003 report, the WCC Moderator noted two contemporary general features of religion: that in respect to the relationship between religion and politics, religion continues to be both a “transforming and destabilizing force”; and that the very plurality of religion is viewed as “a source of fear and hope” (*Report of the Moderator*, 2003, p. 1). Syncretism, fundamentalism and pluralism were identified as key issues seen to lie behind and within the many contexts of contemporary social difficulties. Yet the Moderator was clear in his assertion that the “ecumenical vision embraces

the whole of humanity, including other religions”, and he reiterated the commitment of the WCC “to foster dialogue and cooperation with people of other faiths in order to build viable human communities” (p. 2). The broader context of, and rationale for, interreligious dialogical engagement is, at least in part, one of the maintenance and promotion of human community in a context of increasingly polarised religious plurality. And in that regard the Moderator was unequivocal in asserting the ecumenical priority of dialogue with other religions. Religious plurality – or the context of multi-faith diversity as the now virtually normative *sitz-im-leben* of contemporary Christianity – continues as a principal element justifying the interreligious dialogical imperative by way of responding appropriately to that plurality.

In respect to the advocacy of interreligious dialogue with regards to the RCC, the first five more general theological elements include advocacy of societal good; the quest for community; the religious impulse for deity; theological anthropology; and the implication of belief in God as Creator.

The Pursuit of Social Good

For Paul VI, a key theological motive for dialogue was the fact of the divine love towards humanity (*ES*; *EN*). This was given succinct expression on the occasion of a visit to India in 1964 (Gioia, 1997, pp. 125–128). From the inception of the apostolate of interreligious dialogue its fundamental purpose was advocated in terms of the social good of humanity. The corollary requirement was that of mutual learning, and an intentional interfaith engagement, at many levels. In turn, this was understood to issue in pragmatic action in respect to fundamental purpose: thus interreligious dialogue, at the very least, serves the cause of social justice and healthy community relations.

Quest for Human Community

For John Paul II, dialogue was regarded as the modality par excellence for engaging in the quest for improved human community: the engendering of mutual respect; the tackling together of common human problems; promoting the socio-political task of nation-building (*RH*; *Recognize the Spiritual Bonds*, 1994). Dialogue neither supplants mission nor promotes any notion of pluralist relativism. Instead, in recognizing truths and virtues of or within other religions, a platform could be established which enables the Christian and the person of another faith to advance together towards the true, the beautiful and the good – indeed, towards God (Humbertclaude, 1969). Pope John Paul II advocated “a truly dialogical relationship where both sides give and both receive”; where the “beliefs and the moral values of the followers of other religions can and should challenge Christians to respond more fully and generously to the demands of their own Christian faith” (*Recognize the Spiritual Bonds*, 1994, p. 14). It is in the special events of the prayer for world peace at Assisi in 1986, for example, that this rationale is clearly enacted: by papal invitation, a gathering

together of religious leaders in order, not to pray together, but rather together, each in the full integrity of their own religious praxis, to pray for the cause of world peace and, *inter alia*, promote harmonious interfaith and so inter-communal relations.

Human Seeking for the Divine

The new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, issued in 1992, gave a broad rationale for interreligious dialogue premised on notions of the innate human hunger for relationship with the Divine: the universality and commonality of the inherent human quest found within the variety of religions throughout history. Religions which embody such a quest for and awareness of God are to be recognized by the Church. This wider theological rationale is found also in the 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (VS) which refers to the motif of the “Seed of the Word” together with a universal “moral sense” as being present within the diversity of human cultures and religions found throughout the entire world, so undergirding the authenticity of the innate human quest for the Divine. This also allows for a measure of validity and veracity appropriately attributable to the non-Christian religions, and so provides a further basis on which to pursue dialogue.

Theological Anthropology

Pope John Paul II often situated interreligious dialogue within the context of the relation between humanity and God. Being open to the other in dialogue is a modality of being open to the God who is present in, with and through the other. This anthropological rationale, which is given expression within a number of documents of Vatican II, and subsequently in papal teaching and other curial documents, means that each person “grows by encountering and sharing with others” whereby seeking after truth “is better attained, understood, and lived through encounter, and by it even one’s own faith can be purified and deepened” (Zago, 1984, p. 267). Together with being underscored by the theological anthropology of the likes of Karl Rahner, the anthropological foundations of interreligious dialogue in respect to the deepening and enriching of faith, together with the humanising and improving elements of social interaction, also play a key part (Jukko, 2007). Indeed, theological anthropology emerges as central in many of the documents produced by the Vatican’s dicastery on dialogue.

Universal Creator

The affirmation of the unity of the human race as a creation of God is another oft-repeated theological rationale for dialogue. Most typically, it is accompanied by the specifically Christocentric and exclusive affirmation that it is only in and through Christ that the fullness of the religious life can be found. Yet there is also an inclusive dimension: all of humanity shares a common divine origin and eschatological

orientation (Arinze, 1987). Either way, however, it is the implication of belief in the universality of the redeeming Creator that can be said to be a distinctive theological rationale for dialogue. This rationale is held in common with the WCC, of course.

The above five elements are, arguably, directly complementary to the central themes identified in respect to the WCC. However, they are augmented by five other reasons for engaging in interreligious dialogue, which are more directly or specifically of a doctrinal nature, namely the Trinity, salvific ecclesiology, ecclesial imperatives, a pneumatological implicate and a soteriological imperative. Thus the rationale for dialogical engagement with other faiths is further underpinned and extended from the RCC perspective. And these rationales contribute also to a deepening of the wider overall ecumenical Christian approach to interreligious dialogue and interfaith engagement.

Trinitarian Belief

The seminal 1984 document, *The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions* (ACTFOR) was a major source of reflection on dialogue and mission (Gioia, 1997, pp. 566–579). The principal reason to engage in interreligious dialogue is because of belief in God as Trinity: the universality and encompassing pervasiveness of the love of God the Father; the enlightening Word and Wisdom given in and through God the Son; and the regenerative life-giving Spirit that “acts in the depth of people’s consciences and accompanies them on the secret path of hearts toward the truth” (ACTFOR, cl. 24). The “other” is not utterly other; the alterity of the other is also a theological point of connection. Dialogue is regarded as a genuine give-and-take of insight and understanding, and at the same time regarded as the opportunity for the Christian to offer to the other the opportunity of engaging with the Gospel and the values it represents.

Salvific Ecclesiology

Pope John Paul II was clear in his enunciation of *sine Ecclesia* (without the Church) there can be no salvation. Although somewhat softer than the earlier “outside the Church” (*extra Ecclesiam*) dogma, *sine Ecclesia* nevertheless continues to maintain a necessary link between salvation and the life of the Church per se: belonging to the Church, however implicitly or even mysteriously, remains as an essential condition for salvation in Catholic understanding. But ecclesial “catholicity” arguably refers to the universality of the body of Christ as such rather than to any denominational or institutional particularity. Nevertheless, it is the view of the RCC that *it* most fully represents and manifests the Universal Church, the Body of Christ. The Church is regarded as the universal sacrament of salvation through which the kingdom of God is made present. The Church is not to be identified with this Kingdom, ontologically; rather the Church is spoken of as “a pilgrim community, ever moving into the fullness of divine truth” (DP cl. 37). Thus dialogue with the “other” and salvific Christian proclamation to the other are meant to co-exist without confusion or mutual detraction in the context of a salvific ecclesiology.

Ecclesial Imperatives

Distinctive ecclesiological reasons for engaging in dialogue have also been advanced by the RCC, in particular with regards to the situation of a minority Christian community set within a majority non-Christian religious environment; and also with respect to the demands and challenges of appropriate inculturation (Jukko, 2007). It is the Church which is itself “the sacrament of salvation, the sacrament of the Kingdom of God”; although, because the action of God “is not bound to the sacraments”, it is possible that “the grace of the Kingdom can be found outside the visible Church”: the Kingdom of God “is wider than the boundaries of the visible Church” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 119). Thus the Church is the unique focus and vehicle of that universal Divine Reality she serves; at the same time, as this Reality is itself greater than the institutional church, allowance can be made for “the other” to sit, as it were, alongside the Church; for the “other” is likewise included already within the all-encompassing embrace of the Divine Reality.

Pneumatological Implication

A pneumatological dimension to the rationale for dialogue was introduced by the 1990 encyclical *Redemptoris Missio (RM)*. Affirming the ubiquitous efficacy of the Holy Spirit, understood to be at the very heart of being human, this dimension involved respecting the human quest for answers to deep questions together with an affirmation of the universal empowering and motivating action of the Spirit within human existence. This amounted to a deepening of the longstanding inclusivist perspective wherein all of humanity is viewed as subject to the will and work of divine salvific intention mediated through the dominical means of grace: the Church and its sacramental presence within the world. Both are implicates, or outcomes, of the work of the Spirit.

Soteriological Imperative

Finally, Catholic commitment to dialogue may be understood as a practice and a perspective which is “not merely anthropological but primarily theological” in the sense that it is irreducibly soteriological: “God, in an age-long dialogue, has offered and continues to offer salvation to humankind. In faithfulness to the divine initiative, the Church too must enter into a dialogue of salvation with all” (*DP*, cl. 38). John Paul II declared that, with respect to “the economy of salvation, the Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue” (*RM*, cl. 55). These two elements, which are essential to the overall task of mission, are distinct and non-interchangeable, but are symbiotically and necessarily interconnected. Interreligious dialogue “is witness to Christ. It is dialogue of salvation; it is part of the total mission of the Church” (Arinze, 1987, p. 256). Dialogue is not just juxtaposed with proclamation; it serves, in the end, the greater cause of Christian witness. As Hinze remarks, in Catholic teaching, dialogue “is viewed as

distinct from missionary activity and evangelization, but it can pave the way for both” (2006, p. 2).

In this regard, the significant *Dialogue and Proclamation (DP)* document stressed the integral link between the Church’s universal mission and the task of interreligious dialogue: dialogue accompanies mission on account of the soteriological imperative of the gospel. The independence and integrity of dialogue may be reasserted, but the context remains always that of mission. Arguably, interreligious dialogue in official Catholic thought is an element of, not an alternative activity alongside, the Church’s salvific mission. And a significant 1993 theological colloquium, with some participation from the WCC, focused on ecclesiology along with Christology and the theology of religions, having the further aim of highlighting the theology which underpins “the apostolate of interreligious dialogue” (Arinze, 1994, p. 5).

Although the above reasons for engaging in interreligious dialogue are distinctive to Catholic theology, they yield unmistakable evidence of a considerable measure of ecumenical complementarity in respect to the theological underpinnings of dialogue. A 1967 consultation, for instance, which brought the WCC and RCC together around the table of ecumenical discussions on interreligious dialogue per se, was an occasion of both ecclesial and theological complementarity: on the one hand, the RCC in denoting the relation of the Church and other faiths in terms of the distinction of “extraordinary” and “ordinary” ways of salvation; on the other, the WCC in its clear focus on “common humanity” as the determinant for dialogue (Hallencreutz, 1977). *Prima facie* it would seem that the theological work emanating from the Vatican side of ecumenical co-operation echoes and extends the thinking to have come out of the WCC. I suggest that, together and complementarily, they provide something of a wider ecumenical template in respect to interfaith engagement both theoretically and in terms of practice.

From this analysis and discussion of the rationales for interreligious dialogue that have informed the actions of the Christian Church in recent times, we move now to a brief exploration of the models of dialogical engagement which have been employed. Once again, we will see something of a wider ecumenical complementarity at work. It is significant that, at the official level of policy pronouncements and practical guidelines the WCC and the Vatican, if not speaking with one voice exactly, are certainly singing from the same hymn-sheet.

Models of Dialogue: Ecumenical Compatibility

WCC Models

Three models of dialogue can be said to apply to the interreligious activities of the WCC. I identify these as systemic, communitarian and relational. The first – *systemic* dialogue – refers to the notion of dialogue as a discursive interaction between

faith-systems, mediated through the meeting of minds. This is the arena of discussion, enquiry and debate undertaken by representative experts. In some ways it encapsulates the classic understanding of what dialogue is about: an intellectual exercise and quest. Although it was perhaps one of the earlier models employed, it was relatively quickly eschewed by the WCC in favour of the communitarian and relational models on the basis that dialogue is primarily an inter-personal engagement. Indeed, inter-systemic dialogue was dismissed as an abstract arid exercise, effectively the antithesis of genuine dialogue – for this dialogue was understood to be primarily, if not solely, an experience of communal and personal engagement; a meeting of persons of different faiths, set within a context of community interaction. Thus, the second model, *communitarian*, emerged very much in the context of the community-seeking rationale for dialogue: dialogical engagement as a modality of community-building per se; an inter-personal exercise where the agenda was of a social-enhancing nature – the quest for peace, the promotion of harmony, the agitation for justice, the combating of social ills and so on. The third, *relational*, model is enacted where dialogue is promoted on an educational basis, or for broadly educational reasons: mutual enrichment, deepened understanding, combating ignorance and prejudice; together with the aim of building inter-personal relations of goodwill, especially among leadership personnel.

Whilst it is clear that the latter two models have been dominant since the 1970s, with perhaps the communitarian as the predominant one even so, it is arguably the dismissal of the systemic model which has contributed to problems encountered in respect to addressing theological issues that appear, in turn, to have dogged the work of the WCC towards the end of the twentieth century. In the early 1990s this was seen particularly in the severing of theological reflection and engagement from the work of the OIRR which had been charged with the promotion of interreligious relationships independently of related theological work. This approach governed – and arguably hobbled – much of what then occurred. Nevertheless, interreligious dialogue remains a stated priority for the WCC, and it would seem pressing theological questions are again able to be taken up. This has been underscored by the outcomes of the 2006 WCC Assembly. Perhaps there is a new opportunity to recover the systemic model and interweave that quite intentionally into the other two. In so doing, dialogical discourse would play a proper role supportive of, and extending, the wider field of interfaith engagement.

Vatican Models

It was primarily through RCC developments that the now-standard fourfold “LAED” (Life, Action, Experience and Discourse) model for dialogical engagement was articulated. As well, other distinctive models may also be discerned. The RCC, through the Vatican State, engages in formal diplomatic relations. As an official Vatican organisation, the contacts which the PCID has with the world of interfaith communities tend to be at high social and/or governmental level. The dialogue in

which it is engaged is often a dialogue between leaders. At the same time, the task of interreligious dialogue is a work of the Church at large, supported and nurtured by the Vatican, in particular through its interreligious dicastery to which has been given “the apostolate of promoting dialogue with the followers of other religions. . . and contributing to the formation of people who engage in interreligious dialogue” (Arinze, 1993, p. 17). And wherever there is dialogue, there is also proclamation: the mission of salvific announcement forms the default horizon within which, for the most part, dialogical engagements take place. Therefore, three distinct and mutually interactive models of interreligious dialogical engagement may be identified: ambassadorial, propaedeutic and humanitarian. These may also be seen to mark emphases or stages, or denote types, of dialogical engagement.

In the first place can be found *ambassadorial* dialogue for, as noted, the Vatican is itself a sovereign state with all the diplomatic responsibilities and relationships that pertain thereto. This is not to be underestimated. It influences the means of engagement and relating to any “other” as such. Many countries have ambassadors accredited to the Holy See, and in turn the Vatican has ambassadorial representation and relationships around the globe. So it should not be surprising that this modality of relationship is found to the fore in respect of interreligious relations. In many situations, of course, State and religious relations coincide. A mark of the ambassadorial mode is that steps are taken to maintain long-term relationships: specific dialogical events may be themselves ad hoc, infrequent and irregular, but the relationship between dialogical parties can be nurtured over time nonetheless. The annual goodwill message to Muslims throughout the world during the fasting month of Ramadan may serve as an example. Over the years there has been a steady increase in reciprocal greetings “and expressions of gratitude” by way of response (Arinze, 1997, p. 29).

Since 1995 similar annual messages have been sent to Hindus, in respect of *Diwali*, and to Buddhists on the occasion of *Vesak*. In the ambassadorial mode of dialogical relationship there is – or at least there is a presumption of – an encounter of equals; the establishment and maintenance of cordial and functional working relations is the order of the day. In this context the undergirding task is the patient and mutual self-presentation of one side to the other in the interest of fostering mutual authentic knowledge and respect. Within the context of interreligious relations the ambassadorial mode is a way of relating that requires clear assertion of identity: Vatican representatives know what it is, and who it is, they represent; Catholic interlocutors in dialogue are unmistakably clear in their Christian identity and concomitant assertions concerning the nature of ultimate reality. Ambassadorial dialogue is the implicit precondition for any dialogue of action: co-operative ventures require, in the first place, a context of mutual respect and functional communication.

The second, the *propaedeutic* model, refers to the style or dimension of interreligious engagement that goes beyond the presenting of credentials to the careful explanation of the self to the other as a means of preparing the ground for further development and deepening of relationship. This allows for mutual invitation and responsive engagement. As with the ambassadorial model, it is premised on the reciprocities and protocols of the host–guest relationship paradigm. Inherent in

this model is the fact that much careful attention is paid to identity explanation. It involves articulating an apologia and bearing clear witness, rather than simply engaging in informative self-presentation. Pains are taken to assert and explain what it means to be Christian – indeed, to be Catholic – in the context of this dimension of engagement. References to it abound with the language of “proclamation”, “mission” or “outreach”. It is spoken in terms of a clearing of the way for appropriate evangelical “invitation and witness”. In this regard Cardinal Francis Arinze, then President of PCID, spoke of a “conversion” that is concomitant to, if not inherent within, interreligious dialogue. There is, he wrote,

a sense in which we can rightly speak of conversion as a needed mental state and as a result of dialogue. It is the sense of greater conversion to God. Every believer who meets other believers in interreligious contact should strive to be more and more open to the action of God. God can speak to us through our encounter with other believers. Such can become occasions in which we are challenged to become more faithful to the deeper calls of our faith. (Arinze, 1997, p. 41)

Arinze would hold, however, that religion “should be proposed, not imposed”. The propaedeutic dialogue model is undoubtedly a valid form of interreligious engagement, one that is premised on both respecting the integrity of the “other” and upholding one’s own assertions and truth references. However, it is difficult to see how a genuine mutual dialogue of discourse might proceed in this context; rather it would seem effectively excluded, or at least severely delimited.

The third “Vatican model” is that of *humanitarian* dialogue. This is found, in particular, in terms of the dialogue of action, where engagement is not so much in attending to issues of identity, relationship and understanding – such as would be expected in the context of dialogues of discourse and religious experience, and implied even within the dialogue of life – but rather a coming together of two or more parties in the quest for a common goal, or the commitment to joint action for the greater good of the human community, whether in a local or wider context (Hensman, 1999). Such dialogue, more particularly, is an expression of the local or regional church in action. But a number of PCID-sponsored dialogues, such as conferences on Jerusalem, or on the Middle East more generally, have focussed on socio-political issues and allied humanitarian concerns and questions of justice, human rights, freedom and so on. The humanitarian model stands alongside, and may even intertwine with, the propaedeutic and ambassadorial models.

Conclusion

From relatively tentative beginnings early in the twentieth century to the smorgasbord of activities that now occur under the umbrella of interfaith action around the globe, the Christian Church has been at the forefront. The ecumenical initiatives that prefigured then became a feature of the World Council of Churches were conjoined, from the 1960s, by developments within the Catholic Church that flowed from Vatican II. We have sketched these initiatives and developments and noted the

high level of co-operation that exists which speaks volumes of the ecumenical context and high intentionality of the Church in regards to dialogue with other faiths and their followers. In particular we have identified some predominant theological reasons why the Christian Church has become involved in interfaith action, together with the key dialogical models that have pertained.

Interreligious dialogue – or interfaith engagement more broadly – is of critical importance in the world of the twenty-first century. In an article arising from the ninth Assembly of the WCC, held in February 2006, ecumenical journalist Mark Woods summarised the contemporary perspective on interreligious dialogue. It is, he said,

now recognized as one of the most pressing needs of our time. In addition to the theological issues arising from the shrinking of the world and the ever more porous boundaries between communities, religion has become an increasingly significant component in inter-communal relations. Faith can make things better, or it can make them a great deal worse.

This “pressing need” has, in fact, been the subject of intense activity and reflection by the Christian Church for half a century and more, as we have seen. The development and promotion of dialogical engagement through various initiatives involving the WCC and the Vatican have been of critical importance. Although Christian involvement in interreligious dialogue and interfaith activities can never be taken for granted in any given local situation, clearly the context for such engagement – historically and theologically – is well-established. Sometimes Christians themselves need to be reminded of these things. And for potential dialogical interlocutors, or prospective partners in interfaith ventures, it can be helpful to know that Christian involvement is not premised on a passing liberal fad. The Church, ecumenically – inclusive of both the WCC and the RCC – continues to wrestle with the implications for self-understanding and the outworking of its identity and mission of the commitment to engage in interfaith relations and interreligious dialogue. But, as this chapter has endeavoured to demonstrate, the commitment itself is in no doubt. And if today universally significant values, such as peaceful living and compassionate concern – as espoused by virtually all religions – are compromised by the juxtaposition of religious jingoism with political hegemony, the advent of a dialogical age means that, as never before, religions and their peoples have an opportunity to make good on shared values for the benefit of all. Nevertheless, as ever, wars and rumours of war abound; religiously motivated terrorism has become a feature of our age: faith can make things worse. Yet people of different religions, in pursuit of dialogical relationship one with another, nowadays have the possibility of transcending past histories of combative clash in favour of a future marked increasingly by co-operative engagement: faith can make things better. At least that is the hope, even if the reality of everyday existence is yet to match. And such hope is engendered by a profound change wrought by the positive possibilities of interfaith dialogical engagement, possibilities that the Christian Church has warmly and actively embraced, both at the formal global level and in the many regional and local arenas, which have their own story to tell.

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Many Mansions: East and West in the Roman Catholic Communion

Paul E. Bumbar

Scope of the Chapter

This chapter looks at what is commonly called the *Roman Catholic Church*.¹ It gives an overview of the 19 Eastern Catholic Churches currently within the *Roman Catholic communion* of Churches,² along with their sometimes troubled place and role within this communion. Ecclesiology, church structure and functioning are the chapter's salient points. It is written for those interested in examining and addressing issues in the internal and external functioning of religious bodies.

It also is written for those with little or no knowledge of the Eastern Catholic Churches, which includes most Latin Catholics within the Roman Catholic Church; "Even after Vatican II and papal conclaves with . . . (Eastern) hierarchs in public view, most Roman Catholics still regard Eastern Catholic Churches as alien" (Manschreck, 1985, p. 93). They may also be wary of "Greeks bearing gifts." This lack of knowledge or hesitancy about Eastern Churches is generally even truer for individuals who do not belong to the Roman Catholic Church.³ Hopefully, this chapter might lessen some of the confusion and parochialism related to Eastern Catholic Churches, by pointing out differences within the universal ("catholic") Church. In

P.E. Bumbar (✉)
Dominican College, Blauvelt, NY, USA
e-mail: durbar2@aol.com; glopeb@aol.com

¹In this chapter, *Roman Catholic Church* always means the totality of *all* the Churches, anywhere, who are in full ecclesiastical communion with the *Church of Rome*. The Church of Rome, also called the *Roman Church* or *Latin-rite Church*, is the Church that is headed by the Bishop of Rome, who is also the Pope. The *Roman Catholic Church* currently includes 20 Churches; the Church of Rome plus 19 Eastern Catholic Churches.

²The *Roman Catholic communion of Churches* signifies the same reality as *Roman Catholic Church*; i.e., 20 Churches. The word *communion* is used to emphasize the plurality and interdependence of these Churches.

³The exceptions to this might be persons living in countries where a particular Church originated or is officially recognized; e.g., in Lebanon, whose constitution requires the president of the country to be a Maronite Catholic (cf. Roberson, 1999).

every age, conflicts and wars have been waged in the name of religion. It, therefore, seems worth the effort to remind religious educators that religious thought and practices can differ even within an apparently “monolithic” religious body like the Roman Catholic Church; that differences need not mean separation, but they cannot be ignored.

I will clarify certain issues so that a clearer, more multifaceted and complete image of the Roman Catholic Church can be developed by the reader. Just as a complete image can be reproduced from any part of a hologram, I trust the reader will come to see the total Church as present in a unique and irreplaceable way in each of the Churches in the Roman Catholic Church – in each of the 19 Eastern Churches as well as in the “Western Church,” the Church of Rome.⁴ Mention will be made of some individual Eastern Churches to illustrate certain points, but most references will be brief, only by way of illustration, and will reflect the author’s Byzantine Rite and Ukrainian Church background. Readers wishing more in-depth information on any one or all Eastern Churches should consult works listed in the Reference section, especially the comprehensive books of Roberson (1999) and Saato (2006).

To critically examine and to constructively engage in dialogue, mutually understood words are essential. This chapter will explain those that might be unfamiliar (e.g., autocephalous, autonomous, eparchy, *sui iuris*) and others – like church, catholic, and orthodox – are familiar, but will be defined more specifically. With an accepted and commonly understood vocabulary, it should become easier and less confusing to address issues that divide the communities within and outside of the Roman Catholic Church. May this chapter aid in this endeavor.

Introduction

As someone ordained a priest in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, I always have been familiar with “Eastern” Christianity. I did not realize, however, how narrow and unecumenical my perspective was until 1997, on my first visit to the homeland of all my grandparents.

One Sunday in Kyiv,⁵ four of us were trying to find a Ukrainian Catholic church for worship. I asked a cab driver to take us to a Catholic church. He took us to a Latin-rite Catholic church. I finally remembered we were in a predominantly Orthodox country where “Catholic church” would mean “Latin-rite church” for most, so I asked a nun who was there, “Where is (a/the) *Ukrainian* Catholic church?” She was not sure, but explained where she thought Ukrainian

⁴Similarly, St. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) wrote: “The episcopate is a single whole, in which each bishop enjoys full possession. So is the Church a single whole. . . . There are . . . many *episcopi* . . . but only one episcopate.” (*On the Unity of the Church*, 5, in Ware, 1997, p. 14).

⁵Usually spelled Kiev, but *Kyiv* (pronounced “Kî -yîv”) is the more correct transliteration of the city – named after the Scandinavian Prince Kyi – and is now commonly used by native Ukrainians when writing in English.

Catholics had temporary use of a church.⁶ We went there and saw a church with Byzantine mosaics, onion-shaped domes, and three-barred crosses – evidently not Latin-rite. I approached an old lady outside and asked, “Is this church Catholic?” “Yes,” she replied emphatically. With grateful thanks we entered the church. It was packed – worshippers standing in the nave and deacons before a ceiling-high icon screen, with the priests enclosed in the sanctuary while the choir was singing in Ukrainian and incense filled the interior, all aglow from candles in front of myriad icons. We were late for our Sunday Liturgy, but we had finally found our Ukrainian Catholic Church!

Or, so I thought. When I heard prayers for the Patriarch of Moscow, I realized we were in an Orthodox Church! The old lady had not misled us, but had said “catholic” with a small *c* – as in the “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic” of the Nicene Creed. We were not where we had wanted to go, but we felt comfortable and stayed to fully participate in the celebration of the Liturgy. It was one of the memorable events of our trip.

This story is worth remembering for a number of reasons, all related to this chapter:

- (1) It is easy to be parochial when talking about *church* (cf., me)
- (2) *Catholic* for most people means “Latin-rite Catholic” (cf., the cab driver);
- (3) Not all Catholics are fully aware of the Eastern Catholic Churches (cf., the nun);
- (4) Roman Catholics do not own the word “catholic” (cf., the Orthodox lady); and,
- (5) Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches are very similar (cf. our Sunday Divine Liturgy).

With this in mind, we will look at: (1) the meaning of *catholic*; (2) *church* and *churches*; and, (3) the Eastern Catholic Churches and their connection with the Orthodox Churches.

All these issues are viewed within the context of the current position of the Church of Rome, which affects the structure, governance, decision making, and functioning of virtually everything in the Roman Catholic communion; most specifically, the status and function of the Eastern Catholic Churches as well as relationships with other religious bodies. In addition to being an overview of the Eastern Catholic Churches, therefore, this chapter is also an “apologia,” a defense of these Churches and a critique of their status in the Roman Catholic communion. Worldwide, Eastern Catholics number not quite 17,000,000 – less than 2% of the entire Roman Catholic Church. As smaller ecclesial communities, they have had to assert their position in the face of an historically preponderant influence and authority; that is, the hegemony of the Roman (or “Latin Rite”) Church. In examining their

⁶After the fall of the Soviet Union and re-emergence of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in 1989, property settlements were still being worked out between Catholics and Orthodox, to whom all church property had been given when the Soviets outlawed Catholicism in 1945.

situation and status, we are reminded of the important role religious educators have in addressing and correcting such hegemony in any religious body.

Let us begin with thoughts on *catholic*, *church* and *churches*.

Meanings of “Catholic”

As the reader probably knows, the Greek word “katholikos” means “universal,” or “general.”

Quite simply, therefore, the “catholic” Church” means the “universal” Church – the Church as holding one and the same faith everywhere, no matter where it exists.

The first recorded use of the term “the catholic church” (ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία) is in a letter written by Ignatius of Antioch,⁷ between 105 and 135. He warned the faithful against heresies, and to remain steadfast in the faith and to the earthly, “universal” church – which he compared to the heavenly (and, therefore, universal) kingdom (*Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 8:2, in Drobner, 2007, p. 50). Other writers in the early Church subsequently adopted the term “catholic” and its use grew.

By the fourth century, as dispute and division arose in the Church, “catholic” became “Catholic,” that is, a way of identifying the communion of those Churches that followed the universally and generally accepted faith, *and were not heretical or schismatic*. At the same time, however, the Churches that had “separated” continued to use the term “catholic” in speaking of themselves. The initial communion of unified Churches had fragmented, and now witnessed the rise of “separated” church communities. Some of these remained in communion with one another, and some did not, but most continued to call themselves “catholic” in one sense or another.

The difference between “catholic” and “Catholic” that began so early on continues today. Not to oversimplify, how one uses “catholic” is often a question of capitalization. Remember the old lady in Kyiv? She said the church was “catholic” – just as she, an Orthodox Christian, would say every time she recited the Nicene Creed.⁸ The adjective “catholic” is also used by Churches other than the Orthodox; e.g., Anglican and Lutheran. And to further complicate the matter, there are some “non-Rome-affiliated” Churches that use “Catholic” (capitalized) in their official names; e.g., the Old Catholic Church, the Anglican Catholic Church, the American Catholic Church, or the Independent Catholic Church of Ceylon. To differentiate themselves, these and other Churches that use “catholic” will often use “Roman Catholic” when speaking of Churches in communion with Rome.

Given the history and the ambiguity of “catholic,” we should not ambiguously or carelessly use the word, capitalized or not, especially in the age of ecumenism. Someone who says “Catholic Church” (to mean the communion of all the Christian

⁷St. Ignatius was St. Peter’s successor as bishop of Antioch (present day Antakya, in southeastern Turkey) and was writing to Christians in Smyrna (present day Izmir, in western Turkey).

⁸It is ironic that something similar occurs during the Ukrainian Catholic Divine Liturgy when the congregation is addressed by the presider as “all you orthodox Christians.”

Churches united with the bishop of Rome) would be better off saying “Roman Catholic Church” – so as not to offend or discount other Christian Churches that use the term “catholic.” Moreover, the Catholic (“universal”) Church is more than the particular Church that was founded in Rome in the first century. Persons, therefore, who say “Roman Catholic Church,” but really mean members of that particular Church founded in Rome, would do better by calling it “the Church of Rome,” “the Roman Church,” or even “the Latin-rite Church.”⁹ In doing so, they do not discount the 19 other Catholic Churches who are part of the Roman Catholic Church communion. In discussions about church matters within the Roman Catholic Church, it is quite natural and correct to say “the Catholic Church,” or, as is usually done, simply “the Church”; however, when Catholics address persons from other religious groups, most especially those of a Church that uses “Catholic” in its official name (e.g., the Old Catholic Church) I think it is more proper to say “the *Roman Catholic Church*.” Finally, either with co-religionists or with “outsiders,” if I am speaking of one particular Church in the Roman Catholic communion, I should name the specific Church; e.g., the Ukrainian Catholic Church, the Maronite Catholic Church, the Latin-rite Church.

Having said this, I hasten to add that the Eastern Catholic Churches do not use the adjective “Roman” when naming themselves, preferring instead either “Greek” (e.g., the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church) or “Byzantine” (e.g., the Hungarian Byzantine Catholic Church), or simply the name of their particular Church (e.g., the Chaldean Catholic Church). All these Churches, however, are united, “in communion,” with the Church of Rome. They are in the “Roman Catholic communion of Churches,” and, therefore, to this extent, and this extent only, they can be called “Roman Catholic.”

A distinction must be made if one is to use this terminology, It must be accepted that “Roman Catholic” and “Roman Church” are not equivalent terms; not all Roman Catholics belong to the Church of Rome (i.e., the Roman Church); many other Roman Catholics belong to one of the 19 other Churches, but do not use “Roman” – mainly because that term is too often identified with the Roman Church (the ruling hegemony). Eastern Catholic Churches do not want to be identified with, or considered a subset of, the Church of Rome (the Roman Church). They are, and wish to be seen as, autonomous, independent Churches within the Roman Catholic communion.

I realize that in saying this, I swim against the tide of popular expression, the practice of many writers (e.g., McBrien, 1994) and, possibly, some Eastern Catholic Churches. I use the term “Roman Church” to mean the “Latin-rite” Church, as well as the other rites that stem from it; the Ambrosian, Mozarabic, Bragan, Carthusian,

⁹In this chapter, “Church of Rome,” “Roman Church,” and “Latin-rite Church” mean the same thing; that is, the Church founded in Rome that has its own particular practices – most notably, its Latin liturgy (hence the term, Latin Rite) which spread into Europe and throughout the world.

Dominican, and Carmelite rites.¹⁰ I use “Roman Catholic Church” to designate the communion of *all the 20 Catholic Churches* of the East and West. Qualifying “Catholic” with “Roman” affirms the unity of all these Churches with the Church of Rome, and implicitly acknowledges that other Churches have a right to, and do, call themselves *Catholic* or *catholic*.

Church and Churches

In the Gospel of John (14.2) Jesus tells his disciples, “In my Father’s house, there are *many mansions*.”¹¹ This passage suggests that the Church of Christ, the “*ekklēsia*” or “gathering of the called-out ones” is meant to be a place where different peoples will be at home. At the first Pentecost, sundry people hear the Gospel in their own language (cf. Acts 2.5–11). Jesus says that those saved will be “. . .from east and west, and from north and south. . .at table in the kingdom of God” (Lk. 13:29), and St. Paul, that all are part of the new dispensation (Gal. 3, 28). In trying to explain and express the Gospel message to different peoples, the early Church adopted and adapted many different concepts, symbols, and languages while maintaining the “*catholic*” (universally the same) faith. Many mansions arose in the Father’s house.¹²

Continuing throughout its history, the Roman Catholic Church recognized value in the voices of the various Churches. Periodically, this came in the form of papal pronouncements; for example: in 1894, Leo XIII in *Orientalium Dignitas*, “On the Churches of the East”; in 1917, Benedict XV establishing the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church (Saato, 2006, pp. 37–38). John Paul II, in *Orientalis Lumen*, “Light of the East” (1995) said he looked forward to the Catholic Church breathing with “both lungs.”¹³ Some popes have made clear the important status of the Eastern Churches in the Catholic Church.

Of equal importance to any papal pronouncements are the decrees of ecumenical councils – in this case, the Second Vatican Council.¹⁴ Vatican II reaffirmed the validity and value of the Eastern Catholic Churches in three of its documents: (a) the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) says that “individual churches . . . in union with the Pope” constitute the universal or Catholic Church (no. 23); (b) the Decree on Catholic Eastern Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*) asserts the equality of these Churches within the Catholic Church; and, (c) the

¹⁰All these rites are not “churches” in the strict sense. They do not have, for example, their own Code of Canon Law or distinctive theology. They differ from the Roman Church only in some of their *ritual* practices; the Mass, or the Hours.

¹¹Or “dwelling places” or “rooms” – depending on one’s translation of ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς μου *μοναί* *πολλά* *εἰσιν*.

¹²For an in-depth exploration of the early history and development of doctrine and Church teaching, cf. Drobner, 2007.

¹³One of the lungs, it should be noted, is really 19 other lungs; they are not all alike.

¹⁴The references to the documents of Vatican II are taken from Abbott (1966.)

Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) affirms the role of the Eastern Churches in ecumenical efforts with the Orthodox.

Thus, not only popes, but all the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church officially recognize and affirm the multiplicity of its Churches and their place within the universal Church. The matter was well put at the 1997 Synod for the Americas by Stephen Kocisko, the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan of Pittsburgh: “The universal Church is, in fact, *a communion of Churches* (emphasis added) with their own theology, liturgy, spirituality and discipline which do not contradict but complement one another” (as cited in Saato, 2006, p. xiii).

This notion of a “communion of churches” is at the heart of the matter we are addressing. The individual Churches of the West and the East in the Roman Catholic Church all have their own integrity and value. Regardless of their size, they do not exist in a symbiotic but in a synergistic relationship; that is, they do not live off of one another, but they live – and grow – with one another. Each individual Church has a unique way of professing the Gospel message. If one traces the origins of any of these Churches, one sees that their distinctive elements (theology, liturgy, spirituality, and discipline)¹⁵ grew out of the “variety of natural gifts and conditions of life” (Vatican II: *Decree on Ecumenism*, Art. 14, in Abbott, 1966) of its people and place. They are “autochthonous,” that is, formed of the earth where found. Each brings its “home grown” riches in theology, liturgy, spirituality, and discipline to the universal Church. In so doing, the entire Church communion is enriched. At the same time, these individual Churches can be strengthened by having their gifts welcomed, affirmed, and appreciated by the others. The association does not result in a homogenization of the Churches, a melting pot, but, rather, a mosaic wherein each distinctive piece adds to the beauty of the whole, and is enhanced – like a precious stone in a setting – by being part of the whole. With this in mind, let us now look at the different Churches in this Roman Catholic communion.

The Eastern Catholic Churches: A Brief History

The history of the Churches in the Roman Catholic communion is lengthy, elaborate and, may it be said, often byzantine.¹⁶ Despite centuries of unity in the “katholike ekklesia,” dissension in the Church (disputes, heresies, schisms) and

¹⁵According to the Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, Art. 3; and the Decree on Ecumenism, Art. 15, 16, 17 (Abbott, 1966), these are the distinguishing characteristics by which a particular grouping is recognized as an “autonomous church.”

¹⁶The reader with an historical interest is referred to Chapter 1, “A Bit of History,” in Saato (2006), and to the work of Roberson (1999), which, although subtitled “A Brief Survey,” provides extensive histories of 19 Catholic and 39 Orthodox Eastern Churches. A concise and comprehensive history of the Ukrainian Church – how it was Catholic, became Orthodox, and is now both Catholic and Orthodox – is given in La Civita (2007). Such is the history of many Eastern Churches; the Great Schism of 1054 took most of them into the Orthodox communion, but, at various times, some Churches, at least parts of them, “re-entered” the Roman communion.

political events (wars, the rise and fall of emperors) brought divisions. The fragmentation of the universal Church, like the shifting of tectonic plates, was barely perceptible – until punctuated by episodic cataclysms. Beginning in the fifth century with the Assyrian Church of the East, some Churches left the communion because of differences over pronouncements of the early ecumenical councils. The Eastern and Western sides of the “katholike ekklesia,” however, managed to exist (sometimes contentiously) until 1054, when the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Papal legate mutually excommunicated one another and their respective followers. The breach was widened qualitatively and quantitatively during the fourth crusade when western troops sacked Constantinople in 1204. The subsequent resentment and outrage that the East felt toward the West cemented the fault lines, and has remained part of its collective memory.

An attempt to foster reunion was made 70 years after the sack of Constantinople, at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274. The reunion officially lasted only 14 years – mostly because of civil and ecclesiastical politics, but also in part because of doctrinal differences; e.g., the *filioque* controversy.¹⁷ The separation and drifting apart continued, and another attempt at reunion between East and West was made at the Council of Ferrara – Florence (1438–1439). It addressed mostly theological issues: the *filioque* (again), the teaching on purgatory, leavened versus unleavened bread in the Eucharist, and the nature and scope of the pope’s authority. Agreement was reached and a reunion between the two Churches was declared; however, this one was even briefer than the one at Lyons 165 years earlier – not even long enough for some of the Greek delegates to get back home. Some groups from the Armenian, Coptic, and Syrian Churches, however, did remain in communion with Rome (cf. Holmes & Bickers, 1983, p. 115 f.). Many at the time did not, but over subsequent centuries, individual Churches reestablished their communion with the Church of Rome, beginning with the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) Church 156 years after the council of Florence, continuing throughout the centuries and into more recent times with the Syro-Malankara Church in 1930.

Reunion with the Church of Rome to some extent has always hinged upon resolution of theological and liturgical differences. The *filioque* question raised at Florence was again revisited when the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) Church explored reunion with Rome. The Union of Brest, signed in 1595 after years of discussions, resulted in an agreement that the Ruthenian Church would not be compelled to use the *filioque* phrase in the recitation of the Creed, and would retain its liturgical practices, church calendar, and ecclesiastical privileges. Such theological and liturgical agreement, however, did not suffice. The original impetus for reunion had been to restore the spiritual and moral integrity of the Ruthenian Church, and union with Rome

¹⁷In 1014, after centuries of papal resistance to inserting “and the Son” after “I believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father. . .” in the Nicea-Constantinopolitan Creed, it was used at a papal Mass and entered the Latin liturgy with “assumed . . . sanction of the papacy” (USCCB, 2003, Part II, p. 18). The Eastern Churches regarded this as contrary to the decrees of the ecumenical council and, therefore, inadmissible. It came up in 1054 during the disputes between Constantinople and Rome and contributed to the eventual schism.

was seen as the means to this end.¹⁸ In the minds of some Ruthenian bishops and faithful, however, reunion was seen as subservience to Rome and a loss of their Eastern tradition and their autonomy. They, therefore, repudiated the Union and remained united with the (Orthodox) Patriarch of Constantinople. What ultimately sabotaged the Union of Brest had to do with ecclesiology, with church governance, not theology.

It must be briefly mentioned (but always remembered) that many of the disputes and subsequent division between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism relate to how the Church is governed. After the schism in 1054, the Church of Rome understandably gravitated toward “keeping its own house in order.” Popes began asserting authority not only over local churches in the West, but also those in the East, claiming a universal jurisdiction that went beyond the “primacy of honor” which the East had always granted the Church of Rome because of its association with the Apostle Peter.¹⁹ For the Eastern Churches, before and after schism, even though the bishop of a particular church (even that of Rome) may have a primacy of honor vis-à-vis other bishops, that bishop “still remains primarily bishop of a local Church” (Saato, 2006, p. 156).²⁰

Papal actions and pronouncements that contradicted this principle of the jurisdiction local bishop furthered the separation between the East and West, and continue even today. Many Orthodox will say: “It is not history, but ecclesiology that ‘really’ divides us” (Morbey, 2001, p. 5) and view with misgiving the Eastern Catholic Churches in union with Rome. They say, in effect, that the Eastern Catholic Churches should either join the Roman Church (i.e., become “Latin”) or assert their genuine Eastern traditions and become “Orthodox,” as some have done. Others, however, have chosen to be in communion with the Church of Rome. Let us look more closely now at who those are.

The Eastern Catholic Churches

Whatever the reasons for division, after the definitive break between East and West in 1054/1240 and over the course of centuries, most of the separated Eastern Churches, or parts of them, reestablished – sometimes more than once – their

¹⁸In 1577, Peter Skarga, a Polish Jesuit, published a famous and very influential work, *O jedności kościoła bożego pod jednym pasterzem*, “The Unity of God’s Church under One Pastor” (Warzeski, 1971).

¹⁹The fifteenth century “conciliar movement” indicates that, even in the West, many were wary of papal authority that claimed to supersede the authority of an ecumenical council. The conciliar movement stalled, however, and papal authority grew.

²⁰In this regard, it is worth noting that when a Pope gives a solemn blessing (e.g., at Easter, or Christmas) it is “urbi et orbi”; that is, first to the city of Rome (“urbi”) of which he first is the Bishop, and *then* to the worldwide faithful (“orbi”).

communion with the Church of Rome.²¹ These Eastern Churches that are in communion with the Church of Rome are listed each year in the *Annuario Pontificio* (the “Pontifical Yearbook” published by the Vatican).²²

Currently, according to the 2008 *Annuario*, there are 19 Eastern Catholic Churches in union with the Church of Rome (Roberson, 2008). The *Annuario* as well as the Vatican II *Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches* and the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* speak of them as *sui iuris* Churches; that is, Churches “of one’s own right/law,” or “of a particular nature.” This means that they have their own particular liturgy, theology, spirituality, and code of law that sets them apart. Another term applied to all of these Churches, and used interchangeably with *sui iuris*, is “autonomous,” meaning that they have their “own laws,” different from the Code of Canon Law governing the Western Church.²³ The Western Church (of Rome), the largest *sui iuris* Church, and the other 19 *sui iuris* Eastern Churches comprise the Roman Catholic communion of Churches.

A *sui iuris* Church has its own chief hierarchy, who will use the title of Patriarch, Major Archbishop, Metropolitan, or (Arch)Bishop, as history and ecclesial rulings allow. For example, the head of the Church of Rome is also called “Patriarch of the West,”²⁴ and there are six other patriarchs in the Roman Catholic communion: the Armenian, Chaldean, Coptic, Maronite, Melkite, and Syrian Churches. The head of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church has a title just below a patriarch – that of Major Archbishop – as do the heads of the Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Churches. “Metropolitan” is the title for the heads of the Ethiopian/Eritrean and the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Churches. Other Churches use Archbishop or Bishop to designate their hierarchy. As previously mentioned, the actual title of the head of a particular Church depends on any one or more of number of factors; antiquity, history, political importance, number of faithful, size. Regardless of the title of its head hierarchy, each *sui iuris* Church has the right to govern itself.

The following listing (Table 1) gives a picture of the 19 Eastern Catholic *sui iuris* Churches – their official names, number of faithful, relative size, and their ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Note that they are not as far-flung as the Church of Rome

²¹Until fairly recently, these re-united Churches were called “Uniate Churches,” but since “uniate” has also a pejorative meaning, it is no longer used in ecumenical circles. It should be noted that the Maronite Catholic Church and the Italo-Albanian Byzantine Catholic Churches were always in communion with Rome; i.e., they never had to “re-unite.”

²²The *Annuario* is the “official” list of the Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See, and is the one used in this chapter. Other sources may have different numbers, listings, or names.

²³“Autocephalous” – meaning, “its own head” – is a designation used only by the Orthodox for a Church that is self-governing and independent of any other authority; e.g., the Council of Ephesus (431) declared the Church of Cyprus autocephalous, independent of Constantinople.

²⁴This is the title the Orthodox Churches prefer, and use, when speaking of the Bishop of Rome, the “Pope.” It is also worth noting that the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria assigns the title “Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa” to its head hierarchy.

Table 1 Autonomous (*sui iuris*) Catholic Churches (cf. *Annuario Pontificio* as cited in Roberson, 2008)

"The Church" ^a	# Members (Rounded off)	% of Eastern Catholics	Number of Jurisdictions ^b	Locations of the Jurisdictions
1. Albanian Byzantine Catholic	3,600	<1	01	Southern Albania
2. ARMENIAN CATHOLIC	539,800	03	17	Armenia Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Amman/Jerusalem, Ukraine, France, Greece, Latin America/Mexico, Buenos Aires, Romania, USA/Canada
3. Bulgarian Byzantine Catholic	10,000	<1	01	Bulgaria
4. CHALDEAN CATHOLIC	452,500	3	21	Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, USA, Australia
5. COPTIC CATHOLIC	163,900	01	07	Egypt
6. Ethiopian/Eritrean Catholic	208,100	01	06	Ethiopia, Eritrea
7. Greek Byzantine Catholic	2,300	<1	02	Greece, Turkey
8. Hungarian Byzantine Catholic	290,000	02	02	Hungary
9. Italo-Albanian Byzantine Cath.	61,600	<1	03	Italy, Sicily
10. MARONITE CATHOLIC	3,090,500	18	26	Lebanon, Cyprus, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Argentina, Brazil, USA, Australia, Canada, Mexico
11. MELKITE GREEK CATHOLIC	1,597,300	09	25	Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Jerusalem, Brazil, USA, Canada, Mexico, Iraq, Egypt/Sudan, Kuwait, Australia, Venezuela, Argentina
12. Romanian Greek Catholic	776,500	05	06	Romania, USA
13. Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic	646,600	04	06	USA, Ukraine, Czech Republic
14. Slovak Greek Catholic	246,000	01	03	Slovakia, Canada
15. SYRIAN CATHOLIC	161,800	01	14	Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, USA, Venezuela
16. Syro-Malabar Catholic	3,947,400	23	27	India, USA
17. Syro-Malankara Catholic	413,500	02	06	India
18. Ukrainian Greek Catholic	4,284,000	25	29	Ukraine, Poland, USA, Canada, Great Britain, Germany/Scandinavia, France, Brazil, Argentina, Australia
19. "Yugoslavian" Greek Catholic	59,200	<1	03	Croatia, Serbia/Montenegro, Macedonia
Totals	16,954,600	98% (+5 <1%)	205	

^aSix of 19 *sui iuris* Eastern Churches are **PATRIARCHAL**, four are **Major Archiepiscopal**, and two are **Metropolitan**.

^bThe jurisdictions: are either an **Archeparchy** or **Eparchy** (like a "diocese" and can be Patriarchal, Major, Metropolitan, or regular); some, an **Exarchate** (like a "vicariate" and either Patriarchal, Archiepiscopal, or Apostolic); four, a **Patriarchal Dependency**; three, an **Ordinary**; one, a **Territorial Abbey**; and one, an **Apostolic Administration**.

in terms of their jurisdictions. They are more tied to their countries of origin and destinations for their emigrants.

The major differences between patriarchal, major archiepiscopal, and metropolitan Churches rest largely on the autonomy a particular Church has in selecting its head: (a) in a patriarchal Church, the bishops (eparchs) elect their patriarch and let the Church of Rome know who was elected; (b) in a major archiepiscopal Church the name of the one elected is submitted for Rome's approval; and, (c) in a metropolitan Church, Rome selects one name from a list of three nominated by the Church.

Eastern Catholic Churches also use slightly different terms to define ecclesiastical jurisdictions. What in the West is a *diocese* is in the East an *eparchy* (or *archeparchy*, depending on size and status). An Eastern Catholic *exarchy* corresponds roughly to a *vicariate* or *ordinariate* in the West.

In defining *Churches*, there is one more distinguishing characteristic; that of *rite*. In the past, Churches were often referred to as “rites”; the Latin-rite²⁵ and the Eastern rites (Armenian, Coptic, Ukrainian, etc.). This use of *rite* focused largely on the liturgy and rituals of a church – visible elements that distinguished one Church from another. The term *rite* is still used, but it is now used to define groupings of the particular Churches.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: “The liturgical traditions or rites presently in use in the Church are the Latin . . . and the Byzantine, Alexandrian or Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Maronite and Chaldean rites” (John Paul II, 1992, n. 1203); that is, one in the West, and six in the East. These groupings into “traditions” or “rites” are based on “. . .the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony, culture and circumstances of history of a distinct people, by which its own manner of living the faith is manifested in each autonomous (*sui iuris*) Church” (Canon 28 of *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*; also, Vatican II, *Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches*, art. 3). The most salient factors for the groupings of the *rites* and the particular Churches today are: (a) liturgy, (b) theology, (c) spirituality, and (d) canonical discipline. It is worth noting that this same Canon 28 goes on to group the Eastern rites treated in the Code into but five traditions, rather than the six enumerated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which lists the Maronite Rite separately. The Eastern Code, places the Maronites in the Antiochene (“Syrian” in the *Catechism*) Rite. This results in five “Eastern rites”: Alexandrian, Antiochene (or Syrian), Armenian Chaldean, and Constantinopolitan (“Byzantine” in the *Catechism*). The 19 Eastern Catholic Churches listed in the 2008 *Annuario Pontificio* can be grouped into these five rites, as follows (Table 2):

These 19 *sui iuris* Eastern Churches, grouped into the five “rites,” have, by and large, existed from the very beginnings of the Christian Church. In fact, as the reader may have noticed, some of them antedate the Church of Rome. Seniority,

²⁵Pope Pius V (1566–1572) “imposed the liturgical rite of Rome on the Latin (Western) Church, in response to the confusion that preceded the Protestant Reformation” (Zagano, 2006), but there still are six other liturgical rites under the patriarchate of the Bishop of Rome; i.e., Ambrosian (in Milan), Mozarabic (in Toledo), Bragan (in Portugal), and in the Dominican, Carthusian and Carmelite Religious Orders.

Table 2 The Eastern rites and the *Sui Iuris* Eastern Catholic Churches

Tradition/rite	The 19 Autonomous Eastern Churches	
1. Alexandrian	Coptic, Ethiopian/Eritrean	(n = 2)
2. Antiochene	Maronite, Syrian, Syro-Malankara	(n = 3)
3. Armenian	Armenian	(n = 1)
4. Chaldean	Chaldean, Syro-Malabar	(n = 2)
5. Constantinopolitan	Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Hungarian, Italo-Albanian, Melkite, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovak, Ukrainian, “Yugoslavian”	(n = 11)

however, does not always mean authority or influence, and all the Eastern Catholic Churches have to contend with the hegemony of largest Church in the Roman Catholic communion, namely, the Roman Church.

The Status of the Eastern Churches and the Hegemony of Rome

In any society, some sort of ruling hegemony always exists. The largest, most powerful subsume the smaller, less powerful, who then may become identified with them. Witness how citizens of the USA are named “Americans” even though millions of other people live in the Americas (North, Central and South), or how inhabitants of the other 14 Republics in the former Soviet Union were frequently called “Russians” by outsiders. In like manner, the Church of Rome has overshadowed and sometimes overwhelmed the smaller Eastern Catholic Churches; a Church in union with Rome became “Roman,” a subset of the “Latin Rite,” at least in popular parlance, if not also, as occasionally happened, in actual practice. Even today, the Church of Rome all too often functions as a “massive canopy . . . (stifling) small shrubs in the undergrowth of a tropical rainforest” (Kania, 2008, p. 9). Let us first look briefly at the past.

Historically, the equating of the Latin-rite Church with the entire Roman Catholic Church has been to a large extent the doings – by design or default – of the Church of Rome, and some of the Popes in particular. The power of the Popes grew greatly after 800 AD when Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Emperor. It was efficient and effective for the emperors to be legitimated by the Church, to have one religion “to unify diverse subjects – people of various ethnicities and social classes, speaking languages that varied from German and its dialects to the Slavic language” especially in a time when “allegiance to religion bested all other loyalties such as allegiance to emperors, barons, and even ethnicity, language and social class (Pereira, 2008, pp. 2, 3). Conversely, it was also efficient and effective for the popes to have the protection of the emperors to secure their temporal holdings and, in times when popes were sometimes poisoned, to secure their personal safety. One hand washed the other. Both sides of the alliance profited, the relationship solidified, and once the power of the Patriarchate of Constantinople ended (with the city’s capture by the Moslems in 1453), the authority of the “Patriarch of the West,” the Pope,

became the ruling hegemony in the Roman Catholic communion. “*Roma locuta, causa fnite*” (“Rome has spoken, the case is closed”) became the final argument in ecclesiastical disputes after the Great Schism (1054) when the Christian world was divided into the Orthodox East and the Catholic West.²⁶ Saato (2006, pp. 14–37) gives an overview of how the hegemony of the popes grew in the second millennium, to the extent that the Bishop of Rome, the “Patriarch of the West,” eventually claimed *universal jurisdiction* over *all* Churches in the West as well as in the ancient Patriarchal Churches of the East – most of which by this time identified themselves as Orthodox.

This “imperialism” of the Church of Rome had deleterious results for Eastern Catholic Churches. In India, in 1599, there was the forced Latinization of many of “The Thomas Christians,” once a part of the Assyrian Church and to this day tracing their origins back to the Apostle Thomas. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Roman Church tried to latinize the Ethiopian Church (cf., Saato, 2006, p. 26 f.; and Roberson, 1999, p. 20 f.). Such actions are epitomized by the words of Pope Benedict XIV in 1752: “Since the Latin Rite is the rite of the holy Roman Church and this Church is mother and teacher of the other Churches, the Latin Rite should be preferred to all other rites” (as cited in Saato, 2006, p. 34).²⁷

Efforts to latinize the theology, liturgy, practices, and discipline of other Eastern Churches continued. In 1891, at the provincial synod of Lviv,²⁸ Rome exerted strong pressure on the Ukrainian (then called “Ruthenian”) Catholic Church to do away with the practice of a married clergy. The synod, however, formally resolved to continue the Church’s historical practice of clerical matrimony. The resolution was read in the Lviv Cathedral and sent to Rome for final acceptance, but when the final version of the synod resolutions was published in Rome, it was not the one the synod had adopted and submitted. It was a version written by the Apostolic Delegate to Ukraine which stated: “. . .the Synod, recognizing this freedom (to marry before ordination) and leaving it undisturbed, nonetheless, in consideration of the benefit and need of our church, urges the seminary authorities to support and confirm in their intention . . . those seminarians well disposed to accept clerical celibacy” (as cited in Himka, 1999, p. 118). In other words, the Ukrainian Church was told to “put your treasure where your heart should be.” The pressure to discontinue clerical matrimony continued, and in the 1920s clerical celibacy was made mandatory in two of the three Ukrainian eparchies; only the archbishop in Lviv withstood the pressuring.

The Church of Rome continued its hegemony during the emigration of Eastern Catholics from Sub-carpathia and Galicia (Ukraine) to the United States. These

²⁶“East” and “West” reflect divisions of the old Roman Empire, the Danube River being approximate dividing line.

²⁷This seems a dramatic change of heart, or at least a gross inconsistency, because 10 years earlier, in 1742, this same Pope Benedict XIV had published the bull *Etsi Pastoralis* “to buttress the position of the (Byzantine rite) Italo-Albanians in relation to the Latins” (Roberson, 1999, p. 145).

²⁸The Ukrainian name for the city called “Lwov” (by the Poles), Lvov (by the Russians) or “Lemberg” (by the Germans).

faithful needed churches and priests of their own, so Pius X, in the papal bull *Ea Semper* in 1907, appointed a monk from Galicia named Soter Ortynsky as the “Greek Catholic” bishop for the United States.²⁹ This was one step forward, but two steps back, because this Greek Catholic bishop had authority only “as an auxiliary to every Latin ordinary” and with the stipulation that “No married priests were to be sent to the U.S., nor were any married men to be ordained” (Kaszczak, 2007, p. 7).³⁰ *Ea Semper* institutionalized the deeply felt sentiments of US Latin-rite bishops, who had been resisting the presence of non-Latin-rite bishops in their jurisdictions, and used clerical celibacy to justify their position. Meeting in 1893, they said that:

the presence of married priests of the Greek rite in our midst is a constant menace to the chastity of our unmarried clergy, a source of scandal to the laity and, therefore, the sooner this point of discipline is abolished before *the evils* (emphasis added) obtain large proportions, the better for religion. . . . The possible loss of a few souls of the Greek rite, the archbishops thought, ‘bears no proportion to the blessings resulting from uniformity of discipline’” (Hennese, 1981, as cited in Kaszczak, 2007, p. 4).

On two subsequent occasions, in 1894 and in 1896, the Latin-rite bishops also proposed that they have the faculty of creating national parishes for all Ruthenian Catholics and placing them under their jurisdictions (Paska, 1975), in effect, “to simply become Latin Catholics” (Kaszczak, 2007, p. 8). The latinization of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was continuing.

Greek Catholic faithful resisted this. At their National Church Congress in 1913, they asserted their rights as Greek Catholics, including the right for their bishop to ordain married men, and Bishop Ortynsky “signed the proposals of this congress” (Kaszczak, 2007, p. 12). It did not, however, stem the tide of Latin-rite resistance to a married clergy, and Pius XI reaffirmed Pius X’s prohibition of a married clergy in the United States. In 1929, he issued the decree *Cum data fuerit*, Article 12 of which states, “. . . priests of the Greek-Ruthenian rite who wish to go to the United States of North America and stay there, must be celibates” (as cited in Warzeski, 1971, p. 277).

For the most part, the “Greek-Ruthenian” (Ukrainian) Church acceded to this, but not everyone. To preserve their tradition of a married clergy, some eventually broke away and, in 1938, formed the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of the USA (Johnstown, PA) under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The “loss of a few souls,” foreseen by the Latin-rite ordinaries in 1893, was for them the price worth paying to enforce clerical celibacy in the United States. The over-900-year-old tradition of a married clergy in one particular Church became collateral damage to a felt need for uniformity and conformity in the “Father’s house.”

²⁹The Austrian government, since 1772, called those living in what had been the eastern half of the old Roman Empire “Greek Catholics” because they had been Christianized by Greek missionaries (Kaszczak, 2007, p. 3).

³⁰Full, ordinary jurisdiction was granted in 1913, but the prohibition against ordaining married men remained.

Unfortunately, the tendency toward uniformity continues, and even in catechetical materials. The *General Catechetical Directory*, published by the Vatican in 1971, says the Apostles' Creed is "a synthesis of and key to reading all of the Church's doctrine, which is hierarchically ordered around it. . ." (*GCD*, 1971, n. 115). The hegemony is evident. Eastern Catholic Churches do not use the Apostles Creed.

Yet again, when the first version of the *Catechism of the Universal Church*³¹ was distributed in 1990,³² the Eastern Catholic bishops in the United States responded saying the Catechism "works from the perspective of the Roman view throughout . . . seeing the Roman tradition as the principle of universality, normative for all the Churches" (unpublished document, in Saato, 2006, p. 151). The response seems to have little effect on the final document because, 2 years later, the final version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* stated, "The Church professes this mystery [of the faith] in the *Apostles' Creed* (emphasis added). . ." (John Paul II, 1992, n. 2558), thereby again discounting the fact that Eastern Catholic Churches use the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, not the Apostles' Creed. Moreover, even though the *National Directory for Catechesis* (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 2005) more than once makes mention of creeds (pp. 60, 97, 191), it also says that the Apostles' Creed is "among those formulations that should be learned by heart" (p. 103) – but no mention is made of the other creeds, in apparent contradiction of what it had earlier affirmed; "The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a catechism for the universal Church" (USCCB, 2005, p. 73).

Eastern Catholics have difficulty accepting the universality of the *Catechism* when it omits two-thirds of the references to Eastern Church practice that were in the original version. To correct this omission, the U.S. Eastern Rite bishops felt they had to issue their own three-volume catechism³³ which reflects Byzantine theology, liturgy and practice (Saato, 2006).

The hegemony is not limited to catechetical materials. In 1990, a separate *Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches* was promulgated, which was a very important event because to be recognized as a church in the Roman Catholic communion, a group must have its own "discipline," that is, code of church law. The 1990 *Code* would seem to have dispelled the notion of Roman hegemony over the Eastern Churches; however, it was not so. The first attempts at developing this Eastern code were so offensive to Eastern bishops that Pope John XXIII suspended the work. Unfortunately, the subsequent attempt adhered to the working principle that the Eastern code and existing Western code should be procedurally similar. This resulted in the Eastern code following the Western code so closely that ". . .while the code was described as being drawn on Eastern sources, its canons are similar to and in some cases identical with canons in the Western code. . ." and leaves "to

³¹This was the original title of what is now called the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (John Paul II, 1992).

³²With only one copy for each bishop, and *sub secreto* (Reese, 1991).

³³*Light for life* (Pittsburgh: God with Us Publications): *The Mystery Believed* (1994); *The Mystery Celebrated* (1996); *The Mystery Lived* (2001).

the particular law of the various Eastern Churches such things as . . . honorary titles, and the liturgical calendar” (Saato, 2006, p. 37). In other words, it disregarded the history and integrity of Eastern canon law. Saato goes on to conclude: “. . .current (Roman) curial practice is loathe to admit any real autonomy to those Churches that its documents call autonomous. . .” (p. 37). This is unfortunate, but for Eastern Churches, their experience.

Conclusion

This experience with the *Catechism* and with the *Code* – indeed, the general history of the Eastern Catholic Churches – indicates that, despite presumably good intentions, centuries-old attitudes and habits are hard to eliminate and avoid. It is, however, the function of education to promote changed behavior, thinking or attitudes. Changing attitudes within a church (or temple, or mosque) and between religious groups is part of the role of religious education. Those who are engaged in religious education within the Roman Catholic Church should not contribute to the hegemony of the Latin-rite. By knowing about and talking about the Eastern Catholic Churches, religious educators can do much to mitigate the hegemony of the West, give their audience a truer, more complete picture of Roman Catholic Church, and demonstrate that there is room for all in the “Father’s house.”

I hope any apparent defensiveness on my part has not offended or distracted the reader, and I point out this situation because not only does a hegemonic atmosphere affect relationships within the Roman Catholic Church communion, it also makes other Churches extremely wary of ecumenical advances from that communion. Since it diminishes prospects for authentic dialogue, a hegemonic atmosphere should be resisted and countered by all, especially religious educators. Learning about others is the necessary first step to understanding and respecting them.

While it is encouraging to have heard Pope John Paul II say that the Church should “breathe with two lungs,” the dominant Roman Church, as a whole, has to allow the Eastern Churches more room to breathe and move about in the Father’s house. Failure to do so belies the promise of the Pope’s statement; it erodes the status and hampers the flourishing of Eastern Churches. Moreover, it hampers and undermines ecumenical dialogue, because the Orthodox can then rightly fear the same fate will befall them. Respecting and fostering the traditions of the Eastern Catholic Churches will facilitate church growth and reunion because it will show that the “holy and apostolic” church of Christ can be simultaneously “one and universal,” truly catholic. The Eastern Churches themselves have a significant role in fostering this, by more vigorously asserting their historic rights, and by consistently engaging with the Orthodox. Specifying how this might and is being done exceeds the scope of this chapter.

Religious educators in the Roman Catholic communion, for their part, have to: (1) “lead people beyond” (“e-ducare”), by raising awareness – and critiquing the hegemony – of the Roman Church in the universal church; and (2) understand, value and make known the unique liturgical, theological, spiritual, and disciplinary

differences of the Eastern Catholic Churches, so that these Churches – as well as the Orthodox – may be accepted for who they are and assume their rightful place in the Father’s house. Having read this chapter, the reader, hopefully, is more aware of the Eastern Catholic Churches in the Roman Catholic communion of Churches and their close ties to the Orthodox Churches, and is more equipped to do this.

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Religious Education in United States' State Schools

Gabriel Moran

Two facts about the United States are widely acknowledged. First, on any scale of national religiosity (belief in God, prayer, attendance at religious services), the United States ranks near the top; second, there is a scandalous ignorance of religion, both a lack of knowledge of an individual's own religion and the religion of others. This combination is dangerous when a president can plunge the country into war under the cover of religious rhetoric. Carey McWilliams (2003) has written, "In an era when religion and morals are less a matter of habits and givens, religious education is a critical part of civic education; secularity calls for schooling in the sacred" (p. 154).

The Problem

A major part of the problem is that a comprehensive religious education does not exist. Furthermore, there is no discussion of religious education in the public arena. When religious education is referred to, it is assumed to be the task of church, synagogue, mosque, and temple, but those institutions do not use "religious education" for the formation of their members. Each of the religions has its own intramural language of education. This focus of religious groups on the beliefs and practices of their own members is understandable. But where then are the other key elements of education in religious matters that today's enlightened citizen needs? The logical answer would seem obvious: schools that are called public.

The immediate reaction to this suggestion is an objection based on the belief that religious education in state schools is unconstitutional. But the Supreme Court has never addressed the topic of religious education. While some elements of religious education do not belong in state schools, the same is true of education in most of the important areas of life. The public school cannot and should not try to be the sole educator in politics, sex, morals, economics, and much else. Cooperation between

G. Moran (✉)

Department of Humanities and the Social Sciences, New York University, New York, NY, USA
e-mail: GM1405@gmail.com

the school and other educational agencies, starting with the family, is indispensable. The classroom is only a part of education, but it is a crucial part for today's citizenry.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many leading educators and politicians recognized the need for something new – religious education. It would encompass the several major religions of the United States. Equally important, it was to include public education along with education by religious institutions. The impressive gathering of 400 national leaders in 1903 included 45 university presidents, prominent politicians, many public school administrators, and religious officials. The ambitious project of the Religious Education Association was “to inspire the educational forces of our country with the religious ideal; to inspire the religious forces of our country with the educational ideal” (Harper, 1903, pp. 230–240).

For a variety of reasons this religious education remained an unrealized ideal. At its earliest stage of development, the Religious Education Association absorbed the assumptions of liberal Protestantism, something that tended to drive away Roman Catholics, Jews, and conservative Protestants. Later, it was the economic depression in the 1930s that undermined hopes for the “professionalization” of religious education in both church and public schools. And then the reaction against liberal theology which hit the United States after World War II all but ended the movement. For the past 60 years, as the need for a religiously intelligent citizenry has become increasingly evident, there simply has been no discussion of religious education within which the public school would have its appropriate role of academic instruction in religion.

Legal Issues: Church and State

Before I look at the legal decisions concerning religion and the public school, it is necessary to briefly mention a different topic that has obstructed discussion in this area. The doctrine that is called “separation of church and state” is invariably brought up when religion in the public school is discussed. I would argue that the language of church and state has always been an inappropriate metaphor for the United States. When applied to the teaching of religion, the doctrine is an irrelevant distraction. We do need some careful distinctions for what is legally and academically appropriate, but they will not be found within the language of church and state.

Despite its inappropriateness, separation of church and state has become deeply embedded in the national consciousness during the past 70 years. Even people who should know better refer to this doctrine as if it were in the US Constitution and as if it has always been the framework within which the country has operated. When church and state is referred to, it is usually within the phrase “wall of separation between church and state.” There is usually a recognition that “wall” is a metaphor. Arguments that then ensue are all about the wall: Can it be lowered or raised? Is the wall being breached? Should the wall be permeable? and other metaphorical questions. What gets lost in such discussions is that the governing metaphor is not “wall of separation” but “wall of separation between church and state.” A wall that separates makes no sense unless church and state make sense.

The European language of church and state was inadequate when the United States was coming to birth in the eighteenth century. It is patently inaccurate in the twenty-first century. However, there are thousands of people in influential positions whose work is described as church and state issues; I have no illusions about the phrase disappearing. But at the least, it should be kept out of discussion of the teaching of religion.

The United States in its founding document did attempt something new. It tried to remove the federal government from involvement in people's practice of religion. To do so, the First Amendment refers to religion with two phrases, both negative. First, there would be no "establishment of religion"; the federal government would not give support to a religious institution. Second, the government would not prohibit the "free exercise" of one's religious life. These two principles were in tension with one another and were bound to sometimes conflict. James Madison (2002) acknowledged "that it may not be easy, in every possible case, to trace the line of separation between the rights of religion and the civil authority, with such distinctions, as to avoid collisions and doubts on unessential points" (p. 88). The line between civil authority at the national level and religious institutions did not immediately apply to the states of the United States.

Several states continued practices such as paying the salaries of Protestant ministers. The Baptists of Danbury Connecticut asked Thomas Jefferson for his opinion. In a letter of 1801, Jefferson introduced the phrase "wall of separation between church and state." A scholar who has studied in detail the writing and content of the letter concludes that it was "a statement delimiting the legitimate jurisdiction of the federal and state governments on matters pertaining to religion" (Dreisbach, 2002, p. 60). Baptists of the nineteenth century stuck to their antiestablishment claims that government should not regulate worship, compel payment of taxes in support of religion, and discriminate among religions. If Jefferson's letter had supported them, they would have published the letter, but they never did so (Hamburger, 2004).

It was not until 1870 when the language of church and state emerged in discussion of bible reading in the public school and the beginning of the Catholic school system. The separation of church and state seemed readymade to keep the Catholic church from receiving aid for its schools while the doctrine did not touch bible reading which "the people" rather than a church put into the public school (Hamburger, 2004). This point was made explicit regarding the "Blaine Amendment," defeated at the national level but passed in several states, which prohibited aid to religious schools but had no prohibition of bible reading in the public school (Hamburger, 2004).

If the reference for "church" was not clear in the late nineteenth century, it certainly was in the 1940s when a national system of Catholic schools lobbied for various kinds of aid, including bus transportation for the students. At that point, the language of church and state entered into Supreme Court decisions. Opponents of the Catholic church, such as Paul Blanshard and Protestants and Others United for the Separation of Church and State, celebrated the limiting of the Catholic church's power (Blanshard, 1950).

Many of the people who were delighted by the separation of church and state were stunned in the 1960s when the Supreme Court interpreted the doctrine as prohibiting prayer and bible reading in the public school. Their surprise was understandable. History and logic were on their side. Of course, a metaphor can have indefinite extension, but the Court has continued to extend a metaphor that was inappropriate from the beginning.

What are supposedly separated are two entities: “state” and church. The term state in the United States has a built-in ambiguity. It would be clearer to refer to civil authorities or governments of various kinds. But the ambiguity of “state” is completely overshadowed by the misleading use of “church.” Obviously, “church” only includes Christian bodies; there are hundreds of religious institutions in the United States that are not included. Jews, for example, are content with talking about church and state; it does not affect them except by a metaphorical stretch.

Even among Christians, the reference for “church” is not always clear. Protestants most often use the term for a local congregation, which is not the locus for church–state talk. Jefferson did not write his letter to the Baptist church (there is no such state or national institution) but to a Baptist association. When right-wing religious groups have engaged in political lobbying, they have been accused of violating the separation of church and state. Their logical response has been: We are not a church.

During the past 40 years the Court has continued to try to extend the metaphor of church–state beyond all logic. The concerns of Jews, Muslim, or Buddhists cannot be addressed as “church–state” issues. Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist (1985) made this point in no uncertain terms: “The ‘wall of separation between church and state’ is a metaphor based on bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned” (pp. 106–107). It should be noted that Rehnquist properly refers to the whole metaphor, not the wall of separation but the wall of separation between church and state. It is also noteworthy that this firm assertion by a Chief Justice is seldom quoted compared to some seemingly casual statements by judges that are quoted as dogmas.

The Supreme Court was undoubtedly correct in its 1960s decisions on religion. The government has no business sponsoring devotions in a multi-religious society. It also has no business deciding what subjects should be in the curriculum of schools. What is taught in the classroom and how it is taught should be decided by schoolteachers and school administrators not lawyers who are interested in church–state problems.

Legal Issues: Religious Education

The idea of religious education was still alive in the 1940s, as evidenced by a report from the American Council on Education. The Committee on Religion and Education was a distinguished group of educators that was chaired by F. Ernest Johnson. He was the primary author of the report, *The Relation of Religion to Public Education*. Published in 1947, the report formulated the issue quite well: “One must

either accept the patent inference that religious education is relatively unimportant and a marginal interest or assume that religion is a matter so remote from life that it admits of no integration with the general educational program" (p. 10). Referring to the emerging doctrine of church and state, the report insisted that "this doctrine may not be invoked to prevent public education from determining on its merits how the religious phases of the culture shall be recognized in the school program" (p. 25). Unfortunately, that is just what happened as legal jargon edged out genuine educational discussion.

A Supreme Court decision in 1948 forbade religious instruction that was given by various religious groups in public school buildings. In the decision and in two of the opinions, the term "religious education" is used to refer to this practice. Justice Robert Jackson admitted that the Supreme Court was in no position to solve the overall relation of religion and public education. He worried that the Court would become entangled in endless local disputes. While siding with the majority in this case, Jackson (1948) said, "One can hardly respect a system of education that would leave the student wholly ignorant of the currents of religious thought that move the world society for a part in which he is being prepared" (p. 203).

Jackson's rhetoric here seems to echo the report from the American Council of Education (1947, p. 19). As I discuss later, an even clearer connection to that report is found in the key decision of *Abington School District v. Schempp* in 1963. That decision, along with *Engel v. Vitale* in the previous year, set the direction for future discussions of religion and public education. *Engel* outlawed state-mandated prayer. *Abington* forbade reading the Bible and saying the Lord's Prayer in the public school. These two decisions angered many Protestant groups who had never dreamed that the separation of church and state could apply to the Our Father and the reading of scripture. A cartoon by Herb Block showed a man angrily throwing down a newspaper and shouting, "What do they expect us to do, pray at home"? Yes, that was pretty much the general idea.

In some regions of the United States, the Court's decisions were simply disregarded. In other places, there began an endless series of court cases concerning what does and does not count as a religious practice. Debate and controversy in this area are inevitable but lawyers rather than educators usually control the argument. That may have been predictable in this most litigious of countries. However, the courts, including the Supreme Court, do not have a clear idea of "religion" or any idea of religious education.

Efforts were made in the Congress to go around *Engel* and *Abington* with a Constitutional Prayer Amendment. It narrowly missed the needed two thirds majority in November, 1971. Interestingly, the opposition was led by Robert Drinan, a representative from Massachusetts and a Jesuit priest (as cited in Wood, 1984, p. 33). When the same issue resurfaced in 1984, the opposition was lead by another clergyman, Senator John Danforth, who said:

Prayer should not be cheapened. It must not be trivialized. . . .To many religious people God is not dependent on the Supreme Court or the Congress. Objects may be kept out of the classroom, chewing gum for example. God is not chewing gum. He is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. (As cited in DeFattore, 2004, p. 197)

A practice that has concerned the courts during the last decade has been the “posting of the ten commandments” in public places, especially in public schools (Moran, 2000, pp. 6–14). The school shooting at Columbine gave impetus to this movement. Liberals pushed for stricter gun control laws; conservative Christian groups seemed to think that students seeing a list of ten commandments on school property would dissuade shooters. Both the local supporters of the postings and the American Civil Liberties Union, their regular opponent in court, assume remarkable educational effect from what is posted on a school wall. The Supreme Court has attempted to make distinctions regarding when and how the ten commandments may be posted (Trigg, 2007, p. 226). This legal hair-splitting might make sense within a clear framework of religion and religious education, but that is what is lacking. Congress has stayed up all night debating prayer in school. What it has never discussed and lacks the language to raise the question, is the school doing with religion what schools are for, namely, to teach it.

The Meanings of Religion

For a meaning of religious education that would include teaching religion in state schools, one has to recognize the ambiguity of the term “religion.” The problem cannot be cured by a definition. Nietzsche said that any word that has a history cannot be defined. That is, no definition can cover the historical shifts in meaning of ancient terms, often resulting in sharply divergent meanings in the present.

“Religion” is a term coined by Cicero who boasted of the Romans that “in religion and the worship of the gods we are pre-eminent” (pp. 7–9). The Christian church took over the term, reshaping Cicero’s meaning. Augustine (1959) describes religion as existing from the beginning of the world and finding fulfillment in the “true religion” of the Christian church. Religion as meaning genuine devotion held the field until the sixteenth century. Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin still used *religio* for practices directed toward God. (Aquinas treats religion under the practice of justice (*Summa Theologica*, n. 81)).

A different meaning of “religion” emerged when “the Christian religion” (true devotion) was rocked by division, and opposing groups claimed to be the possessors of true religion. The first hint of tolerance after the Reformation is found in references to the “Catholic and Protestant religions.” Rather quickly, these two religions were folded into the “Christian religion” but “religion” used this way was now available to refer to Judaism, Islam, and, more doubtfully, to other groups. “Religion” has a western (or even Christian) bias but it is the best available word to try to encompass the beliefs, rituals, and codes of the institutions studied by historians, anthropologists, and sociologists.

This second meaning of “religion” has obvious roots in the first but there are stark oppositions as well. In the ancient meaning, religion was singular; genuine devotion was opposed to false. The modern meaning necessarily implies diversity even when used in the singular. A reference to “the Christian religion” today,

unlike its use in the fifteenth century, carries comparison of one religion to others in its class. This sketch of the history of "religion" might be merely a curiosity except that the two meanings continue to appear in the present. As regularly happens with other important old words, the second meaning did not replace the first but instead created a word of rich ambiguity (Bossy, 1985, p. 170; Harrison, 1990, p. 185).

In discussions of religion and public education, the two meanings are regularly conflated leading to endless confusion. The ancient meaning of "religion" lives on in referring to devotions and practices in a generalized way, even though no one actually practices religion; they practice *a* religion. They follow the gospel, observe Passover, pray facing Mecca. "Religion" can also refer to the historical systems that have some but not all of the same characteristics. Religion(s) in this sense cries out for intellectual inquiry so as to relate religion(s) to other important aspects of the world.

The subject matter for academic curricula is any human phenomenon that has a tradition of rational inquiry and a universe of discourse. "Religion" in the second sense has better academic credentials than many other subjects in the school. "Sociology," for example, was coined in the 1840s; psychology, as an estranged relative of philosophy, is mainly a twentieth-century product. It is true that "religion" cannot shake off its ambiguity. That ambiguity in the meaning of religion as an academic subject is similar to other subjects that do not end in *-ology* (e.g., art, history, mathematics). "History," can be the name of actual events in the past. That does not prevent the word history from being used for the academic study of those events. Of course, "religion" raises suspicions that "history" does not.

The discussion of religion in state schools continues to be a confusing mess. The periodic headline "Does God belong in the classroom?" is a silly if not blasphemous question. As Danforth said in the above quotation, a discussion based on that question trivializes both meanings of religion. In a Supreme Court decision of 2004, allowing "under God" to remain in the pledge of allegiance, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor defended the phrase on the basis that it is "ceremonial Deism" which "cannot be seen as a serious invocation of God" (*Newdow v. U.S. Congress*, 2000, p. 597; 2004, pp. 2321–2327). We do not need ceremonial deism in the classroom; we do need serious intellectual encounter with religion(s).

A Comprehensive Religious Education

Religious education today would have to include two distinct parts: formation in the practice of a particular religion (or a personal choice to abstain from such practice) and some minimum competence in understanding the phenomenon of religion, comparing the religion closest to home with other religions. The first element of religious education does not belong in the state school; the second element is needed there. Without a language of religious education, including recognition of religion as a subject for intellectual inquiry, the discussion of religion in state schools becomes

bogged down either in fighting over devotional practices or by including religion in ways that avoid trying to teach an understanding of it.

In recent years there has been considerable enthusiasm for “religious literacy.” There is little opposition to the idea but little success in achieving literacy. Even Richard Dawkins in his assault on religion bemoans the fact that students cannot recognize biblical references in Shakespeare (Dawkins, 2006, pp. 340–344). Stephen Prothero (2007) in *Religious Literacy* has 90 pages of religious references that citizens should be able to recognize. Such factual knowledge might be desirable but it is not likely to come from piling up facts about religion. Surveying all the religions of the world can be a way to avoid actually inquiring into the complexity of the logic and the history of any one religion or, for example, understanding the Christian religion in relation to Islam. Prothero, like other writers on the topic, repeatedly says that the Supreme Court has pronounced the teaching of religion in state schools to be unconstitutional. That assumption has been the unchallenged legal dogma that prevents an educational discussion of teaching religion in state schools.

Teach and Teach About

The supposed proscription of teaching religion is derived from the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Abington v. Schempp* (1963). Two statements from that ruling – one by Justice Arthur Goldberg and one by Justice Tom Clarke – are cited in almost every discussion of religion and public education. The combination of the two passages results in a confusion based on the call to put religion into the curriculum together with the insistence that religion cannot be taught. It is no wonder that only a small group of people feel at home in the convoluted language that is used.

Stephen Prothero’s book, *Religious Literacy*, embodies the logical conflict. He says that “many states and school districts now have standards and policies that at least in theory carve out a place for religion in public school curricula” (2007, p. 131). At the same time, he insists that the teacher cannot legally teach this curricular subject. There is confusion, he says, “about the crucial distinction between theology and religious studies – between what the Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg called the “teaching of religion” (which is unconstitutional) and the “teaching about religion (which is not)” (p. 53). Prothero here equates teaching religion and teaching theology, which would be news to professors of religion in universities. What one must do with religion, according to Prothero, is “teach about” it, but not teach it. Not surprisingly, most school administrators and school teachers find this contrast an unworkable puzzle which they prefer to avoid. As Martin Marty has said, “instead of teaching about religion, they teach around it.” I think that is exactly what should be expected.

The strange dichotomy of teach religion versus teach about religion is lifted from a comment in Justice Goldberg’s concurring opinion in *Abington v. Schempp* (1963). What Goldberg said was: “It seems clear to me that the court would recognize the propriety of teaching about religion as distinguished from the teaching

of religion in the public school.” That statement is not exactly a firm and definitive ruling by the Supreme Court. This one justice says that he thinks the “court would recognize the propriety” of one but not the other of what he contrasts. Goldberg expresses a tentative opinion that the court would find propriety in teaching about religion. He need not have been so tentative on that point. A teacher can teach about anything that happens to show up in the course of teaching his or her subject in the curriculum. One can teach about mass murder in sociology, sadomasochism in psychology, or cannibalism in anthropology. Religion shows up in all those places and many others, and then, obviously, one has to teach about it or around it.

The problem is not an approval of teaching about religion. It is that Goldberg contrasted it to the teaching of religion. The affirming of the first was connected to the negating of the second. Ever since then, it has usually been assumed that this distinction is a neat and clear dichotomy. Instead of challenging or at least questioning this legal formula, educators set out to put religion into the curriculum while avoiding teaching it. Pennsylvania and Florida worked at early projects that soon met with obstacles. States continue to work within impossible restrictions and with nervous insistence on words such as secular, neutral, objective, and equal.

In California, “Guidelines for Teaching about Religion” say that a teacher can instruct about religion but can emphasize no particular religion. Apparently, every time a teacher mentions one religion he or she must refer to every other religion. But a teacher cannot seriously examine religion without examining a particular religion. A course on sixteenth-century European history would presumably have to emphasize what happened to and within the Christian religion. In one California case, the teacher, Stephen Williams, used disputed material that highlighted the role of Christians in the nation’s founding. The lawyer from the Alliance Defense Fund reasonably noted that “You’re not going to find a lot of Muslim Founding Fathers” (Boyer, 2005, p. 71).

From what was published about this California case, I think that the teacher was in fact proselytizing. He made some good points about the illogic of the state’s guidelines but that does not prove that his own position was academically sound. As a recently converted Evangelical Christian, Williams’ “supplementary material” was skewed toward making the case for Christianity. Some people inclined to be evangelical preachers are attracted to programs for “teaching about religion.” They figure that they can get their message across while going about and around religion. If states exclude on principle teachers professionally prepared to teach religion in an academically sound manner, the field is left open to people who see the classroom as a pulpit.

Where did Goldberg’s strange contrast come from? Most likely it was directly or indirectly from F. Ernest Johnson. In the 1947 report, “The Relation of Religion to Public Education,” Johnson made reference to teaching about religion. *Time Magazine* (1947) summarized that document as saying, “The committee proposed to teach about religion, but not to teach religion itself in the schools.” Actually, that contrast is not explicit in the document but was deduced by *Time*. Their insertion of the word “itself” is to make clear that religion should not be the subject of inquiry. In 1951, a report from the Educational Policies Commission, *Moral and Spiritual*

Values in the Public Schools, says, “The public school can teach objectively about religion without advocating or teaching any religious creed” (see Johnson’s comments in Johnson, 1951). What “teaching objectively” means can be debated at length but one cannot quarrel with the prohibition of “advocating a religious creed” in the public schools.

Johnson used the distinction of “teach” and “teach about” in other essays and books. In responding to the question of whether “studying about religion is not studying religion, he says that is true but “studying about is the beginning of study” (1940, p. 188). That is, Johnson made a distinction within a single process: the way into understanding something is to become acquainted with some external facts about it. Unintentionally, Johnson’s description of steps in the process of understanding may have helped to create a dichotomy of teach religion versus teach about religion.

Johnson bears more responsibility for a related contrast that shows up in the *Abington* opinion. In addition to confusion about the meaning of religion, the misunderstanding of “teach religion” is based on a stereotype of teaching. In this country, learning and studying are effusively praised but teaching is suspect. Not many people go so far as Ivan Illich’s (1971) formula that to teach is to corrupt. But there are authors who, while having no experience in academic teaching, assume that school teachers are big people telling little people what to think. The Hollywood image of an ideal school teacher is a man standing on a desk and giving an impassioned sermon on the meaning of life to students who are rapt in attention. The actual work of classroom teaching is more prosaic, trying to provoke people to think carefully about something they have read for that day’s meeting.

The insistence on “teach about” instead of “teach” is to keep school teachers from telling students what to believe. “Teach” when applied to religion is assumed to mean indoctrinating children into the particular beliefs of the teacher. That makes one wonder what people assume is done when teachers teach history, economics, or literature? Statements that are routinely made about teaching religion are a slander on the profession of school teaching.

Study But Not Teach

The uneasiness with “teach” leads authors to talk about “studying religion” instead of “teaching religion.” Students are allowed to study religion but teachers are not allowed to teach religion. This way of speaking shows up in Supreme Court decisions and in the literature of the last 40 years. The use of “study” to avoid “teach” is found in this widely quoted passage in *Abington* by Justice Tom Clarke: “Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education may not be effected consistently with the first amendment” (1963, p. 203).

If he is talking about presenting religion objectively, that sounds like he is talking about teaching. But he studiously avoids the term teaching and refers to the

study of religion. It is easy enough to imagine students studying religion or anything else they fancy. The question is whether teachers can teach religion. On that point, Justice Clarke slides around the issue, leaving to Justice Goldberg the opinion that the teachers cannot teach religion. The *Abington* opinion of the Supreme Court, therefore, is that in state schools studying religion is constitutional but teaching religion is not. Religion should be in the curriculum, presented objectively, but it cannot be taught.

As was true of these two Supreme Court statements, it is common practice elsewhere to praise the study of religion while avoiding references to the teaching of religion. The American Council on Education report was one source but not the sole source of the Clarke–Goldberg contrast. However, what is noteworthy about the report on this point was that the authors were clearly aware of why people say “study” rather than “teach.” They address directly the nature of academic teaching, something actually rare in educational literature. Their advocacy of religion in the curriculum clearly entails that the teacher would teach it. But in the end they back away from defending what they know to be the correct position.

A paragraph in the Conclusion of the document embodies their inconsistency. The first sentence reads, “Fundamental to the proposals we have set forth is an interpreting of ‘teaching’ which distinguishes it from indoctrination in the ordinary sense of that word” (Committee on Religious Education, 1947, p. 51). Their distinction between “teach” and “indoctrinate” is certainly acceptable, although to some people not obvious. But if the Committee’s use of “teaching” is fundamental to what they are proposing, they should have vigorously defended it. Indeed, in defense of every school teacher in the public and private schools of this country, their distinction should have been insisted upon. However, the last sentence of the same paragraph says, “We have frequently used the phrase ‘the study of religion’ instead of ‘teaching religion’ because the latter so commonly implies indoctrination.” That is precisely why they should have insisted on what they have said in the first sentence.

Using “study of religion” for “teaching of religion” is not the substitution of a synonym; it is giving in to the stereotype which they know is the obstacle to their proposals being heard. The committee failed to stand by their convictions and became part of the confusion that swirls about the issue of teaching religion to this day.

Conclusion

Any attempt to revivify the twentieth-century project of religious education may seem to be a hopeless undertaking. However, just as the term was falling out of a public use in the United States, it was being given a legal meaning in the United Kingdom. Religious education in England and Wales was to include religious instruction in every state and county school (Wedderspoon, 1964). For reasons quite different from those in the United States, religious education in the United Kingdom

has not lived up to the hopes of those who adopted the term in 1944. Nevertheless, it has retained its meaning to include state schools and there is a substantial body of literature on religious education in the state school.

Today there is some fairly serious discussion of religious education within the European Union and especially within the Council of Europe. One of England's leading religious educators writes:

Issues about the study of religion in public education are being discussed internationally as never before. The discussions include specialists in religion, but also many outside the professional field of religious education – politicians, civil servants, NGOs and other groups within civil society as well as educators concerned with fields such as citizenship and intercultural education. (Jackson, 2006)

In other words, the Council of Europe is engaged in a project similar to what the United States started in 1903.

British usage of “religious education” had tended to place the whole of it within the state school. The result was that the work of church, synagogue, mosque, and temple was excluded from the meaning of religious education. The British way of speaking is now challenged by assumptions in the usage of other European nations (Jackson, Miedema, Weisse, & Willaime, 2007). The United States, given its religious diversity and its commitment to schools, should be a leading participant in these discussions but it is absent. The United Nations has expressed concern with religious education, a worldwide religious education that is still in its formative stage (*International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 1966; see also Moran, 2006).

Ironically, a strong impetus for European discussion of religious education was the attack on the United States in September, 2001. The question now is whether the United States will join the rest of the world in developing adequate programs of religious education. For religious institutions, the need should be obvious. And for the country as a whole, if it is to confront its political, ecological, and economic problems, the academic examination of religion is a needed part of education.

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Civilising Religion

Trond Enger

Four Scenarios

Scenario One

The year is 1719. The place is Madrid. The stage is a platform with a man tied to a pole. It is the Roman Catholic Church's inquisition at work. An eyewitness – the Inquisitor himself – relates:

A burning torch is held up in front of the face of the condemned man to warn him, to show what awaits him if he does not repent. Around the victim there are numerous monks, who . . . with increasing fervour urge the culprit to convert. Quite calmly the culprit says: 'I will convert to the belief in Jesus Christ' – words that had never before come from his mouth. The monks were very enthusiastic about this. They embraced him tenderly and affectionately, thanking God over and again that he had opened a door to the man's salvation. Wishing to save this soul that had shown so many signs of repentance, I moved seemingly by chance to the executioner where he stood behind the pole and ordered him to strangle the man immediately because it was very important not to hesitate. He strangled him at once.

When it was ascertained that the man no longer lived, the executioner was ordered to set fire to each of the four corners of the platform, which he immediately did. It began to burn from all sides, the flames soon licking all over the platform where the victim was tied to the pole. As soon as the ropes holding the victim were burnt through, he fell through the open trap door into the red-hot pyre and his body was burned to ashes.

Scenario Two

It is end of July 1941. The place is the concentration camp in Auschwitz. The stage is the parade ground after an escape has been discovered. As collective punishment

T. Enger (✉)
Østfold University College, Halden, Norway
e-mail: trond.enger@hif.no

the SS officer Karl Fritsch has just picked out 10 prisoners who are to be executed by being locked up in the underground starvation-cell, there slowly to starve to death. An eye witness tells:

A Polish sergeant, Franciszek Gaiowniczek, was among those who had been chosen to starve to death. He screamed in the despair at the thought of his wife and two children. Suddenly a lean figure with steel-rimmed spectacles leaves the ranks and approaches the feared camp leader. He takes off his cap and stands, red in the face, to attention in front of the SS man. Frightened, SS officer Fritsch automatically reaches for his pistol. The other prisoners expect their co-prisoner to be shot down on the spot. Fritsch shouts: "What does this Polish swine wish? Who are you?" The man answers: "I am a Catholic priest. I want to die instead of this man. I am single, whereas he has a wife and children." Fourteen days later Fr Maximilian Kolbe was executed in the starvation-cell in Block 11.

Scenario Three

It is a Friday evening in August 1998. The place is Kabul. People are moving towards the town's stadium. Thousands gather in the stands, all men. Time is ripe for what is called the only legal form of entertainment under the Taliban's strict regime: the public punishment of criminals. First, the reading aloud of verses from the Koran by the Taliban's scribes. One hour's edification, then the time is ripe. The loud speaker proclaims that it is a good and edifying thing to witness executions. About 5000 persons wait expectantly.

Three men are led into the circle to pay for their crimes according to Islamic law. The first is a thief, decidedly with bad luck, as he has twice been caught red-handed. As punishment he has to live without hands for the rest of his life. His hands are cut off to the accompaniment of a scribe, a mullah, who chants admonitions and verses from the Koran. Surgeons in their working clothes perform the amputation, but it is not clear whether anaesthetisation is used.

The next is left with his hands, but a foot is cut off.

Then comes the climax of the meeting. A man has been convicted of murder, and has to pay for the crime according to the rule 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'. He dies in a hail of bullets from a Kalashnikov.

Scenario Four

Cairo in the 1990s.

As he did every week, the Nobel Prize winner for literature 1988, Naguib Mahfouz, came into the editorial office of al-Ahram, Egypt's most important newspaper, with an article commenting on current issues. That week's article he had called 'Between power and freedom'. Among Islamic fundamentalists, who do not accept contradiction, Mahfouz was hardly beloved. But, he was never tired of fighting openly for Egyptian democracy. 'Utopia', he wrote, 'cannot be forced upon others, least of all by arms. Whoever tries this would probably suffer the same fate

as the leaders of the Communist Soviet Union. Egypt's history also contains warning examples for anyone trying to force his dreams upon a reluctant population . . . Of course we need dreams and dreamers for society to develop. But positive development can only take place when human nature is taken into account. To treat human nature with respect . . . must never be the task of an individual or a group of people alone. That is the task of society as a whole, and can only be realized through the dynamic process of democracy. Only in a democratic society can every voice and every nuance of opinion be heard. Democracy creates the best atmosphere for progress; for where human rights are respected, a positive development is guaranteed.'

A Fifth Scenario?

We could add a fifth scenario that needs no description – only a date: 11 September.

Religions: Complex Entities

Christian torturers and executioners of the Inquisition who took the lives of others, Muslim mullahs who mutilate and kill, Father Kolbe who gave his life for another, and the writer Mahfouz who placed the struggle for democracy and human rights above personal security – they illustrate the fact that the major religious traditions are of a complex nature and include the potential for contradictory behaviour. Each of the four reactions described above can be justified in the religions in question.

It is not, however, unusual to come across the opinion that the persecution of heretics in the name of Christianity and terror in the name of Islam are not due to inherent features of those religions, but rather that the evildoers and terrorists unjustly plead their religion. It would be convenient if it only were true. To repudiate all religiously motivated murders, mutilations and terror as misuse of religion is in a social anthropological perspective a sort of strange reluctance to take seriously the self-understanding of the representatives we are uncomfortable about or perhaps are afraid of, a reluctance to accept their personal religious sincerity. To judge all religiously motivated murderers, mutilators and terrorists as misusers of religion is moreover a violation of the facts.

Those who set out to liberate the Holy Land from the alleged enemies of God and massacred Muslims and non-Christian Jews in Jerusalem, or tortured and executed the heretics in spectacular autodafés until less than 250 years ago, could plead unambiguous supportive statements in both parts of the very book which Christianity holds holy (e.g. Jes. 65:12; Apoc. 19:15–18, 20 ff.).

Those who in the decades after Mohammed let the sword prepare the way for Islam, or administered the public mutilations and executions in the stadium in Kabul, or who today blow up buses and restaurants in Israel or hijack passenger planes and

turn them into weapons in a holy war, they too could and can point to unambiguous supportive statements in *their* holy book, the Koran (e.g. 22:9, 20f., 25f., 50, 56, 71).

The phenomenon 'religion' is obviously an enormous power in the lives of individuals and of nations. It is, however, obviously a power both for good and for evil, depending on which elements of the actual religion and religious tradition are given priority.

The Need for Religious Criticism

Facing the fact that the major religious traditions are of a complex nature also as far as potential interpretation and behaviour is concerned, it is for obvious reasons of immense importance that the different religions engage in a thorough criticism of their own traditions so that religion can promote reconciliation and peace and no longer be used to defend hatred and violence. If we deny the religiously motivated murderers, mutilators and terrorists religious legitimacy, we hinder the religions from facing the inescapable self-criticism necessary for the process of civilisation.

What is needed is not the traditional form of religious criticism. With traditional religious criticism I mean critique of religion as such, religious criticism as we know it from Demokrit and Epicurus to Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. What is needed is an *intra-religious* criticism, a criticism of the different religious traditions from within. This form of religious criticism has a long and lively history in the Christian tradition. It has, nevertheless, frequently led to separation and the establishment of new denominations and religious communities. In other words, in Christianity we also have a long tradition of failing to cope with religious criticism from within, other than by expelling those who dare to criticise.

Fortunately, during the last century or so, the major Christian communities have learned – at least to a certain degree and partly through a painful process – to live and to cope with intra-religious criticism. Some have even included it as an essential element of their spiritual identity. Those of the major western churches that have internalised modern scholarly theology realised the necessity of a continuous internal criticism in order to maintain their spiritual health. And they look upon modern scholarly theology as a principal agent of healthy criticism.

The Standard

Any meaningful critical approach requires a standard. What we have to look for is a standard which is able to discern between the positive and the negative potentials within *all* religious traditions, and we need a standard that is not only applicable to every religious tradition, but one – and this is extremely important – which the

different religious traditions can internalise and adopt as their own and thus apply from within.

To most people in the west and for many people outside the western world it is quite clear what this standard should be, that which may not be violated at any price, not even by the religions and their prophets. This standard for the necessary criticism of religion – of *all* religions and religious traditions – is found in the Human Rights (HRs) as they have developed through the United Nations after the Second World War in the International Bill of Human Rights, concentrated on the belief in equal human dignity. This is expressed as simply as monumentally in the first article of the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights – one of the most beautiful sentences in the history of humankind: ‘All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood’.

After a long and painful process we in the western world have to a large extent internalised this standard not only in our culture, but also in the dominating religion in the west, Christianity. Christianity has thus come far in the process of internal criticism and discrimination in the difficult process of cleansing its tradition using the HRs as standard, a process fraught with risk.

What about the rest of the world? Is this standard valid for them? Is it applicable to other cultures and religious traditions? And just as important: Are these cultures and religious traditions willing to apply this standard themselves?

We leave aside the allegation that the HRs, as they have developed through the UN, are a product of western Christian culture, alien to non-western cultures – both the fact that human rights had to be fought for during centuries *within* western culture, the facts of the process leading to the 1948 UN Declaration, and the fact that western countries represented in the General Assembly of UN were far outnumbered by non-western countries when the two basic Human Rights covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were adopted in 1966 making the allegation more than questionable.

Human Rights: Conflicting Principles

The HRs as a standard for unavoidable religious criticism have built-in challenges. I will point out two of them. The first challenge is that the HRs themselves contain conflicting principles as demonstrated by three of the most important principles relevant to religion in education: the principles of *parental right*, of *children’s rights* and of *public interest*.

Parental Right

The principle of parental right in education is a principle that is basic in most of the documents relevant to religion in education, classically expressed in the 1948 *UN*

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26:3: ‘Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children’. Aimed more directly at religious education in the 1966 *UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Article 18:4: ‘The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions’, in the 1950 *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, Protocol 1, Article 2: ‘. . . the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions’ and in the 1960 *UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education*, Article 5:1b: ‘It is essential to respect the liberty of parents . . . to ensure . . . the religious and moral education of the children in conformity with their own conviction’.

Children’s Rights

The principle of children’s rights in education is classically expressed in the 1948 *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: ‘Everyone has the right to education’ (Article 26: 1).

Public Interest

The principle of public interest is closely connected to the previous principle of children’s educational right. The authorities in a pluralistic society have a strong public interest in a religious education that furthers the kind of education described in the 1989 *UN Convention of the Rights of the Child* (Article 29:1c & d), where the relevant passages read:

State Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: . . . the development of respect for . . . civilisations different from his or her own; . . . the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups. . .

. . . and in the 1960 *UN Convention against discrimination in Education* (Article 5:1a), where the relevant passages read: ‘The States Parties to this Convention agree that: Education shall . . . promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups’.

When the principles of children’s right and of public interest clash with the principle of the parental right, which principle shall be given priority?

Case Study: Norway

The challenge of the conflicting principles emerges especially clear when one tries to design a multi-faith religious education (RE) compulsory for all pupils in school. Developments in Norway after the introduction of such compulsory RE in 1997 are interesting in this context.

Basic Principles and Objectives

The premises for the curriculum guidelines state that the subject is ‘objective, neutral and pluralistic’.

The same pedagogical principles should be applied to all material. In other words, the approach should be the same to all religions and views of life presented. The approach should be what John Hull calls divergent: the teacher intends neither to deepen the pupils’ faith in a special religion nor to discourage it. He or she is teaching religion as part of a worthwhile educational experience for the pupils.

It is a subject like all other subjects in school, concerned about knowledge, not about converting pupils. The subject belongs to the school. The teaching of RE is carried out on the school’s terms, not on the church’s or the terms of any other systems of belief.

The basic aims are twofold: to build up identity by passing on the cultural heritage, and promote dialogue; to foster pupils and a society characterised by tolerance and understanding for those who differ from mainstream society.

Content

When we turn to the content, we realise that even if the subject is multi-faith, Christianity dominates quantitatively, on the grounds that 92% of the population belong to a Christian denomination.

The aesthetic dimensions are central, a consequence of the growing awareness of religion as part of the cultural heritage – which is a main argument for making the subject compulsory.

Challenge: Lack of General Exemption

Multi-faith RE is no longer unique (*cf.* England, Sweden, Denmark, parts of Germany). What makes the new subject in Norway so special is the fact that it

is compulsory. It is possible to withdraw only from certain small parts of the subject, which are ‘those parts which the parents experience as the exercise of another religion or approval of another view of life, e.g. religious activities in or outside the classroom’. The debate about the new subject has focused almost exclusively on this lack of general exemption as a violation of the HRs of minorities.

Legal Developments in Court

Two organisations representing two minority groups (Humanists and Muslims) decided to sue the Norwegian State in two separate lawsuits in 1999. Both the Humanists and the Muslims pleaded that their children should be granted full exemption from the subject. In the court the Muslims pointed among other things to what they regard as the enormous difference between Christianity and Islam. They alleged that the mere encounter with Christianity, independent of whether it is in the form of objective information or preaching, creates fear and confusion in the children and disturbs the development of identity. Both the Humanists and the Muslims concluded that the subject violates several HRs conventions and is an infringement on the minorities, with special reference to

- The 1960 *UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education* (Article 5:1b) and
- The 1966 *UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (Article 18:4), . . . and other relevant conventions:
- The 1948 *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Article 26:1 and 3),
- The 1950 *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (Articles 9 & 14), and 1. Protocol (Article 2) and
- The 1989 *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Articles 14:1 and 3; 29:1a-d; and 30).

The *State* claimed as a fact that the subject is an ordinary subject like all other subjects offered in the school. Its aim is to promote knowledge, tolerance and understanding, and definitely not to promote the Christian faith. The State concluded that such a subject does not violate any HRs convention on freedom of religion. In its understanding of the HR requirements the Norwegian court followed the State and based much of its arguments and its conclusion on the rulings in three cases for the European HRs Commission and the European Court of HRs:

1. The *Valsamis* case in 1996, where Greek parents belonging to Jehova’s Witnesses wanted their 12-year-old daughter exempted from a national celebration. When dealing with the case the Court of HRs stated that in relation to violation of HRs it should be judged objectively, not according to the subjective comprehension of the parties.

2. The *Angelini* case in 1983, where a mother in Sweden wanted her daughter exempted from all sorts of RE as she and her daughter were atheists. The HRs Commission stated that predominance of one particular religion or worldview could not as such be seen as violating the 1950 *European Convention for the Protection of HRs and Fundamental Freedoms*, Article 9, concerning ‘Freedom of thought, conscience and religion’, provided there is no indoctrination.
3. In the *Kjeldsen* case in 1976, where Danish parents wanted their children exempted from sex lessons, the Court of HRs stated that Protocol 1, Article 2 about ‘Right to education’ in the *European Convention* does not prevent the State from including religious education or philosophy in the curriculum provided the teaching is objective, critical and pluralistic.

Repeatedly the Norwegian court emphasised that the crucial point is the *intention* behind the subject. The court established the intention as follows: to promote dialogue, increase understanding and tolerance among religions in order to master the multi-cultural situation in Norway. This is in accordance with the intention and spirit of the 1948 *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

The court referred to the three partly conflicting principles in the relevant HRs conventions, referred to in Paragraph 5: the principle of *parental right*, of *children’s right* and of *public interest*.

That the court referred to these three principles is not surprising. What is surprising is the weight the court put on each of these principles:

The Authority to Educate

Traditionally, almost all emphasis has been laid on the principle of parental right. The parental right as far as education is concerned was laid down as one of the basic principles already in the 1948 *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. When we consider the historic background for the 1948 declaration, it is easy to understand that this principle of parental right became very central. During the Nazi regime in pre-war Europe the State had forced upon all children a political ideology by means of indoctrination through the school system. Even though the Nazi regimes had been defeated by 1948, this kind of state-indoctrination was still being practised in full scale in the expanding communist sphere of influence of the time. Article 26:3 should safeguard against this kind of state-indoctrination.

However, as the leading scholar in the field of RE in Denmark, K.E. Bugge, argues: ‘One should think that in a post-war situation, where democracy has been almost universally accepted, such a safeguard would no longer be necessary. Nevertheless’, he continues, ‘the principle of parental right still has some influence in this country (i.e. Denmark)’ (Bugge, 1991, p. 53). As far as Norway is concerned, the importance of the principle of parental right has weighed heavier towards the last part of the 20th century, that is, until the court rather surprisingly gave greater emphasis to the two other principles. It might, therefore, be appropriate to take a closer look at those principles, which have come more into focus.

Children's Rights

Basic in the HRs thinking is that every individual is born with certain rights. Not only parents, not only adults. The child is also born with rights of its own, rights that are independent of the parent–child relationship. Among these rights is the right to education (UN, 1948, 26:1; UN, 1989, 28:1). It is difficult to defend a position where this right to education should exclude the right to education in the field of *religion*. It might very well be that education in religion with the critical openness both to one's own tradition and to others', which is at the heart of education, is not what the parents want for their child. A consequence of religious education is that parents inevitably lose control to some degree over the child's religious development.

When the principles of parental right and of the child's right clash, which principle shall have priority? To answer this question it can be helpful to look at another of the child's rights: the right of religious freedom (UN, 1989, 14:1). It is clear that the child cannot exercise this right fully before it is in its teens. That does not mean, however, that the parents have the right to educate their children in religion as they wish. Those in authority over the child, which include both the parents and the school, have a duty to prepare it for the exercise of this freedom. Their parental right does not, for instance, give them the right to isolate the child from all ways of life different from those of the parents and of others sharing their faith or outlook on life. Atheistic parents, for instance, have a duty not to isolate their children from religious ways of life.

The limitation of parental right has already been expressed by John Lock in his Second Treatise of Civil Government: 'The power (over his children) belongs to the father only as he is guardian of his children, that when he quits his care of them, he loses his power over them' (Art. 65).

The parental right is important as far as it reaches. It does not, however, reach very far. Neither Article 8 in the 1950 *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* about 'Right to respect for private and family life' nor Protocol 1's Article 2, which reads '... the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions', protect parents' rights at the expense of children's right. The preparation for the European Convention makes it clear that it is not a question of rights that parents have for their own sake, but for the sake of their children. Accordingly the European Court of HRs stated in 1982 that 'the whole of Protocol 1's Article 2 being dominated by its first sentence', which reads: 'No person shall be denied the right to education'.

Lucy Smith, one of the leading specialists in children's rights in Norway, points to the fact that neither the European Convention nor any UN Convention (before the 1989 *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*) takes children's special need for protection into consideration. Seen through the eyes of today, it is astonishing how the European Convention is preoccupied in defending the right of parents to decide over their children. Children's rights are not mentioned at all. Not even in the 1959 *UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child* do we find provisions concerning children's rights in relationship to their parents. We find the explanation for this in the historical situation shortly after the Second World War, as we have already indicated

above. The world community had the intervention in family life by the Nazi regimes in vivid memory, and the same thing went on in the communist regimes still in existence. Facing such a threat from outside, parents will normally try to take care of the interests of their children. It is, therefore, primarily in relationship to the parents that children are in need of protection, as Lucy Smith asserted in 1980, protection now provided for through the 1989 *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

In summary, the parents' right to decide over the religion of their children, including their religious education, is clearly limited by the children's right to religious freedom, even when that freedom has to be administered by the parents. And the parents' rights are limited by the children's right to education, even in religion.

Public Interest

More than referring to the children's rights the court based its conclusion on what it understood as legitimate public interest. The public interest is a well-known but, nevertheless, often overlooked limitation of religious freedom.

The court argued that the development of an individual with that 'spirit of understanding' as outlined in the 1989 *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Article 29:1d) is of decisive importance if the growing multi-cultural situation in Norway is to be mastered. The 1950 *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, Article 9:2, can easily be interpreted in a way which gives the State the right to limit religious freedom in order to reconcile different interests and secure respect for the beliefs of all her citizens. The article reads:

Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others.

If an objective, pluralistic and critical RE for all pupils in school can make a decisive contribution to the above-mentioned legitimate public interest and to promoting the peace we all want, is it right to allow parents to obstruct this by withdrawing their children's participation?

The court's conclusion in both lawsuits was very clear. The new subject does not violate HRs, and consequently it found the State 'not guilty'. This verdict was confirmed by the Norwegian Supreme Court in 2001.

In 2002, five parents, all members of the Norwegian Humanist Association, lodged an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The applicants complained that the refusal to grant full exemption from the subject prevented them from ensuring that their children received an education in conformity with their religious and philosophical convictions.

In June 2007, the ECHR's Grand Chambre delivered its judgment. The Court held that there had been a violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (right to education) of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is, however, worth noting that this judgement was delivered by nine votes to eight.

The Court valued the intention behind the subject as well as ‘the many laudable legislative purposes stated in the connection with the introduction of the . . . subject’. The ECHR – like the Norwegian Court of 1999 – noted that the Convention ‘does not embody any right for parents that their child be kept ignorant about religion and philosophy in their education’ and that ‘the fact that knowledge about Christianity represented a greater part of the Curriculum . . . than knowledge about other religions and philosophies cannot of its own be viewed as a departure from the principle of pluralism and objectivity’. For the Court’s majority, however, ‘it was clear that the preponderant weight that was given to Christianity’ was ‘not only quantitative but also qualitative’. The Court referred first to the so-called Christian object clause, according to which the object of primary and lower secondary education was to be, in agreement and cooperation with the home, among other things, to help give pupils a Christian and moral upbringing, and second to the differences applied to the teaching of Christianity as compared to that of other religions and philosophies in part of the legislative framework. In view of these disparities it was for the majority of the Court ‘not clear how the further aim of promoting understanding, respect and the ability to maintain dialogue between people with different perceptions of belief and convictions could be properly attained’.

The Court then considered whether the possibility for parents to request partial exemption from the subject was sufficient to counter the imbalance, and concluded that it was not the case. In the Court’s view some of the practical arrangements for the partial exemption make it insufficient to counter the imbalance between Christianity and other religions and philosophies.

Accordingly, the Court’s majority concluded ‘that the refusal to grant the applicant parents full exemption from the . . . subject for their children gave rise to a violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1’.

It is important to be aware that before the judgment in the ECHR the Norwegian Government had decided to abandon the so-called Christian object clause which constituted a major premise for the Court’s judgement. A new non-confessional object clause was implemented 2008. And the educational authorities have stated that they are prepared to make the necessary amendments to meet with the court’s ruling.

In the same year as the appeal to the ECHR was lodged (2002), four sets of parents lodged a communication with the UN’s HRs Committee, with in principle the same complaints as discussed in the case above. In 2004, the Committee stated that the subject is not violating Human Rights when neutral and objective. It had, however, critical comments about the rules regarding the practise of the partial exemption. The educational authorities in Norway responded also to this criticism by making the necessary amendments to meet with the Committee’s acceptance.

The Risk Inherent in Education

Multi-faith RE contains some presuppositions that explain much of the opposition. Multi-faith RE is based on a view of education as a critical openness both to one’s

own tradition and to others', and it is based on the conviction that children have a right to be educated even in religion. That some parents do not want their children to be *educated* in religion is not difficult to understand. To be educated in religion implies knowledge even about 'the other'. However, knowledge does something with us – it influences us.

Knowledge does something with pupils which cannot be controlled by those in charge. There is, therefore, an inherent risk in encounter with knowledge. Perhaps I have to think thoughts I never have thought before; perhaps the knowledge forces me to abandon some of my prejudices; perhaps the knowledge seizes me and leads me on paths I have never before dared to walk. If we succeed in teaching religion and worldviews in objective fairness, vividly and to the point, and in conveying to the pupils something of the fascination which the religion or worldview in question has held for millions of people, well, we then run the risk that this knowledge may change them in a way that parents and other guardians are no longer able to control. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that parents with another preference than the Christian faith are worried about the dominance of Christian teaching in the curriculum, even when it is presented objectively, fairly and to the point.

In the Norwegian court the Muslims put it this way: 'It is of no importance whether the teaching is pure information about Christianity or evangelisation. When exposed to Christianity Muslim pupils will experience fear because Christianity is so totally different from Islam'. To this the judge answered: 'The theological differences between Christianity and Islam are of no relevance. The HRs conventions do not provide protection against fear for knowledge'.

Education involves a deliberate risk. Education is the willingness to confront that which I bring with me into the classroom with new knowledge and new ideas. Those in favour of education strongly believe that only through such encounters will people grow in self-realisation, understanding of others and true tolerance. That is why the right to education is one of the basic Human Rights – even the right to *religious* education.

Human Law Versus Divine Law

There is a second built-in challenge in using the HRs as a standard for the mandatory religious criticism, for the necessary civilisation of the religions and as an overall value-base in school, in addition to the above-mentioned challenge that the HRs contain conflicting principles. The religious believer might argue, and some of them certainly do, that the HRs as developed through the UN are created by mere mortals; divine rights, divine law, must have priority – not the other way around.

An example: The Egyptian philosopher, Hassan Hanafi, criticises what he sees as the western concept of HRs in the following words: 'Rights of man were conceived contrary to his duties or the Rights of God'. He sees the western HRs concept as part of the European process of enlightenment where man has taken God's place, hence the moral and spiritual poverty of western secular life. Another example: When

approached by a BBC journalist in connection with the death sentence through stoning of the Nigerian unmarried woman, Safya Hussaini, in 2002 who had become pregnant after having been raped, the public prosecutor answered: 'This is the law of Allah. When we execute someone sentenced by Islamic law, we are only following the law of Allah, and we have therefore nothing to be worried about'.

It is important to recognise the fact that this conflict between human law and divine law has also played a major role in the HRs discussion within Christianity, and furthermore that the very idea of the modern concept of HRs had to be fought for during centuries. HRs are not a matter of course in any cultural or religious tradition – not even in the western Christian tradition. This observation is both important and encouraging. If those within Christianity have managed to alter course all of 180°, other religious traditions might be able to do the same! When Christians approach non-Christian traditions in RE it is also psychologically important to refer to the fact that those too in the Christian tradition had to fight for the HRs, and had to break with parts of cultural heritage to achieve what was accomplished in the field of HRs.

And a 180° change of course has indeed taken place within Christianity. Compare, for example Pope Pius IX's *Syllabus Errorum* (in the Encyclica *Quanta cura*) from 1864, where he condemned among other things religious freedom and the freedom of the press as modern aberrations, with Pope Johannes XXIII's Encyclica *Pacem in Terris* from 1963 and Vatican II's Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* from 1965. *Dignitatis Humanae*'s first chapter opens with these words: 'The Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom'.

The Solution in Christianity

What made the turnaround possible in Christianity? The first major step towards abandoning religiously sanctioned violence and oppression was taken after the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) when parts of continental Europe suffered severely under a conflict where both parties, the Roman Catholics as well as the Protestants, defended their brutal behaviour on religious grounds. The state, in an act of self-preservation, confined religion to the private sphere. The ground was thus prepared for the most persistent dogma in the modernity: that religion and politics have to be separated, at the sacrifice of the potential positive impact which religion could have had on politics. This dogma of separation between religion and politics was implemented by western powers in their colonies with consequences primarily for Islam which, like Christianity in Europe, was confined to the private sphere.

To solve the problems created by religions' negative potential by confining religion to the private sphere is no longer possible. The religions, or at least some religious traditions, in the last part of the 20th century, have revolted against the modernist dogma and broken out of the private prison where they were confined.

We find this tendency even within Christianity combined with a renaissance for the theology of creation. The religions have returned to the public sphere and insist on playing a role even in political life. They will not voluntarily go back to their private prison, and it is more than doubtful whether they will ever again be returned by force, even if this were possible. If we keep religion out of politics, we are not only spared the negative potential in the religions, but at the same time bereaved of their positive potential. The best way to avoid ‘the clash’ – perhaps not the big clash between civilisations as Samuel Huntington (1996) prophesied, but ‘the clash’ as a series of conflicts as we have seen in the last decades – is to start a journey inward in the religious traditions. In other words, it is high time for religious criticism and a RE that dare to criticise and discriminate.

The second and decisive step towards abandoning religiously motivated violence and oppression came when Christians managed to separate ethics from the idea of their directly divine origins. And most important: Christianity managed to find arguments for that separation which are not in conflict with what is understood as the Divine will. On the contrary: Christianity managed to find arguments in its own tradition that positively promoted ethical autonomy – ethical autonomy so to speak as an act of the Divine will. That is the everlasting merit of the Age of Enlightenment, as prepared for by Martin Luther’s distinction between Law and Gospel where he placed ethics entirely in the human sphere: ethics are for the sake of human beings, and they only need reason to understand the difference between right and wrong.

In the Age of Enlightenment it was Immanuel Kant who argued most convincingly for the autonomy of ethics, which did not mean that ethics were at the mercy of human arbitrariness. On the contrary, Kant’s revolutionary effort was to show that its unquestionable nature lies in its autonomy. And that which is unquestionable and universally valid is the respect for the dignity of the human being which according to Kant is grounded in man’s moral autonomy. Simultaneously, this view of the dignity of the human being could find support in the Christian ideas of *Imago Dei* and humans understood as God’s children. The Kantian categorical imperative is so autonomous and, therefore, so unquestionable that no religious argument, no revelation can overturn it, as happens in Islam and by Kierkegaard in his interpretation of Gen. 22 where Abraham is willing to sacrifice Isaac: Abraham, moving from an ethical towards a religious stage, suspended ethics for the benefit of faith, his absolute confidence in that which he understood as the Divine will. What he was willing to do was morally judged murder; religiously judged it was an act of sacrifice, an act of perfect obedience.

The point here is to discuss neither Kant nor Kierkegaard. The point is quite simple, but, nevertheless, all-important: that we in the western world have been able to find arguments for the necessary autonomy of ethics (from religion), arguments which are compatible with elements in the Christian religious tradition, for example in the teaching of Jesus himself when he gives his approval of the ethical maxim called the Golden Rule: ‘Always treat others as you would like them to treat you: that is the Law and the prophets’ (Mt. 7:12). Accordingly: divinely revealed truth can claim obedience only if it is moral. And it is moral only when it respects the

dignity of human beings. This autonomy of ethics is a *sine qua non* in the process of civilising religion, enabling religion to play the role of partner rather than adversary in the greater civilising process.

The way in which the integration of the HRs in the western secular and Christian tradition has been accepted may not be possible for other traditions. To assert that the western secular or Christian solution is the only way possible – in other words, to claim that the HRs are specific to western secularisation or with Christianity – would be the same as denying the universality of the HRs. The HRs are not an obvious part of any particular religious or cultural tradition. Even in the Christian tradition the struggle for HRs was partly a struggle against elements in the Christian tradition itself.

Overlapping Consensus

The extremely important admission that no religious tradition can make exclusive claims on the HRs enables comprehension of HRs as a centre in an intercultural ‘overlapping consensus’. Johan Rawls (1993) created this notion in order to clarify the basic political conceptions of justice in a modern liberal society, where different worldviews live side by side and sometimes in opposition to each other. Rawls’ consideration might be applicable for HRs on the global scene in that HRs might find full support, even though the basis for the HRs support might be irreconcilable with basic principles on which others base their HRs support. In other words, it is possible with real agreement based on real disagreement, called overlapping consensus. When the Universal Declaration of HRs was created in 1948, it was on the basis of just such an overlapping consensus. Representatives of 50 nations could agree on HRs in spite of the fact that some nations had irreconcilable convictions on matters of their deepest concern, for example on religious belief.

From the above it is clear that the HRs cannot be seen as something aiming towards a global universal culture, nor to speak of a global worldview or civil religion. On the contrary, the world’s cultural and religious diversity can be set free and flourish to the full when a standard grounded on an interpretation of their own authoritative sources for cultural and religious development based on the recognition of equal freedom and participation for all people is accepted. The key presupposition is that they find evidence in their religions supporting the autonomy of ethics.

Discriminating RE

A major agent in this necessary religious criticism is RE in school. Therefore, we need a strategy for *discriminating* RE, a RE that dares to criticise and discriminate.

Discriminating RE Means Activating Human Rights

According to the 1948 *UN Universal Declaration* ‘every organ of society’ has an obligation to ‘strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms’. The school’s contribution, however, should not be confined to the HRs as an object for teaching. The school should employ the HRs in a *discriminating* RE. RE should thus be a search-and-learning process.

A Search Process

In his book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, Neil Postman (1983) introduced the idea of ‘crap detecting’ He wrote: ‘One way of looking at the history of the human group is that it has been a continuing struggle against the veneration of “crap” meaning “misconceptions, faulty assumptions, superstitions and even outright lies.” Education should, therefore, “set out to cultivate . . . experts at ‘crap detecting’” in their own society and culture (pp. 16 fl.). Accordingly, RE can be seen as a search for elements in the religious traditions that threaten not only human dignity, but also the dignity of all of God’s creation.

For Judaists, Christians and Muslims a fundamental belief is that our lives are given us of God and that we are to account for this gift. Therefore, when we are going to discriminate, that is, to sort out that which in the various religions, including their holy books, does not have divine authority, one of the most trustworthy criteria should be, at least in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, that anything that violates life, this divine gift, anything that makes life less worth living for my neighbour or other of God’s creatures, is *not* divine – even if it might have its origin in a holy book. Expressed positively, RE should conduct a search for presuppositions for the HRs, especially for the view of humanity that says that human beings’ dignity is inviolable.

A Learning Process

In Christianity the ‘crap detecting’ has been – and partly still is – a long and difficult learning process. RE should reveal this process with its continuity and its discontinuity and thereby reveal Christianity’s totally changed attitude towards HRs – the main ‘crap detector’. This self-critical approach towards the difficult learning process in our own religious tradition helps us to be open to possible new learning experiences. This openness is an important presupposition for dialogue with other religious traditions and *their* learning experiences when facing modernity. One of the wonderful things about HRs is that they are relative, always in progress and development, and therefore, totally dependent on dialogue and learning.

Even if the past can be frightening when one considers the instrumentalisation of religion through history, in school we must, nevertheless, instrumentalise religion.

What is RE in school for? Only to present knowledge about different religious traditions? Or, to pass on the pupils' own religious tradition uncritically? No subject in school is defined only by its concrete aims. The store of knowledge is only a means. Schooling means instrumentalising. Without a discriminating RE we may as well abandon religious education in school.

Finally, an Observation and a Quotation

'Crap detecting' in the religious traditions is an extremely important task. It is, nevertheless, worthwhile making the observation that it was not religion that gave legitimacy to the worst violations of HRs during the last century, but two secular ideologies, communism and Nazism.

And we should above all, Muslims, Christians and others show each other the respect of insisting that the interpretation of God's will that infringes on decent conditions for freedom and equality for all human beings in their utmost consequence is false teaching (Lindholm, 1995, p. 166; 1997a, p. 41).

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With Beating Hearts and Earnest Purpose: The Heritage of the Women Delegates' Speeches to the World's Parliament of Religions

Lucinda A. Nolan

Introduction

The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 marked the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America and displayed to the world America's coming of age in industry, the arts, science, and education. Parliament historian Richard Seager (1995) provides a description of the historical context of the Exposition and the background events that led up to the organization of a parliament of world religions to be held in conjunction with it. On the occasion of this Parliament of Religions, over 20 women delegates arrived with "beating hearts and earnest purpose" (Chapin as cited in Houghton, 1893, p. 47) to join with others in welcoming religious leaders and scholars from around the world to Chicago.

In an era often referred to as the Gilded Age, the antebellum nation heralded to the world an unbridled optimism. Its predominately evangelical Protestant populace produced a national sense of self-identity as the New Jerusalem, claiming for itself the task of evangelizing the world (Seager, 1995, p. 164). Rather than highlight only America's material progress at the 1893 Fair, Charles Carroll Bonney, a Chicago lawyer and president of the World's Congress Auxiliary, proffered, "Something higher and nobler is demanded by the enlightened and progressive spirit of the age" (as cited in Seager, 1995, p. 46). This vision led Bonney to select John Henry Barrows, a Presbyterian minister, to chair the auxiliary's Department of Religion. Together the two men fashioned the idea of a parliament of religious leaders and scholars from around the world—a gathering unprecedented in history.

Richard Seager called the event a "classic" in the sense of David Tracy's use of the term (Tracy, 1987, pp. 1–27), "meaning that it [the Parliament] deserves repeated and varied interpretations to plumb the depths of its significance" (Seager, 1995, p. 163). The few scholars who have studied this unique event have found deep significance for the challenges of pluralism and diversity today. Diana Eck of the

L.A. Nolan (✉)

The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, USA

e-mail: Cnolan1118@yahoo.com

Harvard Pluralism Project attributes the beginning of the modern interfaith movement to the Parliament (as cited in Seager, 1993, pp. xiv–xv). Joseph Kitagawa, historian of religions, suggests, “Barrows and his colleagues should receive credit for initiating what we call today the ‘dialogue among religions,’ in which each religious claim for ultimacy is acknowledged” (1993, p. 188). For Marcus Braybrooke, the World’s Parliament of Religions achieved its significance through what it symbolized, namely, “the aspirations of those who believed that religions ought to be friendly and co-operative to each other and work together for human welfare and peace” (1992, p. 42). Seager, perhaps the most prolific writer on the Parliament, writes that the Parliament “serves as a kind of bottom line against which we can measure what has and what has not been achieved over the course of a century in the way of interreligious and intercultural understanding” (1993, p. 10).

In an article on contemporary critical interfaith pedagogy, Tiffany Puett writes:

Interfaith education grew out of the interfaith movement, a movement with a progressive and activist agenda. The interfaith movement ostensibly began in 1893 at the World’s Parliament of Religions gathering in Chicago, as part of the World’s Fair. . . . This ground breaking event was the first time in history that leaders of so-called “Eastern” and “Western” religions had come together for dialogue, seeking a common spiritual foundation for global unity (2005, p. 2).

A classic event . . . Tracy reminds us, is no less open to multiple and diverse interpretations than is a classic text, symbol, or person The parliament is generally viewed as an axial event in the history of religious faiths, American religious history, interfaith dialogue, and even general human history (Ziolkowski, 1993, p. 3). Seager relates that there is no one story that fully describes the watershed event, unfolding as it did at the end of the century which had been so formative of “American” religion (1995, p. xv). In actuality the Parliament was the locus of many stories, most of which have yet to be fully explored by scholars.

Among the many varied and interesting stories taking place within the context of the Parliament is one that tells of the remarkable presence of more than 20 women delegates. This phenomenon signaled the emergence of women as leaders and spokespersons of religious communities in the United States. Within the context of the speeches made to the Parliament by the women delegates, light is shed on what it meant at the turn of the century to engage in interreligious dialogue and education from within and outside faith communities. These addresses, though edited for publication from stenographic notes, still offer insights into the thinking of these women leaders. This chapter looks specifically to the speeches of the women delegates for key themes that shed light on what it means to do interreligious education in a religiously plural and globally diverse context. While every paper given had import and interest, given the scope of this essay, only a few will be examined. Exact figures vary, but somewhere between 19 and 23 women delegates addressed Parliament audiences on a variety of topics. This event marked the emergence of women as both religious leaders and heralds of the growing religious pluralism of this country at the turn of the century. The women’s speeches give various points of view on the relations among religions at that time. Feminist historian Ursula King

observes that, “many of the issues raised then still concern us today” (King, 1993, p. 326).

Any study of the past for the purpose of identifying themes for consideration in present circumstances must proceed with caution. Historian John Van Engen asks if there is such a “usable past” and, if so, does its study not cause the historian to “set up an impossibly strained triangulation: present-day questions, historic sources, methodological queries?” He answers by positing, “But precisely that three-way tension has often generated the most stimulating historical writing” (2004, p. 1). Scholars with present-day questions about interreligious education will naturally want to turn to history to seek originating ideas and foundational models for theoretical and methodological considerations.

After offering a brief descriptive background of the World’s Parliament of Religion, this chapter identifies and analyzes the content of nine women’s speeches, each of which offers insight into “the genesis of the modern interfaith movement” (Eck, as cited in Seager, 1993, p. xi) and gives voice to some key ideas for consideration in interreligious education today.

The 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions

Held in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition of 1893, the World’s Parliament of Religions brought together for 17 days almost 200 delegates, religious leaders, and scholars from 10 major religions of the world and over 150,000 spectators (September 11–27). Seager writes that of the 200 official delegates, 23 were women (1995, p. 164), but acknowledges the actual number may never be known.

The stated purposes of the Parliament were “to unite all religion against irreligion”; to set forth “their common aim and common grounds of union”; to help secure “the coming unity of mankind in the service of God and man”; and “to indicate the impregnable foundations of theism” (Bonney, 1894, pp. 82–83, 87–89 as cited in Seager, 1995, p. xvii). In what is now the Chicago Institute of Art, the delegates gathered in the Hall of Columbus to hear papers delivered on the particular theme assigned for the day. Describing the opening day procession of delegates to the stage, writers noted the brilliant display of colors in the religious garb of delegates from around the world. In the array of this colorful procession and seated on the stage at its completion were four women (Barrows, 1893, p. 64).

The speakers were overwhelmingly Protestant, male and from the United States. Advances in world travel allowed the parliament organizers to gather a remarkably international and diverse group of religious scholars and leaders. However, this is not to say that there were not certain groups that were underrepresented or totally absent from the proceedings. Many religious leaders thought it best not to attend any meeting that even hinted at establishing religious unity. The Sultan of Turkey declined the invitation and perhaps consequently, Muslims stayed away (one US citizen who had converted to Islam addressed the Parliament). The Archbishop of Canterbury also declined the invitation. Prominent Catholic leaders attended, but there were no Catholic women delegates to the parliament. Certainly, women and

African-Americans were not adequately represented, and Native Americans were not present at all. Mormons were simply not invited.

The papers given over the course of the 17 days covered a wide range of topics. Many addressed the theme of the day from a particular religious standpoint. Other sessions, less well attended, were scholarly, giving attention to the growing international interest in the newly emerging science of religion (also known as the discipline of the history of religions or comparative religion). The Asian delegates, many of whom were reform leaders in their own religious communities, were successful in introducing their religions to the West. In addition, representatives from the East raised awareness of the assumptions of Christian supremacy in their criticisms of the missionary practices of the West. There was little contentiousness at the Parliament, but the organizational structure of the Parliament was in actuality more a series of exchanged monologues than true interreligious dialogue as it is understood today.

While the unity that many participants and planners sought was never reached, nevertheless, scholars have heralded the World's Parliament of Religion as the first truly ecumenical gathering and as the beginning of the interreligious movement. Seager notes, "The Parliament was a liberal, western, and American quest for world religious unity that failed," but it

unintentionally turned out to be a revelation of the plurality of forces on the American and world scenes. As a result, it was a harbinger on the rise of the idea of religious pluralism that is alternatively celebrated, studied, decried, and in various ways struggled over today (1995, p. xxix).

Though small in number, the Parliament's women delegates made major contributions to the proceedings. Martin Marty observes that the "parliament engaged a larger percentage of women than such public events would involve for decades to come" (1993, p. 166). Mrs. Charles Henrotin, vice-president of the Woman's Branch of the World's Congress Auxiliary was quoted as saying that

The experiment of an equal representation of men and women in a Parliament of Religions has not been a failure, I think can be proved by the part taken by the women who have had the honor to be called to participate in this great gathering (as cited in Barrows, 1893, p. 63).

Who were these women delegates and what do their speeches have to say about interreligious education? Sources beyond the records of their original speeches are scant. On the one hand, Seager acknowledges the significance of their contributions while Jean Madeleine Weimann's *Fair Women* (1981) on the other hand offers an extensive documentation of women's influences and contributions to the Chicago World's Exposition, but does not so much as mention the Parliament. Ursula King of the University of Bristol is the only scholar who has focused specifically on the contributions of women delegates to the Parliament in her chapter "Rediscovering the Women's Voices at the World Parliament of Religions" (1993, p. 325). King gives analyses of the speeches of four women: from a feminist perspective: Rev. Antoinette Brown Blackwell, Jeanne Sorabji, Josephine Lazarus, and Alice C. Fletcher.

The Women Delegates to the World's Parliament of Religions

Interreligious education is a nascent discipline, certainly not in practice at the time of the Parliament, having slowly evolved to the point of its present day urgency. It is the result of a growing awareness that to live in this world means living interreligiously. The women delegates to the World's Parliament of Religion were cognizant of the need for teaching others about one's religion and learning from others about theirs. Therein lay the real essence of the gathering in Chicago.

The women were, like the majority of Parliament attendees, mostly white, Protestant and from the United States. Most were affiliated with liberal churches, and at least four were ordained ministers. There were two Jewish women and one African-American who gave addresses. No Catholic woman, religious or lay, spoke at the Parliament. The women of the World's Parliament of Religions were scholars and social activists, suffragettes and religious converts, professors and ordained ministers. At the close of the nineteenth century, women's voices had begun to resound in US churches, institutions of higher education, and in agencies for social action. As historian Joseph M. Kitagawa wrote,

Now all these leaders have joined the heavenly parliament, leaving behind precious memories of a grandiose vision, an undaunted spirit, and a profound dedication to the search for truth in religion—indeed, noble legacies that we are proud to inherit (1993, p. 189).

The following sections address the speeches of nine women whose talks highlighted several key themes of continuing significance for today's interfaith education. The texts of the speeches are taken from both the Barrows and Houghton editions since they offer differing versions in several incidences.

Rev. Dr. Augusta Chapin, D.D.: The Dawn of a New Age

An ordained minister in the Universalist Church, Chapin was also an advocate for the higher education of women. She was the only woman speaker on the opening day of the Parliament—September 11, 1893. Augusta Chapin was the first woman to earn a D.D. in the United States. In addition to being a pastor, she was a lecturer in English literature at the University of Chicago (Barrows, 1893, p. 1585). In an editorial comment, John Henry Barrows noted, “Miss Chapin proceeded with great felicity to speak of [the assembly's] singular opportuneness, especially in regard to women's share in it” (1893, p. 82). In her address entitled, “On Behalf of Women,” Chapin called the diverse crowd “children of the infinite fatherly and motherly One” who share the “same high spiritual nature” (as cited in Houghton, 1893, p. 46). Reflecting the idealism of early liberal Protestantism, Chapin continued:

The old world, which has rolled on through countless stages and phases of physical progress, until it is an ideal home for the human family, has, through a process of evolution of growth, reached an era of intellectual and spiritual attainment where there is malice toward none and charity for all, where without prejudice, without fear and with perfect

... fidelity to personal convictions, we may clasp hands across the chasm of our indifferences and cheer each other in all that is good and true . . . A hundred years ago the world was not ready for this parliament (as cited in Houghton, 1893, p. 47).

Rev. Augusta Chapin believed that both women and religion were on the brink of a new age since both were beginning to gain access to the classrooms of higher education. Women educated in religion brought a “new gospel of freedom and gentleness” (p. 47) to the world. She concluded her address saying,

We are still at the dawn of this new era. Its grand possibilities are before us, and its heights are ours to reach. We are assembled in this great parliament to look for the first time in each others’ faces and to speak to each other our truest words. I welcome you brothers of every land . . . and sisters, who have come with beating hearts and earnest purpose to this great feast, to participate not only in this parliament but in the great congresses associated with it (as cited in Houghton, 1893, p. 47).

Chapin’s opening speech was welcoming and open—an appropriate overture to the women’s speeches that would follow throughout the course of the next 16 days.

Laura Ormiston Chant and Josephine Lazarus: The Spiritual Nature of Religions

The themes for day 5 of the Parliament were “Religious Systems,” and comparative theology. Following several scholarly papers on the scientific study of religion, Houghton relates that the British lay Protestant, Mrs. Laura Ormiston Chant, was “greeted with a great outburst of applause . . . the audience thus evidencing that it had been waiting to hear this popular . . . speaker” (Houghton, 1893, p. 250). Houghton’s edition of Parliament speeches gives it the title of “Duty of God to Man Inquired” (1893, p. 250), while Barrows’ text cites it as “The Real Religion of Today” (1893, p. 591). Whatever the original title, the speech was a departure from the ones that had preceded it, and the audience was exuberant to have Chant’s “thought on religion independent of its science.” She iterated, “We have learned that religion whatever the science of it may be, is the principle of spiritual growth. We have learned that to be religious is to be alive” (Houghton, 1893, p. 250).

Chant believed that what gets handed on in history from a religion is what makes people happy and good, brave and optimistic, a feeling of trust that God will be dutiful in bringing people to be “more lovely,” “more beautiful,” “more tender” and “more safe” (p. 251). In contrast to religion as a feeling of trust, Chant believed that theologians are “marvelous intellectual jugglers” using “jaw dislocating words” to befuddle the brain, reducing the true spiritual nature of religion to jargon.

I do believe—with all due deference to our dear brothers the theologians, that this Parliament of Religions will have taught them some of the courtesies that it would have been well if they had had years ago. I think it will have taught them that you can never convince your adversary by hurling an argument like a brickbat at his head. It will have taught all of us to have the good manners to listen in silence to what we do not approve (Houghton, 1893, p. 252).

In performing charitable acts, those who would reach out to the marginalized in society, those who work for social justice would not turn to “schoolmasters and books” (p. 251), but to the serenities and certainties of a God who loves and cares for creation.

Equating religious feelings with spirituality, Chant called to mind the universalism of Christ’s teachings in upholding the spiritual dispositions of the Beatitudes as paths of true happiness for all of humankind. She felt that feelings and spiritual affectations should be considered in the teaching of any religion. Without this consideration, religion is simply a matter of assent to creeds lacking the vitality of a spirit-led life. Methodological questions among scholars about how exactly to go about observing and studying such religious feelings and dispositions are still being asked today (Berling, 2004, pp. 44–46).

Laura Chant believed that the key to understanding the religion of another required a course of learning that would go beyond the study of objects, artifacts, and creeds. In her mind to get at the religious sensibilities of persons, it was necessary to study literature and art as human expressions of “all that the heart of man is yearning after” (Houghton, 1893, p. 251). Nature too was important since it was the “great educator of men in all those feelings that are most religious as regards God” (p. 251).

According to Chant, the far-reaching effects of the learning that will take place at the Parliament will lead to “a deepening of religious life” (p. 252) and a deeper appreciation for the spiritual and emotional essence of other religions. She surmised, “It will be so much easier for you and me, in the years to come, to bow our heads with reverence when we hear the sound of the Moslem’s prayer” (Houghton, 1893, p. 252). It is not the simply the sacredness of the words themselves, “but it is the soul behind the words” (p. 252). Chant thanked God for the diversity of voices that would send all the delegates back to their homes better able to “take up this great work of religion to the redeeming of the world out of darkness into light . . .” (p. 252).

The importance of attention to the spiritual qualities of religion is also a dominant theme of the parliament paper written by Jewish essayist Josephine Lazarus, sister of poet Emma Lazarus. Delivered on the sixth day by Mrs. Max Leopold (Lazarus was not present), the speech was entitled “Outlook for Judaism” (Houghton, 1893, p. 324). Lazarus wrote on the biblical perspective of the heritage of the Jewish people that was grounded in the strong voice of the prophets and honed by a long history of struggle for existence. For Lazarus, the Spirit of Judaism must refrain from a narrow ghettoism and take its place in the world by regaining recognition of the spiritual power that has enabled Judaism to survive through the ages. This spiritual element, she wrote, is

Clear and distinct [and] we can trace it now through history and as the present can best be read by the light of the past, I should like briefly to review the ideas on which our existence is based and our identity sustained. . . . From the first, a people much alone and with their own souls and nature, were brought to face the Infinite—self-centered, brooding and conscious of something, they knew not what—a power, not themselves, that led their steps and walked and talked with men (Barrows, 1893, pp. 707–708).

The spirit of the Jews, born throughout the “weary pilgrimage” of persecution and suffering, must now be revitalized and heralded to the world (p. 714).

The spiritual element of Judaism is its essence and is the key to any unity that may be shared with other religions. In Lazarus’ view, the crisis in identity was due in part to the Jews having “lost sight of spiritual horizons” and the loss of “the larger vision of the Hebrew prophets” (Barrows, 1893, p. 712).

What was needed by Jews and Gentiles alike was the “unity of spirit, not of doctrine” (p. 714). The world was not ready for a universal religion, but needed

a new spirit put into life which will re-fashion it upon a nobler plan, and consecrate it anew. . . . It is for religion now to fill with spirit and with life the facts that knowledge gives us, to breathe a living soul into the universe (p. 715).

Laura Chant made explicit the need to look for the spiritual essence of all religions in human expressions of literature and art. Josephine Lazarus called for a renewal of the spirit of her own people so that they might hold up to the world their “prophetic instinct, their deep, spiritual insight” (Houghton, 1893, p. 329). To come to a deeper religious and spiritual understanding of any religion, it is necessary to go beyond the kind of introductory offerings that were given at the Parliament of Religions. Today’s interreligious education goes beyond the mere transmission of information to acknowledge the deeper realms of the human spirit. However, a reading of the speeches of Laura Ormiston Chant and Josephine Lazarus make it clear that incorporation of the spiritual aspects of religion is an important part of any interreligious study.

Eliza R. Sunderland, Ph.D.: The Scientific and Comparative Study of Religions

Eliza R. Sunderland was a writer, lecturer and activist who graduated from Mount Holyoke Seminary in 1865 and earned a Ph.D. in 1892 from the University of Michigan. She was one of the first women to become a principal of a secondary school in the United States. She also led the way for women to be hired as faculty in higher education. Sunderland was a student of world religion and a true advocate of the need for the comparative study of religions (Lavan, 1999, p. 1). Her parliamentary speech, entitled “The Serious Study of All Religions,” “was one of the best received” and was “delivered without a note” (Ziolkowski, 1993, p. 349). In his biographical notes on Sunderland, Ziolkowski identifies sources which hailed the talk as the “clearest and most eloquent” and the one that most impressed the delegates from the Far East (p. 349). Sunderland addressed many points in her hour-long speech, but of greatest importance to this discussion was her insistence that “a serious study by an intelligent public of the great mass of facts already gathered concerning most of the religions of the world will prove of great value” to the general and religious culture of humankind (Barrows, 1893, p. 622).

Drawing on Matthew Arnold’s definition of *culture* as “the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history

of the human spirit” (Barrows, 1893, p. 622) and her own definition of religion as “an attribute of humanity as much as reason and language and toolmaking are” (Barrows, 1893, p. 630), Sunderland asserted that a comparative study of the religions of humankind “furnishes the only basis for estimating the relative worth of any religion” (p. 630). The religious spirit of humankind so permeated culture, and thus the study of literature, art, architecture, sculpture, philosophy, languages, and ethics that it is an essential part of the study of the history of religions.

Sunderland took her audience through a detailed account of the historical development of Christianity in order to make evident the work of “hierology.” She referred to several of the outstanding scholars in the newly developing study of comparative religion or history of religions including Max Müller, C.P. Tiele, D.H. Kuenen, Ernest Renan, Albert Réville, Robertson Smith, Le Page Renouf, Chantepie de la Saussaye, and A.H. Sayce (Barrows, 1893, p. 625). For Sunderland, the scientific study of religion was necessary to complete the body of truth and knowledge about humankind and religion and to “reveal man to himself in his deepest nature” (Barrows, 1893, p. 630). In her view the importance and needed contribution of such knowledge to the development of interreligious literacy and understanding for the sake of continued growth in dialogue and education could not be underestimated. There is no doubt that the scientific and comparative study of religions and their histories has enhanced the growth of religious and interreligious literacy so necessary for authentic dialogue among the religions. The importance of Eliza Sunderland’s scholarly address did not go unnoticed in 1893 nor should it today.

Reverend Ida C. Hultin: Unity Through Ethics

Laura Chant and many other delegates at the Parliament proposed that “religion was a question of spirituality” and that “longing for the spirit was a universal human instinct” found in the great religions of the world (Seager, 1995, p. 65). In contrast, Ida C. Hultin believed that “the essence of all religions was ethics” (Seager, 1995, p. 65). In her speech entitled, “The Essential Oneness of Ethical Ideas among Men,” the Unitarian minister and activist for women’s suffrage spoke of the “universality of the ethical sense” (Barrows, 1893, p. 1003) as part of what it meant to be human:

If life is a whole, then that which is an essential quality of *one part* must be common to the whole. Through all life not only an eternal purpose runs, but an eternal moral purpose. Human history has been a struggle of man to understand himself and the other selves, and beyond that the Infinite Self (Barrows, 1893, p. 1003).

The moral purpose of the human person is not an external matter, but a matter of the heart. She stated, “Not the flotsam and jetsam of exterior conduct, but the conscious purpose, the imperative I ought, I will, changing by virtue of divine necessity to I must—this is the ethical intent of all religions” (Barrows, 1893, p. 1003).

All other human qualities—reason, intelligence, judgment, spiritual hunger, even sin—feed the innate human drive toward moral purpose. Hultin saw moral nature as a law unto itself and not as part of any one religion. She was critical of churches

and creeds, pointing out that they do little for the work of justice in the world. No church freed slaves or “lent itself to the emancipation of the woman-half of humanity” (Barrows, 1893, p. 1004).

If churches were doing the humane work of the world there would not be needed so many clubs and associations and institutions for philanthropic work, and as outlets for the ethical sense. Men and women in the churches and out of them do this work while theologians are busy with each other and the creeds; these men and women belonging to all countries and all races, who perhaps have not had time to formulate their beliefs about humanity, are busy working for it; who have never known how to define God, are finding him in their daily lives (Barrows, 1893, p. 1004).

In Hultin’s view, the disciplines of theology and the history of religions were both “dead” if the ethical intent was ignored. Faith itself is necessary and good, but “faith without works is dead.”

Reverend Hultin concluded her talk with a turn toward the spirit as the corrective to the deadness that results from ignoring the essential importance of the ethical nature of human persons. This spirit is the “Christ spirit, the same spirit that has been the animating force in every prophet-life” (p. 1004).

The religious aspiration which gave birth to ethical sense that made to be alive old forms, has passed on to vivify new forms and systems that yet shall have their day and give place to others. “It is the spirit that giveth life, the letter killeth” (as cited in Barrows, 1893, p. 1004).

Hultin called for a spirit of humility and a conscientious examination of those actions done in the name of religion.

Hultin’s focus on the unifying nature of ethical systems has been emphasized in contemporary circumstances. According to Marcus Braybrooke, a declaration of a global ethic such as the one prepared by Hans Küng in consultation with other scholars in 1992, “would have delighted Charles Bonney, whose idea it was to hold the 1893 Parliament” (Braybrooke, 1998, p. 73). Many of the organizers believed that unity was the spirit of the age and entertained idealistic hopes for a harmonizing of world religions. Others realized the implausibility of such a union. Bonney had stated that his objectives for the Parliament were,

To unite all Religion against all irreligion; to make the Golden Rule the basis of this union; and to present to the world . . . the substantial unity of many religions in the good deeds of the religious life (Braybrooke, 1998, p. 73).

Interestingly, Küng iterated, as did Sunderland, that a global ethic would not be based on the moral imperatives of any one religion, but on *humanum* (Braybrooke, 1998, p. 77). Küng wrote, “The basic ethical question in terms of criteria is: What helps them to be what is not at all obvious, i.e. truly human” (Küng, 1991, p. 90).

In the present day understanding of interreligious education, it is crucial to consider that what religions can and should work toward together is the betterment of all humankind. Tolerance, equality, non-violence, and solidarity are universal and human aspects of such a global ethic. As Professor of Chinese and Comparative Religion Judith Berling notes, “learning other religions in a diverse world entails establishing mutually respectful relationships, learning to stand with

others” (Berling, 2004, p. 48). Reverend Ida C. Sunderland espoused this attitude and in a very short speech made her point with perfect clarity.

Jeanne Sorabji and Alice C. Fletcher: Dispelling Stereotypes and the Inclusion of the Voice of Adherents

Jeanne Sorabji, a young convert to Christianity from Zoroastrianism, was the only woman in the contingent from India. Making a visual impact in her traditional Indian sari, Sorabji was one of the few women on the platform for the opening session of the World’s Parliament of Religions. Though her address was brief, her presence made a lasting impression. The transcripts featured in the Barrows and Houghton texts offer differing versions of what Sorabji actually said. Her topic was “The Women of India,” and her intent was to dispel the stereotypes that existed about them, particularly in the United States.

The Houghton account cites Sorabji’s speech as beginning with an invitation and a message:

I would like you to travel with me in thought over 13,000 miles across the sea to have a glimpse at India, the land of glorious sunsets, the continent inhabited by peoples differing from each other almost as variously as their numbers in language, caste, and creed, and yet I may safely say I can hear voices in concord from my country saying: “Tell the women of America we are being enlightened, we thirst after knowledge, and we are awakening to the fact that there is no greater pleasure than that of increasing our information, training our minds, and reaching after the goals of our ambitions” (1893, p. 535).

Well aware of the stereotypes existing about the women of her country, Sorabji began the task of educating her audience with an invitation to learn more. Some women of India, she explains, “live in seclusion, but not ignorance” (Houghton, 1893, p. 536). Others are gaining the opportunity to leave the home to attend schools and colleges.

The address also introduced the audience to the names of some women of India who had achieved great accomplishments in social work, literature, poetry, medicine, theater, and military leadership. Prophetically, she explained, “My countrywomen will soon be spoken of as the greatest scientists, artists, mathematicians, and preachers of the world” (Houghton, 1893, p. 537). This speech, humble yet exuding nobility, introduced the audience to the extent of their misunderstandings and to the emerging realities of the situation in modern India. Jeanne Sorabji spoke in her own voice, in her own right, and from her own experience (King, 1993, p. 341).

In contrast to learning about a tradition or culture from someone living within it, Parliament attendees also listened to speakers who taught from outside a given religious tradition. “The Religion of the North American Indians” was the topic of the speech given by Harvard University anthropologist Alice Fletcher on the 12th day of the Parliament. Diana Eck aptly noted that this is a practice that would not be acceptable today: “Who speaks for whom and in whose context is a critical issue

today: no late-twentieth-century Parliament would conceive of having an anthropologist speak for the native peoples of America, for example” (as cited in Seager, 1993, p. xvii).

Fletcher herself was aware of the limitations of her presentation on behalf of Native Americans not only because of her outsider status but also because of the great diversity of peoples who inhabited the continent since antiquity (King, 1993, p. 340). With careful scholarship, Fletcher described Native American rituals, symbols, and beliefs and defined their concepts of justice, peace, and hospitality. She believed there was much to be learned through the study of such ancient and mysterious religious practices, calling them “impressive and instructive” and illustrative of “the mind struggling to find an answer to the ever-pressing questions of man’s origin and destiny” (Houghton, 1893, p. 586).

Men and women from all over the Eastern world had been invited to attend the World’s Parliament, yet ironically Fletcher reminded her international audience of the stark absence of the Native Americans who “for centuries were the sole possessors of the Western continent” (Houghton, 1893, p. 587). She concluded,

No American Indian has told us how his people have sought after God through the dim ages of the past. He is not here, but can not his sacred symbol serve its ancient office once more and bring him and us together in the bonds of peace and brotherhood? (p. 587).

The science of religions, comparative studies, sociology, and anthropology have all contributed to the understanding of religions of the world. However, the exclusion of the Native American voice at the World’s Parliament of Religions was a tragedy.

Fannie Barrier Williams: Religion and Social Justice

Given the rampant state of racism in the United States at the time of the Parliament, it was no surprise to anyone that African-Americans were among the most underrepresented groups at the World’s Parliament of Religions. Of the two formal speeches given by African-Americans, one was by Fannie Barrier Williams, a lay Unitarian teacher, activist, and popular lecturer. Her impassioned, yet genteel address challenged Christians in particular to look at their complicity in the promotion of slavery as an institution in this country, noting, “religion, like every other force in America, was first used as an instrument and servant of slavery” (Williams as cited in Seager, 1993, p. 142). Williams’ talk identified ways in which religion had both harmed and helped African-Americans. Then as the title of her speech indicates, she pointedly asked, “What can religion further do to advance the condition of the American Negro?”

In attempts to bring the enslaved people to docility, some religious teachings were hidden or falsified to prevent moral awakening among the slaves. According to Williams, this lack of proper religious and moral instruction hindered the moral progress of African-Americans and led to further prejudices against them:

Knowing full well that the religion offered to the Negro was first stripped of moral instructions and suggestions, there are thousands of white church members even who charge or are ready to believe that the colored people are a race of moral reprobates (Seager, 1993, p. 143).

Though the fullness of religious and moral teaching was often withheld from them, many of the enslaved found a deep, spiritual, and consoling religion. This was in part due to “a goodly number of heroic men and saintly women who believed in the manhood and womanhood of the Negro race and at all times gave the benefit of the best religious teachings of the times” (as cited in Seager, 1993, p. 145). Following emancipation and the reconstruction era in US history, Williams noted that churches were instrumental in helping build normal schools, colleges, and industrial schools and promoting intellectual and moral development of the newly freed slaves (p. 146). Williams acknowledged how much the church had done in the way of social outreach, but then asked what more could be done?

“More religion and less church may be accepted as a general answer to the question” (Seager, 1993, p. 146). While failed church efforts and ill-prepared church ministers have been more a hindrance than a help, Williams, speaking out of her social activist experiences, told her audience that “only men of moral mental force, of a patriotic regard for the relationship of the two races” will “save the race from the evil of false teachings” (p. 147). Men who come with a sense of truth and love for fellow humans can best minister to the heart. For Williams, doctrine and creed obscure the social and moral elements of religion and do not necessarily lead to better ministry.

In her judgment, the most significant work was the rebuilding of “the broken ties of family kinship” by the “purifying power of religion” (p. 147). Williams firmly avowed,

Religion should not leave these people alone to learn from the birds and beasts those blessed meanings of marriage, motherhood, and family. Religion should not utter itself only once or twice a week through a minister from a pulpit, but should open every cabin door and get immediate contact with those who have not yet learned to translate into terms of conduct the promptings of religion (Seager, 1993, p. 148).

Whether the source is “Jew or Gentile, Protestant or Catholic, or those who profess no religion, but who indeed are often the most religious” (Seager, 1993, p. 148), what is most needed are teachings that lead to moral fortitude and responsible behavior.

Religions, in order to further help in causes of social justice, must be aware of their own contradictions and hypocritical actions. “The hope of the Negro and other dark races in America depends upon how far the white Christians can assimilate their own religion” (Seager, 1993, p. 149). Religion should have at the heart of its mission that all souls should “be included within the blessed circle of its influence” (p. 150). The impassioned plea of this early pioneer in the cause of equal rights continues still today to move the reader to recognize and advance the role of religion in the struggle for global human rights and justice for all.

Julia Ward Howe: An Attitude of Charity

Variouly titled, “Possible Results of the Parliament” and “What is Religion?” Julia Ward Howe, author of “The Battle of the Republic,” presented her paper to thunderous applause on the 16th and penultimate day of the World’s Parliament of Religions. The “statements made by various delegates—missionaries, scholars, clerics, laity” to the Parliament “reflect the effort made by many different parties to assess and forecast the relations among the religions of the world at the turn of the century” (Seager, 1993, p. 313). Howe’s inclusivist position, placing her own Christianity as the best among religions, stood in stark contrast to the exclusivism of the preceding speech given by William C. Wilkinson in which he said of “erring religions,” “They are one and all . . . groping downwards . . . like the blind grasping of drowning men on roots or rocks that only tend to keep them to the bottom of the river” (Seager, 1993, p. 321).

According to Seager, the *Chicago Herald* reported on September 27, 1893, “White-haired Julia Ward Howe, the doughty and staunch fighter in many causes attendant upon Christianity, locked horns with Professor William C. Wilkinson, D.D. of the University of Chicago, in yesterday’s Parliament of Religions.” The report noted the approving cheers of the audience following Wilkinson’s speech, with the exception of one person—“the sweet-faced and motherly” Julia Ward Howe (Seager, 1993, p. 78). Rising from her chair to speak in the hushed hall, she countered, “I do not agree with Professor Wilkinson in his remarks on the attitude of Christianity toward other religions and I can never agree with any person, no matter who, who enunciates such principles” (Seager, 1993, p. 79).

Julia Ward Howe answered the question, “What is Religion?” by beginning with her own belief that the sacrifice of Christ’s death was for all persons and that charity is the basis of all Christ’s teachings. Representatives of all religions at the Parliament had spoken of “duty and morality and piety,” but, she asked, “Why is the practice of all nations . . . so much at variance with these noble precepts?” (Seager, 1993, p. 76). What is often labeled religion, she explained, is not. Magic and superstition still abounded and much of what was called “religion” was mindless ritual. Any religion which “puts one individual absolutely above others” or “puts one sex above the other” is no religion at all (p. 77). It is only charity in religious belief that will produce true progress.

Religion, in the end is “our relation to the Supreme” (Seager, 1993, p. 77). It is, “Aspiration, the pursuit of the divine in the human; the sacrifice of everything to duty for the sake of God and of humanity and our own individual dignity” (p. 76). For Howe, the Parliament gathered in honor of the voyage of Columbus was itself a voyage, one of “many valorous souls into the unknown infinite of thought, into the deep questions of the soul . . .” (p. 75). Any such voyage, if it is to be deemed “religious,” must avoid an attitude of superiority and adopt instead an attitude of charity. At the end of Howe’s speech, the *Chicago Tribune* noted, the “huge rafters and girders of Columbus Hall creaked under the pressure of such a storm of applause” (Seager, 1993, p. 79).

Conclusion

These nine representative women's speeches to the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions give credence to the earnestness of their purpose and the passion in their hearts for the dawning of a new age in relations among the religions. While the Parliament never achieved the religious unity hoped for by so many of its planners, these women and many others came to recognize the religious pluralism already existing in the United States. Parliament chairman, John Henry Barrows concluded,

Too much cannot be said of the spirit which prevailed in this great meeting. It was a novel sight that orthodox Christians should greet with cordial words the representatives of alien faiths which they were endeavoring to bring into the light of the Christian gospel; but it was felt to be wise and advantageous that the religions of the world, which are competing at so many points in all the continents, should be brought together, not for contention but for loving conference, in one room (Barrow, 1893, p. 1559).

Certainly, a fuller understanding of the Parliament and its ramifications for the future only came later. According to Richard Seager, "The United States had built the Exposition and convened the Parliament with the intention of changing the world. And it had. There was no turning back" (1995, p. 175).

The fact that the Parliament far exceeded any advances that were imagined at the time has much to say about the substance of the speeches presented there. "The speeches of the Parliament have echoes for today's world. Even where they help us to recognize how far we have come from Chicago in 1893, they remind us of how far we have to go" (Eck, as cited in Seager, 1993, p. xvii).

Interreligious education has at its heart and as its heritage many of the ideas and themes presented by these noble and earnest women in 1893. These include, but are not limited to: (1) the need to acknowledge the spiritual as well as creedal nature of all religions; (2) the important contributions of the scientific study of religions; (3) the unity that ethics bring to the study of religions; (4) the need to dispel prejudices and stereotypes; (5) the importance of including the voices of adherents in the study of religions; (6) the significance of the role of religion in seeking justice in the world; and (7) the need for an attitude of charity.

Interreligious education is an ongoing and life-long endeavor. Today, to be religious is to understand the inextricably interreligious nature of life in the twenty-first century. In retrospect, perhaps it all began in Chicago 117 years ago where women's voices rose above their beating hearts and the earnestness of their purpose helped to shape the beginning of the interfaith movement out of which current practices in interreligious dialogue and education have emerged.

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Educational Encounters and Interreligious Education: A Latvian Case Study for Expanding the Borders of Hospitality

Dzintra Iliško

Introduction

The context of Latvia is marked by the reality of religious diversity. In Latvia people with different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds encounter each other in everyday life and share their experience. Formerly fixed borders between ethnic groups are gradually dissolving after the break of the Soviet Union, but new, simultaneously confirming and excluding barriers are being set up. People themselves create and maintain borders and contribute to separation between diverse communities.

This chapter discusses the issue of hospitality toward the other in society and religious education in Latvia. The experience that religious education can provide for teaching religious otherness can serve as a powerful tool for deepening one's particular faith. The premise is that religious education is explicitly interreligious. The chapter highlights the challenges for the educator in building a classroom practice and curriculum inclusive of diverse cultural, social, and religious perspectives that would challenge the boundaries built by different religious, ethnical, social, and cultural communities. Thus, it challenges educators to implement a pedagogy of dialog and to create optimal conditions for children to acquire knowledge and skill of how to live in a sustainable society founded on respect toward the other, economic justice, and human rights. The imperative is to recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures, religions, and life forms, "we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny" (*The Earth Charter*, 2000).

This study aims to explore teachers' self-identification and to measure teacher's social distance toward diverse groups of population in Latvia. It was originally designed by E. Bogardus (*Social Distance Scale* ($N = 187$), 1975), but modified for the purpose of the study.

D. Iliško (✉)

Institute of Sustainable Education, Daugavpils University, Daugavpils, Latvia
e-mail: dzintra.ilisko@du.lv

The Context

Latvian society can be described as multicultural. In the modern world it is impossible to find a country where the population is comprised of only one ethnic, linguistic, and religious entity. Latvia is no exception; it is inhabited by people of many different backgrounds. Latvia is also a religiously diverse country. Within contemporary Latvia several equally strong religious denominations coexist. While Latvia is a strong Christian state, there is a significant number of atheists. As well, there was a large Jewish community which was destroyed in the Holocaust during German occupation. In Latvia there are three dominant religious denominations: Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Orthodox Christianity. Other denominations include Baptists, Pentecostals, and Evangelical Protestants. A variety of religious traditions and worldviews also have taken their position in the everyday life of contemporary Latvians.

Latvia is inhabited by people of many different ethnic backgrounds: Latvians, Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, Gypsies, Armenians, and others. Ethnic minorities do not form compact areas of settlement in any territory or town in Latvia. Thus, people of different ethnic origin experience frequent contact on a daily basis. These contacts create the specific nature of Latvia's multicultural society. Individuals live in and between many different cultures and identities. While cultures have things in common, diverse life experiences and perceptions result in individuals developing a range of cultural understandings and behaviors. By Wenger's term, society in Latvia can be described as "a nexus of multimembership" (1998, p. 159). There are no sharp boundaries between different identities of the individual. The notion of "nexus" does not describe merging separate identities; neither does it decompose one's identity into a distinct trajectory. While "in a nexus, multiple trajectories become part of each other, whether they clash or reinforce each other" (Wenger, 1998, p. 159). Latvia is characterized by a high number of ethnically mixed marriages. Every fifth Latvian entering a marriage has a partner of minority origin.

But, Latvian society cannot be described as tolerant and peaceful. Studies carried out in Latvia demonstrate that the most common forms of intolerance are related to ethnic origin and religious affiliation. While there has been some progress toward integration and inter-ethnic relations, there still remains a great deal of resentment on the part of ethnic Russians toward Latvia's citizenship and language policies.

Latvia's inhabitants display stereotypes and prejudices toward Gypsies (*European Value Study*, 1999). According to the data provided by the study, 27.2% of the respondents would not like to have Gypsies as neighbors, and 14.5% of respondents would not choose to live next door to Muslims (*European Values Study*, 1999). Public opinion also demonstrates that there exists intolerance toward such social groups as sexual minorities, HIV patients, and people with special needs.

The *Constitution of the Republic of Latvia* (1922) contains a general prohibition of any form of discrimination. Article 91 of the Constitution declares, "All human beings in Latvia shall be equal before the law and the court. Human rights shall be realized without discrimination of any kind." However, Latvia has not developed

comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation covering all spheres of life. Article 91 of the constitution does not provide effective protection of rights, especially in cases of indirect discrimination in the private sector.

Theoretical Background

There are many instruments being designed that measure intercultural competence and sensitivity. One of the commonly referred models is Dr. Milton Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity. Bennett suggests a model of six stages (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration) of increasing sensitivity toward cultural difference. These stages indicate a move from "ethnocentrism" to some way of "ethno relativism" that allows an individual's culture to be experienced in the context of other cultures.

Denial, defense, and minimization stages are related to exclusiveness and imply staying apart from others. These stages mean deliberate excluding of particular individuals or groups of people from consideration. Exclusion may be a consequence of ethnocentrism in which the outsider is viewed as inherently inferior (a minimization stage according to Bennett).

Acceptance, adaptation, and integration are related to inclusiveness, which involves such aspects as diversifying, empathizing, and caring. Acceptance means realizing the commonality of all community and becoming aware of shared problems and issues. At this stage the self is capable of reaching out, including and integrating others, as well as separating and excluding. Integration denotes making linkages to others and to broader societies. This stage is also referred to as "advanced intercultural competence" (Cross, 1988). Sue et al. (1998) were the first to outline the core of intercultural competence, which comprises awareness, knowledge, and skills. Multicultural awareness involves a belief that differences are valuable and that learning about others who are culturally different is necessary in teacher training. It also implies an individual's willingness to change her or his own values, assumptions, and biases; a belief in the value of one's own cultural heritage; an acceptance of other worldviews; and willingness to acknowledge that one does not have all the right answers (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Multicultural knowledge encompasses knowing one's own culture and other cultures and knowledge about how gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and disability affect one's experience. Multicultural skills involve the ability to openly discuss cultural differences, a capacity to genially connect with individuals who are different from themselves, and the ability to challenge the individuals and make sensitive interventions (Pope & Reynolds, 1997).

Extensivity as the inclusion or exclusion at its extreme toward the others implies two dimensions: the attachment which ranges from alienation on the one hand, and acceptance on the other hand. In between each pole there is a broad continuum reflecting varying intensities of detachment and attachment, as well as various degrees of inclusiveness or exclusiveness. Anthias (2002) suggests the term "translocational positionality" that refers to the interlocking and potentially

contradictory positions in relation to social, religious, and other aspects of identity. The term refers also to the complex nature of positionality faced by those who are at the interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in relation to ethnicity, national belonging, class, and religion. The proximity to the other is never static, but is determined by shifting social and cultural practices.

Dialogical Self

Psychologists show an increasing interest in self study from the perspective of dialog and multivoicedness (Gergen, 1991; Hermans, 1996; Raggatt, 2000). They claim that self cannot be defined as an isolated unity, but rather as a highly open, dynamic, multivoiced dialogical, heterogeneous, and decentralized self. Multiple voices of “self” accompany and oppose one another in a dialogical way. Each individual lives in a multiplicity of worlds, thus creating a highly dynamic and complex organization of self. Dynamic multiplicity of I-positions enters into a dialogical position with different others (Wenger, 1998). While entering into dialogical relations with others, new meanings are being created between positions of different others. As a result of interchange, a new position can be introduced into an existing repertory. Dialogical self is constantly challenged by questions, disagreements, conflicts, negotiations, and confrontations. The capacity of self-renewal allows the self to engage in an active process of positioning and repositioning (Hermans, 1999). As Gergen (1991) suggests, an individual is faced with an intensified flow of positions moving in and out of the self-space within relatively short time periods. In the dialogical self the positions are not necessarily intersubjectively related, but may differ in their dominance, for example, the position of the individuals toward their culture, religion, and sexual identity. The self is located in several positions in space, moving back and forward among them. Therefore, the self can be seen as highly dynamic unity. The embodied person is spatially located with other human beings.

The same refers to a changing nature of ethnical and national minority. The concept of ethnicity is very complex and open for the debate. Ethnic groups have “a common ancestry marked by some form of cultural continuity which distinguishes them from other groups” (Jackson, 2002, p. 83). Ethnicity denotes “a group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as sharing cultural traits such as, language, religion, family customs, and food preference” (Ore, 2000, p. 9).

Ethnic identity also carries dialogical nature and situational character. Some groups rediscover their ethnical symbols as a result of being marginalized by more powerful groups. Jackson (2002) also points to a contextual and shifting nature of ethnic identity, and refers to radical positions of postmodernist thinkers who see ethnicity as an oppressive social construction or forms of “super-ethnic” nationalism in which ethnic distinctions are seen as assimilation (“the melting pot”) (2004, p. 15). The same refers to national identity. Similarly, Smith (1991) views national identity as a combination of ethnic, political, and civic elements. As a result of globalization, identity has a fluid and shifting nature, and religious identity has a

complex and denominational character. As the president of Latvian Academy of Sciences, Jānis Stradiņš, characterizes it, “During the course of centuries, the quite complicated relations of our nation and religious beliefs have been interwoven with national, social, and even economic and political motifs” (1996, p. 75). For an example, he mentions the differences between Christian values and national awakening, and Christian values and the ideas of atheistic socialism. For centuries, Latvians still kept alive their pre-Christian religion, old mythology, folklore, and deities as some sort of inner resistance against foreign invaders. The world of pre-Christian religion, mythology, and folklore is still alive in Latvian culture and religion. Therefore, researchers refer to religious syncretism in Latvia.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of identifying respondents’ attitude toward different groups of population both as close and remote neighbors, that is, representatives of different cultures, religions, and worldviews (e.g., representatives of Eastern religions (Hindu, Buddhism, etc.), the author used Emory Bogardus’ (1975) *Social Distance Scale*. The extensivity of respondents’ possible relatedness toward diverse groups of people as close relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues, the citizen of the country, and tourists were examined. Repeated studies carried out by Bogardus in the United States indicate a slightly decreasing social distancing and fewer distinctions being made among groups. A similar study was carried out by the *European Values Study* in 1999 in Latvia. This study revealed that people perceived themselves as being most distant from people with deviant social behavior (alcoholics, drug addicts, people with criminal past), while racial, ethnic, and religious affiliation, in turn, was not so important to them.

Bogardus’ scale is a psychological testing scale created to empirically measure respondents’ willingness to participate in social contacts of varying degrees of closeness with members of diverse social groups such as racial, religious, ethnic group, and sexual minorities. Social distance refers to the degrees of understanding and feeling that persons experience regarding each other. The scale measures the extent to which respondents would be accepting of each group. It is a cumulative scale (a Guttman scale) because agreement with any item implies agreement with all preceding items. The scale has been criticized as too simple because social distance in intimate relations may not be related to attitudes concerning far-away contacts, such as citizens or visitors in one’s country. Neither does this scale measure all nuances and degrees of social distance.

Participants of this research were asked to identify themselves with the suggested categories (representative from the dominant culture, ethnic minorities, citizens of the country, Europeans, Christians, Muslims, people with special needs, and sexual minorities) and rank their self-identification. Afterwards, the author examined correlation among self-identification of respondents and the social distance the respondents display toward diverse groups of population.

Participants and Procedure

Research participants consisted of under-graduate and graduate students from a university situated in the Eastern part of Latvia as well from its branches situated in four regions of the country. All participants are teachers who chose an introductory course on Multicultural education ($N = 187$).

The items on the demographic indicators specified each participant's age, gender, and respondents' ethnicity. Respondents' age varied from 19 to 68. Students' ethnicity was as follows: Latvians (71%), others (29%). Among the respondents there were 87% female and 13% male respondents. The disproportional selection of respondents according to gender can be explained since education is mainly a sphere of work chosen by women. Religious background of the participants comprised the following: Christians (98%) and atheists (2%). Among Christian respondents there were 56% of Catholics, 19% Russian orthodox believers, 20% Lutherans, 2% Old believers, 1% Baptists. There were 24% of all the respondents who claimed they were living in a monocultural environment, while 74% claimed to live in a multicultural environment. The teachers enrolled in this study are either students of Master or Bachelor study programs or graduates of secondary school. Verbal consent was obtained from all the respondents to participate in this study before they filled in a survey. Each participant was given instruction on how to complete the survey, and the survey data was collected by the author.

Respondents were asked to identify a social distance toward diverse groups of population (religious, ethnic groups, people with disabilities, sexual minorities, and national minority groups). The survey covered seven different relationships: ("close relationships," "as a close friend," "as a neighbor," "as a colleague," "as a permanent resident," "as a tourist," "should not be let into the country at all"). Participants were asked to evaluate social distance toward persons of different cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. Afterwards, research data was discussed with the respondents of the study.

Validity of respondents' self-assessment of their social distance toward diverse groups is open to debate. Respondents relied on their own assumptions and standards against which to judge their levels of sensitivity and proximity. Some of them might have underrated their social distance. As with any type of survey, responses may reflect respondents' desire to appear competent rather than otherwise.

The study has several limitations. Although the sample was large, it still may not be generalized to all teachers. Also, the present study is limited to self-reported data from teachers and does not include all cultural and religious groups. The choice of cultural, social, and religious groups for this study was purposely selected to represent the groups that cause the most discussion and negative sentiments among the population in Latvia.

Finally, several indicators suggested for the participants' description are very subjective, as for example, whether the living environment of participants is monocultural or multicultural.

Research Findings

Participants of the study were asked to identify themselves among the suggested groups of diverse individuals. Of all Latvian respondents of the study, 52% identified themselves belonging to the dominant group (Latvians) in the country, while the highest indicator of self-identification among the representatives from the other ethnic groups was with one's own ethnic group (49%). The second highest indicator of self-identification among Latvians was to one's own ethnic group. The other ethnic groups see themselves as an integral part of the Latvian nation (18%), but for them identification with their own ethnic groups is much stronger (49%) than with the dominant group. Much educational and political work needs to be done to strengthen the citizenship of ethnic minorities. Ethnic identification was more important to male (46%) and younger respondents (39%) compared to the female respondents (29%) and older (35–68) respondents (23%).

The third highest indicator of self-identification among all respondents was religion. Both Latvian respondents (14.9%) and others (19%) identified themselves as Christians. Religious identification is stronger among those in the 19–34 age group, as well as female respondents. Latvia is a strong Christian country. There is a recession of religious practice in Latvia, but religious identification remains among the strongest indicators of self-identification. In the post-Soviet period religious life acquired new intensity, and people were eager to read religious philosophy and take part in Church rituals. Since then, the religious life of people was cultivated in the families of believers. A large part of society has been deprived of any information about the values of Christianity, had no religious experience, and was unaware of the essence of religious rites. Still, the atheism of the Soviet period disappeared with the political changes because it did not penetrate the profoundest layers of consciousness and life values of the largest part of the Latvian population. Later, after the wave of religious revival, traditional religions lost the power to compel people. As Kule (2002) comments, traditional religions gradually turned into “a museum of culture rather than a gateway to an everlasting life” (p. 176). Some people became interested in the exotic nature of Buddhism and New Age Movement.

The representatives of national minorities identified themselves as Europeans (13%) rather than as citizens of their country of birth (32%). The Latvian respondents identified themselves more as citizens of their own country (55%) rather than as Europeans (6%).

When it comes to marriage and relationships, the Latvians have no reservations to enter marriage or to establish close relationships with Latvians, Russians, Europeans, Christians, that is, people from their closest neighborhood. They claim that they have good relationships with Europeans and Christians. They alienate themselves from Muslims and sexual minorities. A majority of respondents insist that Muslims should not be permitted to enter Latvia. However, it should be pointed out that this is an analysis of attitude not behavior. In order to speak about racial or religious discrimination, it is necessary to analyze people's behavior. These respondents may not have encountered diverse religious groups or have gained negative images and stereotypical messages from mass media and their

socialization in families and the society. The respondents do not want to see Muslims as a religious group in their country and placed them on the extreme side of the scale of social distance or exclusion. Negative attitudes toward groups such as sexual minorities were expressed by 93% of respondents. Their beliefs may reflect either physical or social isolation from people of the particular group. This is especially difficult for individuals who claim ultimacy and completeness of their views to accept the possibility or even probability that their interpreted view is partial, incomplete, or even wrong.

A distinct mistrust of immigrants was indicated by 94% of respondents. They would not like to see them in Latvia neither as permanent residents nor as tourists. Due to the demographic changes that took place in Latvia as a result of migration during the Soviet occupation, there exists a distinct mistrust toward potential immigrants. Although a migration wave is a part of the global processes that are taking place in Latvia after its accession in European Union, data on current manifestations of intolerance provided by this study as well as by the study completed by various research institutes in Latvia reveal clear signs of intolerance such as xenophobia toward people of different skin color and religious backgrounds (*Cultural Diversity and Tolerance in Latvia*, 2003).

As the data suggest, there is no major difference in responses of Latvians and other groups. All respondents place Muslims and sexual minorities on the margins of the scale of social distance. They are willing to see representatives of Eastern religions, Muslims, and sexual minorities only as tourists in Latvia. This can be explained by negative images teachers gain from mass media as well as from lack of encounter with these groups. There are no signs of overt discrimination toward ethnic minorities. All respondents are willing to see them as colleagues. The people of Latvia still have a long way to go to learn to show a more inclusive attitude toward people with special needs.

There are no conspicuous differences in the responses of respondents between their self-identification and their position and the distance toward diverse groups of people.

There are also no big differences in teachers' responses toward diverse groups of the population. Respondents who identified themselves as Christians claimed to display close relationships toward other Christians and people with special needs. Female respondents display closer relatedness toward representatives of Christian groups, people with special needs, and ethnic groups compared to the responses of male respondents. There is almost no difference in teachers' responses who identified themselves belonging to a monocultural or multicultural environment.

Implications for Teacher Training

Teaching should begin with the experiences and assumptions of students in order to be sensitive to different ways of thinking. Thus, teachers need to adopt a dialogical approach – dialog between students, between students and the material, as well between the students and the teacher (Jackson, 2004).

One of the pedagogical strategies for building dialogical classroom environments is diversifying, that is, enlarging the groups of people with whom students usually interact in their closest environment. Students will perceive others more likely as similar under conditions that support reducing negative stereotypes and promoting positive interactions.

Learning about other groups will help in diversifying one's orientations. Such learning will be beneficial if it encompasses both characteristics that indicate a shared humanity as well as the conditions that make the group distinct. Learning about other cultural, religious, or minority groups will provide opportunities to discover commonalities and distinctions viewed from the perspective of one's own group as well from the perspective of other groups.

Teachers need to be self-reflective and seek to understand their own presuppositions and assumptions. For example, Freire (1973) suggested a method of codification and dialog that rests on viewing both students and teachers as subjects, creators of meaning, both engaged in the task of understanding their own consciousness and the world. This theory relies on the recognition of each individual's ability to appropriate reality through naming, reading, and thus knowing that reality (Freire, 1973).

Teachers need to be critical thinkers in designing their curriculum and classroom activities: This includes

- helping students to develop a strong cultural identity, awareness of one's own roots, cultural heritage, one's role as a member of a larger earth community;
- developing a sense of solidarity of those who are needy and less fortunate;
- fostering students to become critical thinkers; as well as
- active participants in promoting the ideals of sustainable world.

These tasks can be reached by

- helping students to locate their existence in broader systems;
- exploring other ways of thinking and doing;
- providing space for sharing stories in the classroom; and
- "defining a trajectory that connects what one is doing to an expanded aspect of identity" (Wenger, 1998, p. 185).

This requires teachers' critical reflectivity on how their curriculum supports

- participation of all students in the school and a wider community;
- the use of school's cultural and religious diversity as a resource;
- fostering negotiated decision-making process in the classroom;
- acting toward bringing about a society that is socially just;
- promoting cooperative learning;
- teachers' efforts in challenging the content that is monocultural, monoreligious, and disrespectful to other cultures and religions;
- creating freedom for teachers in selecting materials;

- allowing a flexible time-frame for pupils with diverse needs; and
- taking into account content relevant to children’s lives, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

By evaluating the context of what they are teaching and the textbook materials, teachers need to pay close attention whether

- the content is culturally sensitive,
- it reflects an awareness of the diversity of cultures,
- it contains inclusive language,
- the content reflects the experiences of people from a wide range of backgrounds,
- it reflects cultural and religious biases, and
- the content includes contributions of people from a range of cultural backgrounds.

This requires willingness, freedom, energy, and time to expose oneself to new identities and relationships. This means recognizing diversity as a value. Pedagogy of hospitality requires reminding oneself that

Each cultural expression of truth . . . is a large piece of the complete puzzle of God and humanity, but no one piece alone gives us a complete picture. A more complete picture of the true, the good, and beautiful comes through when pieces are together in their proper interconnectedness. Yet the fullness of the mystery of God and of humanity will still lie beyond our human understanding In the puzzle all pieces are of equal importance. Only when they are joined together, the whole makes sense (Elizondo, 1997, p. 398).

Toward Pedagogy of Dialog

A classroom as a dialogical community should be inclusive toward individuals of diverse ethnic, racial, gender, or other identification. Such befriending acknowledges and accepts differences, or, as Palmer writes,

The stranger, the alien, the enemy – anyone who is different than I am – poses an unspoken question to me, in fact to both of us. The question is why I am as I am, and why is she as she is? Her life is a possibility for both of us. The difference and perhaps the tension between us is an opening into new possibilities for us. Differences are manifestations of Otherness. They are invitations to be led out, to be educated (as cited in O’Gorman, 1989, p. 15).

The task of building dialogical classroom community of learners can be reached by fostering the value of presence and receptivity, hospitality, and care (Harris, 1989). The philosopher, Marcel (1987) describes the meaning of presence as “something which can be revealed as a look, a smile, an intonation or a handshake” (as cited in Harris, 1989, p. 86).

Receptivity is the ability to listen not only to those persons who are oppressed, but also to the voice of the entire Creation, and facing that reality as a “Thou.” It leads toward listening to and including the voices of non-human world, thus, implying a planetary perspective. Hospitality, as Durka (2002) argues, is the feature that is easiest to recognize in the classroom setting. She highlights that when hospitality

is not “merely a superficial acceptance that glosses over differences” but is offered authentically and is born out of a deep commitment to the search for truth, it offers an opportunity for students to engage in deep conversation with one another, and to affirm: “I am glad to be here.” (p. 46). Such a warm and welcoming environment of acceptance “generates deep conversations and good questions,” and helps in “building bridges among students” (p. 46). Derrida (2003) points to the danger of conditional hospitality that serves as an invitation of the powerful or privileged one’s to set the gathering place for the least powerful. Derrida (2003) invites practicing unconditional hospitality as “visitation” to the unknown places and spaces (p. 125).

The pedagogy of hospitality assumes the possibility of dialog as it denotes being oriented to other and the practical accomplishments of articulation. As Anthias (2002) argues, dialog means “going beyond merely seeing the other person’s point of view” and entails “going beyond one’s point of view so that both parties shift their position, not coming closer to each other but developing an alternative vision which is transformative” (p. 282).

Dialog means finding a creative and sustainable balance or interaction between dominant values and openness to even contradictory values. There is a widespread tendency in Latvia to stereotype other religious and cultural communities, usually focusing on their worst features. By developing dialog with religion and culture of others along with one’s own, one can begin to experience one’s sense of connectedness with human diversity. As Veverka (2004) stresses, a dialog with others is “an existential act,” where encounter with others alert one to the spiritual depth, power, and beauty in different religious traditions as well as confronts one with the darkest side of one’s own.

Only a dialog with worldviews of different others can deepen and strengthen students’ own religious, cultural, ethnic, and other understandings. Pedagogy of dialog involves listening to the concerns and questions of students and treating them seriously and with respect. This means making meaning from what is said without preconceiving ideas of what is correct or appropriate. Listening is a metaphor for openness to others, sensitivity to listen and to be listened to. Behind each act of listening there are emotions, openness to differences, to different values and points of view. Therefore, teachers need to listen and give value to the differences, the points of view of others, while remembering that behind each act of listening there is creativity and interpretations on both parts. Listening means giving value to the other, even if not agreed. As Emila Reggio argues, competent listening creates a deep opening and predisposition toward change (as cited in Rinaldi, 2003, p. 140).

Concluding Remarks

The pluralistic world is becoming increasingly complex with divergent and often contradictory demands on the individual. Therefore, educators should not condition the student to particular lifestyles that stifle creativity, homogenize thinking, narrow choices, and limit autonomous thinking, but, rather, educate students who are able

to participate in problem solving and decision making. Universities should develop competencies in their students which will enable them to cope with uncertainty, ambiguous defined situations, and conflicting norms and values.

One of the greatest damages a school can do is to embed a “culture of normality” that can lead toward fundamentalism where differences are seen as factors that divide, separate, and isolate. In their life span individuals tend to develop a concept of certain “others” who are less valued, who are worth less than they are, and their difference is seen as something negative, and therefore to be rejected, eliminated, or negated. Instead, the school needs to become a place that enables students’ willingness to act. It should offer spaces where there is openness to experimentation, continuous reflection, critique, and argumentation, as well as the crossing of boundaries. Inclusion should become a part of the school’s policymaking process that should foster teachers’ searching for better ways of responding to diversity. Teachers need to teach students to live with difference and to learn how to learn from difference. The task of the educator is to allow the differences to be expressed, negotiated, and nurtured through exchange of ideas. As well, the teacher should provide space to express the difference and to develop skills to be receptive to the differences of others. Dealing with differences means approaching each individual in terms of his/her background and personal story. This includes listening to the differences, reevaluating any truth that one can consider being absolute, “giving value to negotiation as a strategy of the possibility” (Rinaldi, 2003, p. 140).

The role of teachers is to encourage a genuine dialog that extends beyond tolerance, that is, accepting the other as an equally entitled partner in dialog. Acceptance and coexistence would be more preferable terminology in striving for shared humanity. The pressing challenge for educators is to create optimal conditions for the education of children who grow up in the culturally diverse society so as to encourage them to participate and contribute to the future of a sustainable society. Thus, religious education can best be achieved in dialog, not isolation, and a pedagogy of interreligious hospitality (Switzer, 2006) can become authentic in Latvia, for it offers a model for deeper understanding of the other.

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Religious Foundations of Education: Perspectives of Muslim Scholars

Hamid Reza Alavi

Introduction

Throughout history, there have been thinkers from all over the world in the humanities, and particularly in education, whose theories and writings have been based on the concepts of nature. These theories have been widely accepted by people in many different times and places.

Since religion is based on nature “Then set your face upright for religion in the right state – the nature made by God in which He has made men” (the The Glorious Qur’an, Rum: 30). Thus the scholars’ natures have the color of God, and since man’s nature is unchangeable – “There is no altering of God’s creation” (the The Glorious Qur’an, Rum: 30) – their sayings and writings have been used as citations to justify their positions. However, the presence of such scholars in many different parts of the world and in many periods of history resulted in ignorance and misunderstanding. Such factors increase disagreements and discord among the different peoples of the world, even though many thinkers seek to promote better knowledge and understanding. Therefore, it seems that under the conditions that exist today in the world, where different factions intend to fuel disagreements and discord, and the results of such discord are evident throughout the world, the duty and task of researchers and writers is all the greater. This entails the following: first, we should discover and identify such scholars; second, we should identify, analyze, and interpret their theories; and third, we should undertake a comparative study of different scholars’ theories of different religions. This will cause, on one hand, the inhabitants of the world to become familiar with scholars’ views and how to utilize their viewpoints, and it will, on the other hand, also allow for the design of a systemic model based on religious education for all the world’s peoples to use for clarification of the core views that are shared by all people. Such a model can be applied by all peoples of the world, moving us all in the direction of worldwide unity and creating peace among all human beings.

H.R. Alavi (✉)
Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran
e-mail: hamidreza_alavi@yahoo.com.hk

Throughout Iran's history, there have been great Muslim scholars who taught educational and philosophical theories that had a worldwide influence. Their opinions and theories were written in hundreds of books and papers and were mostly based on Islam. They included all branches of the philosophical–educational school: ontology (and anthropology as its subset), epistemology, axiology, and their educational effects, which consisted of the definition and description of education, goals, methods, principles, foundations, factors, kinds of education, teaching, curriculum, and educational content. There have been many such authorities and figures in Iran, but this chapter focuses on the educational opinions and theories (including the effect of their philosophies on education) of the three most important of them: Khajeh Naseer Tusi, Ghazali, and Avicenna. Investigation of the educational theories of Avicenna, Ghazali, and Khajeh Naseer Tusi indicate that these educators, even in the past, were aware of the principles of education and have always tried to base their teachings on definite principles (Shariatmadari, as cited in Attaran, 1992). These three scholars' writings and speeches are frequently supported or influenced by the Qur'an and Islamic traditions. They originated from outstanding personalities of Islamic thought, and effected a deep transformation in their own era (Attaran, 1992).

A Brief Biography of Some Muslim Scholars

Avicenna is considered to be the greatest peripatetic philosopher and the most famous Iranian physician in the world of Islam. We have more information about him than about any other Muslim philosopher. This is primarily due to a biography written by Abuobeyd Jouzajani (1046), a loyal student of Avicenna. Avicenna has 131 original writings and 111 works attributed to him (Khorasani, 2006). In addition to philosophy and education, his writings and works focus on the fields of medicine, mathematics, astrology, certain branches of biology, music, mystical literature, language, and linguistics (Mojtabae, 2006). Avicenna was a Muslim philosopher, sage, physician, psychologist, and educator. He memorized the Qur'an when he was 10 years old, and learned medicine when he was 16. Whenever he faced a scientific problem that he could not solve, he sought the answer through prayer (Sheari Nejad, 1998). In the agony of death, Avicenna often repeated, "We died, and what we took with us was: we knew that we knew not" (Dehhoda, 1998).

Avicenna was born in the year 980 of the Christian era or, in Mohammedan reckoning, the year 370. On 13 October 1950, the Mohammedan year 1370 began; it will end on 1 October 1951. As Wickens wrote in 1952,

Therefore we are met together during the one thousandth anniversary of the birth of Avicenna, Mohammedan reckoning; and that is in fact the occasion for these lectures, which thus form part of the celebration taking place all over the world, to commemorate the greatness of one of the outstanding philosophers and scientists of all times.

Avicenna (Ibn Sina) (980–1037), Persian (Iranian) philosopher and physician, is regarded as the greatest of the medieval Islamic philosophers, and he served as

court physician for the Sultan of Bukhara. He was deeply influenced by Aristotle, yet still maintained a Muslim faith (Pojman, 2003). His contributions to science and philosophy are extraordinary in scope (Honderich, 2005). It was in metaphysics that Avicenna made his greatest contributions to philosophy, brilliantly synthesizing the rival approaches of the Aristotelian-Neo-Platonism tradition with the creationist monotheism of Islamic dialectical theology (*kalām*) (Audi, 2001).

Persian Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazali (Alghazal in Latin texts) was the most influential Ash'arite theologian of his time. His role as head of the state-endowed Nizamiyya Madrasa, his monumental work, *Revival of Religious Sciences*, and his autobiographical account *Deliverance from Error* (often compared to Augustine's *Confessions*) furthered the triumph of revelation over reason (Honderich, 2005). Ghazali was an Islamic philosopher, theologian, jurist, and mystic. He was born in Khurasan and educated in Nishapur, then an intellectual center of eastern Islam. He was appointed the head of a seminary, the newly founded Nizamiyah of Baghdad, in which he taught law and theology with great success. Yet his exposure to logic and philosophy led him to seek a certainty in knowledge beyond that assumed by his profession. At first he attempted to address his problem academically, but after 5 years in Baghdad he resigned, left his family, and embarked on the mystic's solitary quest for al-Haqq (Arabic for "the true One"). As a Sufi, he wandered for 10 years through many of Islam's major cities and centers of learning, finally returning to Nishapur and to teaching theology before his death.

Al-Ghazali's literary and intellectual legacy and the esteem in which he is held within Islam may be compared to Aquinas and Maimonides in the Christian and Jewish traditions, respectively. His *Revivification of the Religious Sciences* is considered to this day a major theological compendium. His mystical treatises also have retained their popularity, particularly *The Deliverance from Error*. This book chronicles his lifelong quest for truth and certainty and his disappointment with the premises of dogmatic theology, both orthodox Sunni and heterodox Shiite thought, as well as with the teachings of the philosophers. The light of truth came to him, he believed, only through divine grace; he considered his senses and reasoning powers all susceptible to error. Although Al-Ghazali is widely considered to be the first person in Islam to write in depth about the education of children and to provide his theories with a scientific basis (Attaran, 1989), his educational works have been largely neglected by scholars until the present time, at least in comparison to his philosophical works, (Rahman, 1977; Mumisa, 2002), his political views (Binder, 1955; Laoust, 1970; Hillenbrand, 1988), his mysticism (Smith, 1944), and his religious views (Frank, 1994).

Khajeh Naseeroddin Tusi was from the era of great scholars of mathematics, astrology, and wisdom in Iran in the seventh century (Hejri). He was one of the ministers of that time and also one of the great jurists of Shiite in the religion of Islam. Khajeh has written numerous books on various sciences (Moin, 1992). He has also written very valuable works on ethics and education (Beheshti, Abuja'afari, & Faqihi, 2000, p. 113). Kahjeh Naseeroddin Tusi was born in 597 (H.G.) in Tus, or in Jahrud of Qom, and died in 672 (H.G.) in Baghdad (Modarresi, 2000). He spent his childhood with persons whom he believed were pious and religious, and who were

interested in sciences, occupations, and crafts. His father was an experienced person who always encouraged him to learn different techniques and sciences, and to listen to the speech of persons who were aware of religiosity. Naseeroddin traveled from Tus to Neishabur and other cities to complete his education.

Two of his important accomplishments were constructing the great observatory of Maragheh, and establishing a great library in Maragheh, which had 400,000 books. His purposes were to ensure that the thinkers could continue their research, and to maintain the great heritage of Islam. Tusi wrote about 274 books. Most of his writings concern philosophy, theosophy, mathematics, astrology, and ethics. His writings can be classified under the following ten titles: mathematics, ethics, interpretation, religious jurisprudence, history, geography, medicine, logic, theosophy, and philosophy (Beheshti, Abuja'afari, & Faqihi, 2000, pp. 113–121). Even though Khajeh Naseer Tusi worked hard to promote his own religion and beliefs (Shiite, Islam), he was very kind to people of other religious groups of Islam. He respected scholars from each class or religion and refrained from rigid religious intolerance and dogmatism. That is the reason why some Christian orientalist, some Sunni scholars, and all Shiite scientists have noted his spiritual greatness, religiosity, humbleness, and good manners (Modarresi, 2000).

Goals of Education

Avicenna's views on educational goals are similar to the philosopher, Farabi. Both emphasize speculative intellect and the social aspect of education (Howzeh – University Co-operation Center, 1993, p. 275). Avicenna defines God as the pure and absolute goodness who is the true and real Beloved for all human beings. He also believes that happiness is the real purpose and the desired aim of humans. Real happiness is pure and free from worldly interests and defects. Although sensory affairs and worldly things appear to bring happiness, they cannot be considered to bring true happiness (Avicenna, 1981).

In harmony with Plato, Avicenna regards happiness as one of the goals of education and, believes that whenever humans become closer to God, their enthusiasm, love, and their beatitude increase; whenever they remain away from God, enthusiasm, love, beatitude, and joy decrease in them.

Avicenna swears by God that it is only the foolish who become unable to strive for perfection and become attached to this abject and low world. One who has given her or his heart to the world is always involved in an abyss of pain and disappointment, and is always distressed and in delusion about the importance of worldly goods. How is it possible that such people have a love of seeking cognition of the truth? Avicenna cites amphibolies and quarrelsomeness as the most invalid efforts. The best actions are those in which their doers have a pure intention and clear belief, and the best intentions are those that spring from knowledge. Wisdom is the mother of virtues, and cognition of God is the first and the most important involvement.

All bondmen should seek help from God. They should come to know that following worldly desires causes darkness of the soul; therefore, it is necessary to forsake of the many carnal desires that stand in the way of helping people. People should take lessons from the persons who lived in the past. Such knowledge gives one high regard and esteem. In the light of acquiring knowledge and virtues, the soul will be purified from all kinds of vices (Dehkhoda, 1998).

The foundation of Ghazali's educational philosophy is the realization of humankind's happiness as one of the goals of education. By "happiness," Ghazali means otherworldly happiness, which includes all wishes. This happiness is eternal – a pleasure without pain, a perfection without decrease, an esteem without abasement. To achieve such a happiness, "knowledge" and "action" should be instituted together, so that one's behavior can be changed; so far as one's behavior is not changed for the good, no happiness will be attained. If a light of knowledge shines in one's heart, his or her behavior will become admirable. Therefore, no change in behavior can be expected without education and instruction. That is the reason why instruction is considered the noblest affair. The desirable otherworldly happiness has a non-disjunctive connection with the societies of this world. Thus, it requires that instruction have no disjunctive connection with society's needs, so that there should be some people who strive for social life in which the basic needs of this world have been satisfied and are consistent with human nature, and that all people observe God's orders and guidance in what they do. Humans are social in their nature and need cooperation with each other to prepare the materials necessary for life. The task of instruction and education is to prepare people for participation in and accomplishment of social goals of life in society, in such a manner that everyone can do what he or she needs to do without difficulty and doubt (Kilani, 2007).

Ghazali says that the honesty and virtue of a human being consists in having the aptitude for knowing the exalted God. A unique characteristic of human beings is their ability to obtain knowledge and wisdom, and the noblest kind of knowledge is knowing God and his attributes. Human perfection is dependent upon this, and humans can attain happiness and can deserve neighborliness of God and proximity to Him through that particular kind of knowledge. Happiness for human beings consists of making the vision of God as his or her goal, making the hereafter as his or her deployed place, and the world as a passageway (Ghazali, 1989).

Humans should know and recognize the truth of their essence, because if they do not do so, it will be impossible for them to seek happiness and attain it. In fact, human happiness is in the cognition of the exalted God, and the cognition of one's soul is the key for the cognition of God (Ghazali, 1997). Ghazali believes that wisdom is God's bounty, which will be given to everyone who deserves it. The result of wisdom is to be carefree but the result of wealth is pain and disaster. Ghazali says that all that ends each thing with death has no value for the wise, and that bounty has value that is eternal and permanent; this bounty is "faith" which is the seed of eternal happiness. Ghazali believes that for everyone who knows the world and is always remembering the last breath of life (death), the affairs of the world will become easy, and faith will become strengthened. He suggests that the comfort of the world lasts only for a few days, and is mixed with different kinds of pain

(Ghazali, 1988). Everyone who makes an effort to follow bodily pleasures is like an animal that will fall in an abyss of ignominy. Ghazali compares anger and lust to troops that attack humans and can finally overcome them. They make humans their slaves, perishing them and barring them from the way of reaching eternal happiness (Ghazali, 1989). As for the goals of education, Ghazali opines that a human's inner form is not good insofar as these four powers or aptitudes have not become good in him, namely, knowledge, anger, lust, and justice (Attaran, 1992).

Khajeh Naseer believes that human beings have diverse abilities, aptitudes, and capacities. They have two attitudes: an attitude toward goodness and another toward evil. Therefore, that one of the most important goals of a person's education is that he or she might achieve a scientific and practical perfection and attain ultimate happiness and nearness to God. Clearly, education and guidance of educators, teachers and guides play a great role in this field (Beheshti, Abuja'afari, & Faqihi, 2000).

For Khajeh Naseer Tusi, absolute happiness is constant and changeless. Happiness is obtained whenever its owner enjoys the pleasure of wisdom. Comprehension of true and real pleasure leads one to be inclined to it (Tusi, 1981). Khajeh Naseer Tusi emphasizes "moderation" as a characteristic that can lead humans to happiness. Those who pay attention to only some of their aptitudes or powers cannot reach happiness (Tusi, 1981).

Principles and Methods of Education

Education is based on broad and general rules and policies that are called the principles of education. These policies can be applied and practiced through methods of education that lead the person to the goals of education. It is possible to extract the above principles from the texts Khajeh Naseer has written (Beheshti, Abuja'afari, & Faqihi, 2000):

1. *Fostering individual aptitudes*: People are different in their intellectual aptitudes and abilities, as well as in their personal capacities and interests in the sciences, skills, and occupations. If the unique and particular aptitude and interests of each person in different sciences, techniques and skills are discovered, and he or she is involved in a job or educational field consistent with his or her aptitude and interests, he or she will undoubtedly attain considerable success. Therefore, it is up to individuals, their parents, and their teachers to discover children's aptitudes and interests in order to guide them to the way that is suitable for them.
2. *Harmony with nature*: Khajeh Naseer believes that one should respect the unique nature of children and the faculties of their soul. Their education should be in harmony with the stages of their human and spiritual development, so that these can be developed.
3. *Harmony with the human's nature of seeking God and religion*: According to Khajeh Naseer, harmony with human nature and religion is the principle

of education upon which all educational policies should be based. A human's perfection is possible when this principle is observed.

4. *Attention to developmental stages*: In discussing education based on the gradual growth and development of individuals, Naseer refers to the stages of development of children, the quality of the gradual formation of their aptitudes and powers, and the procedure of the instruction of the composition lesson to children. The stages of children's education are: (a) Suckling period: This stage starts with the birth of children until they reach 2 years of age; (b) Correction period: After finishing the suckling stage, children's education should begin, and they should be forbidden to associate with bad persons, because they are very influenced by their companions. If their virtues and values are praised, they will turn to these good properties; (c) Period of instruction of religion and morality: The subjects and materials that should be first taught to children are religious and moral obligations, so that those may become unwavering in their souls; (d) Complementary instructions or trainings: complementary instructions should be started after finishing complementary education. Students should first be taught the science of ethics if they are interested in acquiring science, after which they should learn social manners. They should be made familiar with social adjustment factors and dissuaded from luxury, affluence, wealth, and comfort; and (e) Job and employment: Young people should be prepared to secure a job and occupation when their complementary period of training and instruction is finished. This enables them to taste the sweetness of an occupation and earn a living in this way.
5. *Observing the student's understanding and comprehension*: Different students have different powers of understanding and comprehension. Observing these individual differences is of great importance in education. Khajeh Naseer emphasizes that every piece of knowledge or science cannot be taught to every person. Rather, each type of knowledge is suitable for a particular group, and teaching a particular kind of knowledge to those who do not deserve it is considered oppression. If some people are presented with things they cannot understand, it is better not to force such information upon them. Thus it is necessary that teachers and educators use logic and speak with each person according to her or his particular ability.
6. *Counseling*: Khajeh Naseer Tusi says that all people need counseling in all of their individual and social fields of life, because it can help them achieve goodness and prevent evil. Students and seekers of knowledge should discuss a subject after they have learned it, because it may be that an hour of discussion is better than a month of review and repetition.
7. *Affection*: According to Khajeh Naseer Tusi, one should love (a real love) and should be really loved. Thus if affection governs home, school, and society, much corruption will be eliminated and many problems will be solved. The highest kind of affection is that which is free from all sorts of defects of materialism, passivity, estrangement, and darkness. This type of affection is given to humans so that they may love the exalted God. After the inner affection of humans to God, the affection and kindness of parents to their children and of teachers to students are considered as the highest affections.

8. *Encouragement and punishment*: Khajeh Naseer Tusi considers encouragement and punishment as two means of guaranteeing the implementation of education, and making sound the climates of home, school, and society. These means create motivation for avoidance of offenses. He believes that people are different; some should be led to courtesy and morality by warning and punishment, and others with encouragement and announcement. A child should be praised and encouraged in public when he or she behaves well. If he or she behaves badly, we should try to feign negligence, in some cases. If that bad action is repeated, he or she should be blamed in private, and we should then state the undecidability of that action and caution him or her against repeating that behavior.
9. *Practice and repetition*: Khajeh Naseer Tusi is of the opinion that practice and repetition cause actualization and realization of one's aptitudes and abilities. Therefore, people should try to create suitable and desirable habits and skills, finally acquiring sensual dispositions through practice and repetition. Students should repeat their lessons happily and with motivation, and after learning a lesson, they should reflect on it.
10. *Interior purification*: According to Khajeh Naseer Tusi, interior purification is the purification of one's inner self from moral corruption and is the first step in self-education, without which one cannot acquire moral virtues. Thus, students should be pious from the very beginning and keep their heart and soul from offenses so that their knowledge may become fruitful.
11. *Mortification*: Mortification is necessary because if a human's soul follows appetitive and irascible faculties and obeys these two faculties, he or she will decline to an immoral soul. Although mortification is difficult in the beginning, considering its effects, such as chastity, self-preservation, contentment, trust in God, generosity and piety, will make it sweet and easy.
12. *Self-vigilance and self-examination*: A self-vigilant person is one who tries to avoid sin, worldly involvements, and obstacles to perfection, and keeps and cares for his or her inward and outward behavior and speech so that he or she does not behave against God. Self-examination allows one to contemplate God's bounties, and then confess his or her defects and sins before God. Self-vigilance and self-examination lead one to compensate for previous behaviors and try to cleanse the effects of sins by worship and mortification.

The stages of child development should be considered in the process of their education. Therefore, according to Avicenna, educational planning should be based on the stages of a person's development and growth. For example:

1. *Group training and instruction*: Avicenna emphasizes group instruction and believes that a child should acquire knowledge and perform well while in the group, because good children have a positive influence and effect on the other children. Observing the above principle causes the moral and social education of children, actualizing their intellect and perceptions, and satisfying their spiritual needs.

2. *Encouragement and punishment*: Ibn Sine recommends encouragement and punishment of children as a guarantee of keeping admirable dispositions and avoiding moral iniquities and reprehensible habits. He mentions different ways of encouragement or punishment. This indicates that educators should not use just one particular method for encouragement or punishment, e.g., encouragement of children can be carried out through praising their good behavior and morality, and through being friendly with children and acknowledging them. According to Avicenna, five principles are of importance in the education of children and teenagers: faith, good and admirable morality, health, knowledge, and occupation (Shiite encyclopedia).
3. *Selection of teachers and friends*: The educator of a child should be wise, religious, aware of moral education, and skillful in the education of children, according to Avicenna. Since one cannot trust one's own cognition, he or she needs a wise and kind friend to point out his or her morals and moods (Howzed and University Co-operation Center, 1993, pp. 280–283).

The following educational principles can be extracted from Ghazali's writings (Howzeh-University Co-Operation Center, 1993, p. 305). They include recognition of the:

1. Ability of child's heart to be imprinted;
2. Changeability of morality;
3. Gradual formation of personality;
4. Effect of habits in education;
5. Effect of indoctrination in education;
6. Negative and affirmative nature of education;
7. Individual differences; and
8. Different stages of development and growth, and the necessity of observing them.

Curriculum and Educational Contents

Khajeh Naseer Tusi has formulated the children's educational plan according to their natural development. He believes that this plan should be consistent with the development of children's powers and abilities. The appetitive faculty should be paid attention to in the beginning, because it is the first faculty that appears in humans, and is given to them for their survival. That is the reason why children search first for food, water, and sleep. Therefore, before overcoming blameworthy morals and habits through satisfying this faculty, they should be corrected with good manners and the establishment of a praiseworthy disposition. It is important to implement proper manners of living, such as manners of eating food, speaking, socializing, and taking exercise. Good dispositions such as humbleness, obeying parents and teachers, and religious teachings should be taught to them.

When children grow older, they should be taught with appeal to reason and an interest in science or crafts on the basis of their capacities, aptitudes, and interests. For example, if they want to learn wisdom, they should first learn logic so that they might learn the procedure of thinking correctly, and be kept from intellectual errors; they should then learn mathematics to become familiar with argumentative problems, and at the end, they should engage in philosophy and wisdom. There are three fundamental principles regarding educational curricula, according to Naseer:

1. Programs of learning should start with those texts that are simple in content and small in volume in order that children will enjoy acquiring knowledge, and then more difficult texts should gradually be started;
2. Emphasis should be placed on assisting all students to acquire deep knowledge and skills in the sciences; and
3. In educational plans, fundamental, durable and old sciences should be preferred to new sciences. Islamic sciences should be considered as the most valuable ones, and prayer and relation to God should be emphasized more, because these two are very fruitful for learning sciences and achieving nearness to God. Thus students will be familiarized with their origin and end (Beheshi, Abuja'afari, & Faqihi, 2000).

Khajeh Naseer proposes that the principles of health be taught to students (Modarresi, 2000). He believed that medicine, astrology, and philosophy could be applied for the welfare and health of the people, and was always trying to find a way to encourage people to study the empirical sciences. He was famous because of his very comprehensive information regarding wisdom, astrology, medicine, mathematics, and religious sciences (Badkubehi Hazaveheh, 2004).

Khajeh Naseer Tusi mentions that it was in the light of "knowledge" that God showed the superiority of Adam to angels and ordered them to prostrate themselves before him. In addition to this, knowledge is the means for bringing humankind to eternal happiness. Therefore, the seeker of knowledge should not surrender to ignorance. It is up to the learner to choose the best from each branch of science, to seek knowledge of a science that is needed now in the affairs of the world, and to also seek knowledge in a science that will be needed in the future. It is also up to the learner to prefer the knowledge of Divine Unity (unity of God) and to try to recognize God through argument and reason. Students should choose the more aware, pious and older ones as their teachers. In addition to consignment of their teachers, it is necessary that students always try to speculate regarding accurate problems and points, for these things can only be comprehended through deep consideration.

A student should have self-esteem and should be high-minded, seeking simultaneously the acquisition of knowledge and the skills to earn a living. There is not one particular time for acquiring knowledge; rather, students should always seek knowledge so that they achieve virtue. This is the picture that Khajeh Naseer portrays as the ideal student. He shows him or her as a person who has decided to strive toward

the cause of God and who transacts with God to exalt knowledge and extend its lights to the boundaries of life, so that he or she might be purified. This is the task and duty of all of God's prophets.

From Ghazali's viewpoint, the curriculum has an extensive and complete structure in which religious sciences and worldly occupations interact and are taught in conjunction with each other. Religious sciences cannot be comprehended nor understood; the intellectual sciences are like drugs taken for good health, and religious sciences are like food. It is not expected that learners should achieve expertise in all fields of the curriculum, rather it is meant that they should become familiar with the general features of sciences in order that they might be helped to achieve cognitive familiarity, rather than become an expert and master in one particular field of science. The curriculum is extensive and includes diverse fields of knowledge and work. Ghazali believes there are standards and criteria for distinguishing sciences from each other and for the result of each branch of science, and the firmness of the reasons for that science. From Ghazali's point of view, when an individual reaches legal age (the age at which he or she should follow the religious commandments), having the knowledge of prayer becomes obligatory for him or her. Whenever a person has enough wealth that he or she should pay alms from it, he or she should know about almsgiving. Such a concept for Ghazali is a changeable concept that causes the curriculum to develop in harmony with an individual's life and as society conditions development. Curriculum for Ghazali is almost identical to the educational principles of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions, the most important of which are: Islamic belief; soul purification; study of the Qur'an and the systems and principles mentioned in it; and applied skills (Kilani, 2007).

Ghazali believes that curriculum should consist of Qur'an instruction, good news, stories and biographies of moral persons, and memorizing good poems. Ghazali also believes that the child should face problems and difficulties in order to acquire the necessary readiness for tolerating and solving life's problems. He considers physical training as a necessary part of the curriculum to move the students away from weakness and infirmity, and considers play as a natural means for the learning and progress of students (Sheari Nejad, 1998).

Avicenna recommends that learners choose to learn natural sciences, pure mathematics science and arithmetic science, divine science, and logic science that will help them to know the truth for itself, and to know virtue for its acceptance, and act accordingly. He also deems it necessary to instruct learners in the knowledge of language and words, because it is necessary for all of us to apply the words, and these words help with thinking. In addition, Avicenna believes that it is necessary to learn philosophy before the other sciences, because it makes humans familiar with the truth of facts and phenomena, at least as far as it is possible for humankind to know such things. Phenomena are divided into two groups: first, those affairs whose existence depends on our willpower and our actions; and second, those affairs whose existence is not dependent upon our willpower or our actions. Knowledge of the first group is called speculative philosophy, and the second group is called practical philosophy. The aim of speculative philosophy is the perfection of a human's soul through learning. The aim of practical philosophy is completion and perfection of

the soul not only through education, but also through instruction of what should be done and acting according to those instructions (Ali & Reza, 2005).

Religious and Intellectual Education

Khajeh Naseer Tusi has proposed a very firm and deep relationship between religion and philosophy, and considered the task of these two compatible and coordinated areas. He considers religion as the helper of intellect and the first educator, and wisdom and philosophy as the second educator. He has combined the doctrines and teachings of these two with each other, and recommends that it is up to parents to lead their children to religion, because it is religion that can lead humans to wisdom, justice, bravery, and chastity; it makes them moderate and keeps them from extremes. Thus, parents and educators should first teach the Qur'an and religious traditions and obligations to children, and proper care and respect for following the religious commandments. When children complete their childhood period, they should be invited to learn wisdom so that they might utilize what they have learned through imitation based upon reason. They should try to appeal to moderation, and practice justice in their lives, although achieving justice seems very difficult in every field. Humans can only attain real happiness when they control and direct their lust, anger, and desires, make their intellect consistent with the orders of religion, and use their will power in harmony with God's will.

Khajeh Naseer Tusi recommends three principles to guarantee the implementation of religious commandments:

1. *Encouragement and punishment*: Parents and educators can make children and adolescents interested in religious affairs through praise, compliments, and acknowledgment in the presence of others, and through becoming attached to them;
2. *Acknowledgment of the pious*: Children accept role models; therefore, if the pious ones are praised before them, and sinners and the mischievous are blamed, and the evil of sin is well portrayed for them, they will undoubtedly gravitate to good models, practice piety and avoid sins; and
3. *Endurance*: Patience and endurance are necessary to achieve the divine straight path, and one cannot achieve perfection and elevation without them.

Worship is one of the important religious education factors, and it is divided into three kinds: (a) Inner worship concerned with one's heart, such as beliefs and thoughts; (b) Organic worship concerned with the body, such as prayer, fasting, and hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca); and (c) Social worship, which is manifest in social contact such as observing justice, equity, benevolence, and prodigality.

Prayer entails humble submissiveness and adoration before God. It causes a decrease in anger and helps one avoid superciliousness and megalomania. Fasting

fosters patience, endurance, self-restraint and control of instincts. Hajj is an emigration toward God and fosters nearness to God (Beheshti, Abuja'afari, & Faqihi, 2000). From the viewpoint of Khajeh Naseer Tusi, one whose knowledge and actions are right and correct can be called wise (Tusi, 1981).

Avicenna emphasizes moral education and deems religious education necessary for moral education. He defines moral education as bringing up chaste women and men who have strong will power, love virtue, and consider God's satisfaction and countenance in their deeds (Sheari Nejed, 1998).

Factors of Education

According to Khajeh Naseer, a human's deeds, behaviors, and thoughts are among those factors which make up his or her personality in such a manner that when an action is repeated, it influences a person's inner self, and it gradually forms a permanent and firm disposition, becoming so solid that it is not easily overwhelmed. Therefore, when one lives life thinking always about the Origin and Return day, one's soul is affected accordingly, and accepts those states consistent with such thoughts and effects. One of the other influencing factors on one's personality is a companion and playmate. Thus, it is up to all people to socialize and associate with those who are pure from evil and adorned with virtue.

On the basis of this, those who seek perfection should search for an *anthroposteleios* (the perfect man/woman), associating with him or her and accepting his or her speech so that they might reach perfection. Every being who wants to attain perfection should choose as a companion a more perfect being, in order that he or she may enjoy perfection. It should be noted in this regard that the highest companionship and association is association with God, It is His name, His remembrance and surrendering to Him that gives a divine color to a human's behavior and thoughts (Beheshti, Abuja'afari, & Faqihi, 2000). There are many factors that are effective in one's education. Two most important factors in this field are heritage and environment.

Ghazali, following Islam, recognizes the influence of heritage in human education. He also refers to Islamic traditions that mention the importance of individual heritage and its role in creating personality in a child. Therefore, Ghazali deems it necessary that a spouse should be righteous, pious, faithful, and friendly. He emphasizes that the parents should not give their girls in marriage to ill-tempered, weak, faithless men. Consideration of these facts will ensure that parents do not allow reprehensible heritage factors to affect the growth and development of a child's personality. On the other hand, Ghazali also accepts the influence of environment in the education of people. The environmental factors can be divided into two groups: non-human factors, which are divided into natural and supernatural factors; and human factors, which are divided into family, school, community (friends), and individual factors. As for natural factors, Ghazali does consider the instructional role of nature, and because of this, has invited people on an external (objective) journey.

Ghazali believes in the effect of supernatural factors on a human's life, personality, and education. He considers God as the basis and principle in human life, education, personality formations, and other factors are considered only as means or instruments. Ghazali also believes that true knowledge is the result of illuminative disclosure and intuition. He calls such knowledge "God-given knowledge" and considers it as a divine gift. As for the other factors, Ghazali mentions the roles and duties of parents, teachers, friends, and students. Observing such duties and tasks ensures that they have very good influence on pupils and students (Rafiei, 2002).

The principle that all philosophers and moralists have agreed upon is that the ultimate aim or goal of seeking knowledge and education is a religious aim. As Ghazali says, this aim is to learn knowledge which is useful in the hereafter, encourages its learner to obey God, and brings the learner to a certitude that is the source and origin of the knowledge. Khajeh Naseer has also considered it compulsory for learners to obtain God's satisfaction and purify ignorance from themselves and other ignorant people. Revival of religion and preserving it through promotion of good and prevention of evil in one's self and one's relatives, as far as is possible, is also necessary (Ali & Reze, 2005).

Ghazali considers the teacher as the successor of the prophet of Islam in the guidance of people, provided that he or she is adorned with moral virtues, including: endurance, gratitude, trust in God, certitude, open handedness, contentment, tranquility of the soul, patience, humbleness, knowledge, truth, modesty, loyalty, dignity, and equanimity. If all of these admirable characteristics are found in a teacher, then he or she will be a light of the prophet's lights, and he or she deserves to be followed by others. Ghazali opines that those involved in instruction have accepted a great work, and they should respect the manners and duties of being a teacher (Ali & Reza, 2005). Finally, Ghazali believes that nutrition, parents, school, companions, exercise, and encouragement are effective in education (Howzeh-University Co-Operation Center, 1993, p. 305).

Conclusion

This essay demonstrates that we can speak of a coherent model of Islamic education based on Muslim or Islamic thinkers' views, who have been inspired from the Qur'an and Islamic traditions. This model has a definite structure. Since most of these views spring from divine foundations, there are many shared points between them, and between the views of each scholar as compared with each other. This consistency allows the researcher to be hopeful that we can have a shared model of divine education based on pure and original human nature that is acceptable for most of the people of the world. It may be that each scholar and religion are somewhat different regarding educational goals, principles, methods, factors, kinds, and content, but with a more accurate analysis and interpretation of each one, we can agree that all of them are founded on a general and broad commonly shared truth, and that they are representative of a single truth, expressed in different words, according to each time, place, and era.

This research presented in this essay suggests that future scholars should study other scholars of the world and different religions and compare their viewpoints and theories with those of this present work, so that we might be able to distill more shared points of agreement between the educational systems of Islam, Christianity and all other divine religions, and design a more comprehensive religious educational system which will be applicable to most inhabitants of the world.

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Wisdom (*Hikmah*) as a Holistic Basis for Inter-religious Education

Mehmet Önal

Introduction

In this chapter it is argued that the concept of wisdom is a crucial aspect of all religious education and is a dynamic factor in human relationships. In Judaism and Christianity wisdom is *hokma*, in Islam *hikmah* and in the Indian tradition *Sanatana Dharma*; all have a similar conceptual background, connotation, and almost the same meaning. In some literature wisdom is called *philosophia perennis* (*perennial philosophy* or *perennial wisdom*) to refer to a kind of invariable universal truth. In general, wisdom is a worldview by which a person can live in this world and community in a balanced way. But it is not my purpose here to discuss all the contents of the concept of wisdom, but simply to affirm the place of wisdom in the religious realm and inter-religious education. To achieve this goal, the chapter also gives definitions of wisdom, and focuses on world wisdom literature and the religious traditions started by the prophets and founders of religions.

Definition of the Concept of Wisdom

Although the concept of wisdom has quite different faces in many civilisations and religious cultures, it carries quite similar meanings and has an international character behind its diversity. However, the concept of wisdom involves a wide exchange among many wise people in different cultural milieux (McKenzie, 1965). Because of this, as a concept, wisdom carries some ambiguity in its definition from one wisdom literature to another. It means that, in the course of time, the term wisdom was used in different communities with a great variety of meanings (Eliade, 1987). But for all that, its core element and meaning has not changed. If one checks out the roots of the word in many languages, religions or cultures, one will see that this ambiguity is only a language problem related to its exterior meaning and not a conceptual one.

M. Önal (✉)

Adnan Menderes University, Aydin, Turkey

e-mail: monal63@hotmail.com; monal@adu.edu.tr

From Mesopotamian to Egyptian, it appears that most wisdom literature sought to provide the fundamental knowledge for living a good life and gaining an understanding of the basic nature of reality. The sources of wisdom literatures are either practical experience or Divine revelation and are transmitted by a father or a master, to child or student as a kind of collective knowledge on which any civilisation can be easily built. The central aim of such wisdom literature was to cultivate a skilled and insightful understanding of the structure of existence. These structures incorporated the primary categories of human beings, society and Divine Revelation. Therefore wisdom, one senses, is a collective intelligence rather than only one person's experience. Although some individual experiences depend on references to the collective wisdom of past generations, it generally refers to the knowledge behind events rather than knowing wisdom itself. According to the Turkish philosopher Hilmi Ziya Ülken (1982), wisdom is a collective experience representing a social and practical worldview. It looks more like ethics than the other human sciences. But while ethics is limited to human actions only, wisdom encompasses all human actions and relationships and a worldview (Ülken, 1982).

The human tendency towards gaining wisdom in later life brings happiness to human beings. Because of this, wisdom is also defined as expert knowledge and is a characteristic of individuals shaped by experiences that come with age. Wisdom is a kind of practical knowledge by which a wise person makes sound judgements and good decisions. But to gain wisdom one needs life experience and adequate knowledge. That is why Aristotle stated in *Nicomachean Ethics*,

What has been said is confirmed by the fact that while young men become geometers and mathematicians and wise in matters like these, it is thought that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found. The cause is that such wisdom is concerned not only with universals but with particulars. . . . (Ackrill, 1989, p. 424)

Therefore, wisdom would lead people to learn about God's will in this world, the workings of the universe and knowing what is good for humankind. Wisdom, in this sense, is the capacity to realise what is of value in life for oneself and others (Maxwell, 2004a). To embrace high and superior values is a hallmark of the wise person and gives perspective on the data of life, guidance for the decision-making process and control over our behaviour (Macdonald, 2006). Wisdom is an extensive factual knowledge by which a wise person knows a lot about the universe and our place in it. However, this knowledge is not just the information of a knowledgeable person or intelligence. Although wisdom contains many aspects of philosophy, science and knowledge, it is more than these since it requires connecting them with the guidance of life or with a perspective on the meaning of life (Ryan, 2008).

The word "philosophy" was first used by the Greeks to mean "wisdom". It is a compound word consisting of *philo* (love) and *sophia* (wisdom); both of them together mean "the love of wisdom."¹ If its meaning is accepted as the capacity to

¹According to Heraclides Ponticus, a disciple of Plato, Pythagoras was once asked; "What are you?" and he replied, "I am a philosopher (*philosophos*)" since he believed that only God knows everything and He is wise but humans are not able to be wise. Therefore, for him, humans should be "lovers of wisdom" (Eliade, 1987, Vol. 15, pp. 5, 6, 216).

realise what is of value (Maxwell, 2004b), it relates to knowing and choosing the way of living a good life. The relationship between wisdom and values indicates that wisdom helps us to understand what is important (Ryan, 2008) and what is a priority in our thought and actions. A wise person must first know and understand and second, use and live it (Ackrill, 1989). For instance, Cophthorne Macdonald indicated that personal wisdom gives perspective to the owner according to its quality. But for the understanding of wisdom there are many ways which are often seen by the person as intellectual knowledge. In short, for Macdonald (2006) “wisdom is a kind of meta-knowledge that helps us make better sense of the rest of our knowledge”. Because of this, he sees a wise person’s questions as being: “Will this work? Does this fit with my goal? Is this fair?” (Macdonald, 2006).

However, wisdom is not mere knowledge because it depends on the point from where you look at the events. Wisdom can be seen as epistemic humility and accuracy or both knowledge and action (Ryan, 2008). That is why Aristotle differentiated between two kinds of wisdom: practical wisdom and theoretical (metaphysical) wisdom. For Aristotle, theoretical or philosophical wisdom is knowledge about certain causes and principles which are the basis of scientific knowledge. But practical wisdom is being able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for oneself. Therefore, in general, practical wisdom cannot be knowledge or art. It is an action which is chosen on the basis that things are good or bad for human beings. Here, human beings use reason only to act with regard to human goods (Ackrill, 1989). That means that in this sort of wisdom rationality it is not enough to judge because the goal of human endeavour is insight into both the informational aspect of reality and the non-informational aspect which can be called energy and awareness (Macdonald, 2006). Because of this, many philosophers and writers investigating wisdom insist that they are not in agreement with Aristotle’s division of wisdom as practical and theoretical. Most of them insist that wisdom, in general, has a practical nature because one of the main characteristics of wisdom is being practical. The theoretical wisdom of Aristotle is merely extensive knowledge (Ryan, 2008).

Although in the Hebrew language, the etymological root of “wisdom” (*hokma*) relates to the skill of a craftsman by which a responsibility is fulfilled (McKenzie, 1965), and signifies the possession of a particular skill, such as that exhibited by the goldsmith, stonemason, or shipbuilder (Blenkinsop, 1995), its general meaning is varied. It can mean a knowledge of nature, knowledge of human affairs, the gift of poetic and sententious speech, skill to foretell the future, to interpret dreams and also all other human qualities and skills (Welton, 1897). As a human characteristic, wisdom can be defined as an ability to think and act, utilising knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and insight (*Collins Softback English Dictionary*, 1992). Wisdom is also defined as a way of dealing with practical knowledge, ethical virtue and intellectual ability that leads one to understand the meaning of life as a whole. In many literatures, the knowledge of wisdom has two main characteristics. First, it is understood that its source is religious and originates in daily human experiences. Second, wisdom is accepted as a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge (Swidler, 1996).

Among the numerous definitions of wisdom, “living in harmony with the Divine World, community and nature” is the most comprehensive one and contains all

aspects of life. In some sense, the concept of wisdom is accompanied by a broad range of knowledge, by intellectual acuteness and by speculative depth, but it is not correct to identify it with any of these words (Blanchard, 1967). Wisdom is a direct, practical insight into the meaning and purpose of things and life. Its fruit and effects appeal to all who are interested in life in general (1967). Wisdom is different from formal science which generally involves elaboration of theories step by step, and it is different also from philosophy which depends on strict reasoning. Wisdom is defined at the same time as an attribute of God and then given to some special person or prophets mainly through revelation.

The central core of wisdom in religion consists of reflection on the existence of the cosmos and Divine revelation. Therefore, a wise person becomes one who puts his or her life in order according to both Divine commands and the fundamental nature of reality. In this respect a wise person can be described as one who has knowledge of the external world, human beings and the Divine realm. The other characteristic of the term wisdom is its being a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge (Swidler, 1996). That is why, for Plato, gaining wisdom requires both scientific knowledge and practical experiences together (Resse, 1980).

In short, wisdom is defined as epistemic humility and accuracy, extensive factual knowledge, knowing how to live well through knowledge and action. In other words, a wise person has the following characteristics: extensive factual and theoretical knowledge, knowing how to live, being successful at living well and very few unjustified beliefs (Ryan, 2008). A description of wisdom is best considered by examining the characteristics of a wise person. Because of this, wisdom is the total of values of the human spirit – emotional, ethical and intellectual (Irwin, 1961). Thus, let us compare the wise person with ordinary people and see the differences between their attributes. A wise person knows oneself, yet is not self-righteous. He or she sees life in proportion and, therefore, does not waste time on trivialities. Such a person recognises that there are situations in which he or she cannot help others directly but is always at the disposal of those who need help. Because such a person is not self-centred, he or she is more able to discern the trend of events in both religion and state than those who are concerned with their own safety and gain. Life is more than tolerable because such a person believes that God's might is most often expressed in deeds of mercy (Macquarie, 1967).

The World Wisdom Literatures

The beginnings of wisdom are found in the form of proverbs as a kind of art form among the rudest of tribes to the civilised Indian and Greek people. The collections of proverbs come to us from separated nations such as those in North America, India, Australia, Palestine, Arabia, Central Asia (Turks) and West Africa. However, some of these wisdom traditions were in the form of oral sayings while some are in written form. In the Book of Proverbs the word wisdom (*chakamim*) is used in place of proverbs (*meshalim*). Thus, the collections of proverbs and other wisdom

literature influenced in both direct and indirect ways the educated classes, some of whom developed Semitic wisdom literature later on (Welton, 1897).

Egyptian sages evolved wisdom literature in the form of books containing moral precepts or instructions, sound sense and sometimes high moral excellence. Among these books the *Wisdom of Imhotep*, the *Wisdom of Amenemhet*, the *Wisdom of Path-hotep* and the *Maxims of Ani* had gained wide popularity in their day. The main themes of this wisdom literature were: diligence, courtesy, faithfulness, humility, self-restraint, purity, loyalty to friends, love of wife and family, kindness to dependents, temperance, modesty of speech, consideration for the poor and aged, loving worship, prayer, praise and sacrifice (Gordon, 1921). Wisdom, as we all know, is a production of the sages and the scribes who were often the same person almost all over the world (McKenzie, 1967).

The Mesopotamian (Sumerian, Babylonian, and Arcadian) wisdom writings originated with the Sumerian as a kind of simple listing of objects. The aim of this list was to order the details of objects and show their importance for human beings. That is why it is called at the same time *list wisdom* which was seen as the basis for scientific study and the first systematic knowledge. This understanding was the basis for the social and moral wisdom texts giving meaning to the cosmos and displaying justice systems (Rudolph, 1987). The dominant element of the wisdom of Mesopotamia was skilled proficiency in insight of the world, human beings and society. In the course of time, Mesopotamian literature showed the development of two different types of wisdom. One is secular wisdom that human observation handed down as aphorisms, counsels for kings, officials and scribes. The other one was wisdom literature derived from divinities or prehistoric wise men such as Shamash, Ninurta and Enki. Modesty, uprightness, consideration for others and deliberation were the principal virtues of this second group (Rudolph, 1987). Besides these, in the Babylonian tradition, wisdom literature contained proverbial wisdom and its main subject was a kind of theodicy. For instance, the Epic of Gilgamesh includes a pessimistic dialogue. Also in this tradition appropriate rewards or punishments were expected in both the present and afterlife as a result of divine justice. Corresponding to this form of instruction were the “Counsels of Wisdom”, the “Counsels of a Pessimist”, the “Advice to a Prince” and the “Teachings of Ahiqar” which centres on issues of death and the suffering of good men (Roth & Wigoder, 1972).

Like other early wisdom literature, Indian wisdom is embodied in the collections of proverbs which were made for kings and other rulers. Among them, the well-known are *Panchatantra* or the *Hitopadesa* (Instruction in what is Beneficial). Also the Indian national epics contain in their didactic sections a good deal of ancient wisdom traditions. In this literature, wisdom gained its central position although it is difficult to distinguish this wisdom from philosophy and religion (Eliade, 1987). In Hinduism, there are three major paths to attain the goal in life through wisdom; namely the Marga of Knowledge (*jnana*), the Marga of Works (*karma*) and the Marga of Devotion (*Bhakti*) (Swidler, 1996).

As in Hinduism, Buddhism also used the term “way” which refers to the Gautama’s fundamental truths that leads one to Nirvana – the goal of life. After their

master Gautama² died, Buddhists described his way as the Middle Way (*Majjhima Patipada* in Pali) between harsh asceticism and loose sensuality, which will lead to the goal of life (Swidler, 1996). In Buddhism, as well as religious exercises and mystical training, wisdom was also used as a method of gaining deliverance from the endless cycle of rebirths. In Mahayana Buddhism,³ Buddha spoke to some of his disciples and gave them canonical inspiration in a new teaching form which operated through the higher mind on the lower nature. For Buddha, right functioning means progressing on the path to perfection through truth, love and action. It is interesting to note that these Buddhist texts contain a number of striking parallels with some of the early Jewish wisdom literature. In the Jewish personification of wisdom, the virtue of “insight” (*panna*) is one of the main elements. Also in the Zen tradition of Buddhism one can see clearly perennial wisdom as a dominant element.

Persian priests, in particular, first collected proverbs and transmitted them from one generation to another, both as speech and action. Although the dominant themes of wisdom in Persia were religious such as Zoroastrianism,⁴ secular knowledge is also present in wisdom literature in the guise of worldly practical experiences (Eliade, 1987). According to the wise men of Zoroastrianism, if faithful people join their circle, God comes close to them. Perhaps one of the most apparent differences between Persian wisdom literature and others is that in religion, experiential common wisdom and philosophy united and became a single system in Persian wisdom understanding. This characteristic of Iranian culture preserved all its history of thought.

In China, in contrast to other ancient Asian civilisations, wisdom has minimal connections with religion. For this reason all aspects of daily life in China are the subject of practical wisdom. In Confucianism, the oldest ethical school of Chinese thought, for instance, wisdom was the cardinal virtue that represents the moral character of the Confucian “wise person” (*Hsün-tzu*). Both major religions of China – Confucianism and Taoism – insisted that salvation in this world depends on living according to the *Tao*, the structure of reality or God. According to their view, every human being has the ability to be wise, but he or she needs only instruction and practice, since human nature itself is good. In the literature of Confucianism, unlike other literature, there is the idea of the “holy man” (*shengjen*) who is superior to all

²Indian Philosopher, born in Bihar. He is the founder of Nyaya school of India, a classical system which was primarily concerned with methodology and reason and developed a system of logic (see Goring, 1994).

³The liberal development within Buddhist practice in the first century A.D. in China, Tibet, Mongolia, Nepal, Korea, and Japan. In Mahayana Buddhism the prime emotion is compassion and is ranked equal to wisdom as a means of achieving enlightenment.

⁴It is the most important and best known religion of pre-Islamic Iran. It takes its name from its founder Zarathustra (Zoroaster) who probably lived around the beginning of the first millennium B.C. Although some claim that Mazdaism was a different religion, in fact Zoroastrianism and Mazdaism are synonymous. Ahura Mazda (wise lord) is the only name for the Zoroastrian God (see Eliade, 1987).

other people, even the wise man, since he complies perfectly with all the principles (*li*), such as living in harmony with nature and society (Eliade, 1987).

Confucianism at the same time recognises five cardinal virtues: The first one is *jên*, “benevolence”, which shows itself in the feeling of sympathy for others; the second one is *yi*, “duty”, reflected in the feeling of shame after a wrong action; the third one is *li*, “manners”, propriety, good form, reflected in the feeling of deference; the fourth one is *chih*, wisdom, reflected in the sense of right and wrong; and the last one is *hsin*, “good faith”, trustworthiness (Zaehner, 1971). Briefly, in China the real meaning of wisdom is the practical management of life through world experience and knowledge of human beings. Unlike the Greeks’ speculative character of wisdom, the wisdom of China aimed to order the life of individuals and create a moral structure which was totally practical for daily life. To reach this standard of an ethical daily life, they suggested one should live in harmony with the universe as a whole.

The first wise men of the Greeks lived in the Ionian cities of Greece, Italy and Sicily, at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. Since the Greek *élite* were the businessmen and craft community, they visited many ancient centres in Egypt and Babylon, and were influenced by the wisdom literature and practical cultures of these civilisations. From the Egyptians and Babylonians, the Greeks learned wisdom, arithmetic, geometry and navigation. This knowledge was then systematised as philosophy within the context of the emerging democratic life of the Greek cities. There is no doubt that Pythagoras was one of the first teachers of wisdom among the early Greek philosophers who was influenced by the Eastern religions and wisdom literature. Both Plato and Aristotle were aware of the Egyptian and Babylonian wisdom literature in some way. The other accounts accepted that the Epicurean tendencies, revealed in the Egyptian *Song of the Herder*, find expression in a remarkable fragment from the Gilgamesh epic. However, it is true that Greek wisdom was a quite systematic method of thinking, employing the usage of logic, and for this reason it was called philosophy because of its scientific nature and separation from religion.

Although wisdom appealed for its authority to the evidence of experience and the result of verifiable observation, it often appeared to be a-religious in its approach to life (Clements, 1992). The central core of wisdom in religion consists of reflection on the existence of the cosmos and Divine revelation. It is through such an application that a wise person becomes a person who orders his/her life according to both Divine revelation and the fundamental nature of reality which are the two different emanations of God (Onal, 1998).

In the Biblical conceptual framework wisdom is represented as a special mediating power emanating from the Creator which operates between God and His creation (Gaskell, 1923). The owner of wisdom, called *hokham*, is the knowledgeable person, the same as the counsellors and teachers. For them, wisdom is the highest virtue which leads the people to ethical awareness and religious understanding through the formula of living in harmony with both God and society (Roth & Wigoder, 1972). The Hebrew concept of wisdom comprised two main categories: first, ethics to give order to everyday life, and second, belief in one transcendent God. These two

were united under the priestly (rabbinical) class with strict observance of the *Torah*. Although the wisdom movement among the Israelites in the very early period came from the result of reflecting upon the world and daily experience, including religious experiences, in the post-exilic period the *Torah* was identified with wisdom, and religious men turned their face to the *Torah* as a reference for all kinds of knowledge of wisdom (Scott, 1961; Cohn-Sherbok, 1992). Because of this, the Old Testament generally condemned human knowledge and wisdom: Jeremiah says,

How can you say “We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us?” But behold the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. The wise men shall be put to shame, they shall be dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the words of the Lord and what wisdom is in them? (Jer. 8:8)

However, historically, one of their great crises directed Jewish intellectuals to use human wisdom as a kind of guiding experience. The event occurred in the early history of Israel when there arose the problem of establishing the monarchical system, and they needed to find a way out of the centralised administration. This problem forced the Israelites to learn human wisdom and experience from other dominant civilisations. To do this they turned their faces to the Near Eastern empires and borrowed many elements, especially from the Egyptian wisdom tradition. Much of the instructional material was translated into their language to educate a new class of civil administrators. Hebrew wisdom (philosophy), in general, dealt largely with its ethical and practical aspects, but many dogmas and ethical precepts were held in common (Foster, 1885) rather than in strict religious law.

Thus, the Jewish scribes tried to find a balance between the Egyptian wisdom literature and their own national experiential wisdom tradition (Blenkinsop, 1995). Their understanding of wisdom gained an international character besides belief in God and targeting ethical behaviours. This event can be seen as the beginning of secularism in human history. By that time Hellenistic Jews identified wisdom with the second Logos, beside God himself. For this reason, in the Hellenistic age wisdom (*hokma*) or “word” was seen as one of the most important attributes of God which was also present in the human. Thus, in *Ecclesiastes* (1:14) we find wisdom is described as the first of all created things. “I (Wisdom) have seen everything that is done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.”

At the beginning, the Christian understanding of wisdom followed that of the Old Testament, in seeing wisdom as a gift from God, and linked specifically to the Christian Revelation. As stated in Colossians (1:28): “Him we proclaim, warning every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ.” But in the course of time, wisdom is identified with the “Word”, manifested in the person of Christ (Jn. 1:1–3) through whom all things were made. It is believed that Jesus’ deeds and teachings demonstrated to those around him his being possessed of wisdom. “And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him” (Lk. 2:40). “. . .and many who heard him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him?’” (Mk. 6:2).

The Christian theological framework also indicates that this personal wisdom had been hidden in God and is then revealed in Jesus Christ (Leon-Dufour, 1967). In place of wisdom, Jesus used the term “good news” (*evangelion*). At that time, rabbis taught in the form of allegories, but Jesus preferred to use poetic metaphor. The essence of Jesus’ teaching can be summed up in the following: “Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.” However, Jesus also taught that communication with God and living according to his Divine instruction can also lead to salvation (Swidler, 1996). After Jesus, St. Paul used the term “Sophia” to indicate Greek wisdom-understanding. But his essential purpose was to affirm that Christ is the true power and wisdom of God (Meyendorff, 1987).

The link between heavenly wisdom and ancient practical worldly wisdom finds historically recognised expression in the philosophical language of Philo by Christian philosophers in the Middle Ages. They tended to use philosophy as a tool to interpret Christianity especially through Aristotle’s works. Basically, philosophical inquiry came to be applied almost exclusively to the conceptual areas of revelation and knowledge of the Logos, which were the bases of the Gnostic Christian tradition. Thus, Gnosticism arrived at a kind of understanding of wisdom which viewed it as a type of knowledge which both reflected and emanated from God. As R.B.Y. Scott mentioned in his unique paper *Priesthood, Prophecy, Wisdom, and the Knowledge of God*:

To religious men and women of the Hebrew-Christian tradition this knowledge comes through priestly, prophetic, and wisdom channels. First, it comes through participation in the worship, theology and ethos of ongoing religious communities. . . Second, we come to know God in a present engagement of our wills with the divine will, in the hearing again of the words of prophecy. . . Third, we come to a clear knowledge of truth and of God through the self-discipline of learning and through dedication to its most worthy goals: reflection in the light of experience upon the meaning of life and of religion, and upon the right order of human life in society; the positive affirmation of personal and moral values. . . (as cited in Scott, 1961, p. 14)

In the Qur’ān it is explained that the book (*kitāb*) and wisdom (*hikma*) are given to the Prophet to instruct the people and to purify them from evil and immoral actions. To quote the Qur’ān (2:231), “He has sent down to you the Book and Wisdom (*al-kitāb wa al-hikma*), for your instruction and to fear Allah (God). And know that Allah is well acquainted with all things.” The other verse of the Qur’ān says that:

It is He Who has sent amongst the unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to purify them, and to instruct them in the Book and wisdom (*hikma*), although they had been, before, in manifest error. (62:2)

In conclusion, in the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) one of the main characteristics of God is being wise, and for human beings the fear of God is accepted as the beginning of wisdom. In these three religions, wisdom is something given to prophets so that they might pronounce religious commands in their community. Accordingly, in the Jewish post-exilic period, wisdom was identified with knowledge of the Torah and Judaic law and in Christianity wisdom was identified with Jesus Christ as the wisdom of the Father (*Oxford English Dictionary*,

1989). In Islam, the Qur'ān defines wisdom (*hikma*) clearly and distinctly as “perfect and high knowledge (*al-hikma al-bāligha*) bestowed on prophets. . .” (54:5).

In both Eastern and Western cultures and in the three big monotheistic religions we see that wisdom is often connected with the Divine knowledge revealed to prophets through scriptures. Thus, as representatives and owners of wisdom, prophets instruct people. It means that wisdom, as divine commands from God applied responsibly by prophets or an experiential and religious holistic tradition, is a dynamic ground for education of the individual and the community.

If one interprets this religious wisdom as a holistic philosophy of prophetic teaching, one can establish an alternative structure for the religious education systems in this age, too. To do this, first, educators have to answer the question, “How can one discover the principles of prophetic wisdom or sages’ sagacity, and how can one apply them in a modern education system?” Achieving those points will allow for the establishment of an inter-religious dialogue and an educational base, not only within the Abrahamic religions but also among many other religions. Second, the educators need to establish religious wisdom as a holistic method of education for inter-religious dialogue. As a clear example, the Jewish, Christian and Muslim prophets applied the understanding of wisdom and transformed it into their own community as a main religious tradition and goal. This essay, therefore, suggests using the concept of wisdom for inter-religious education, as a natural result of inter-religious dialogue, especially among Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The Place of Wisdom in Inter-religious Education

From the above discussion, it is clearly demonstrated that all civilisations, nations, cultures, religions and even philosophies need a wisdom-understanding as a kind of science or knowledge of living a good and happy life and gaining wholeness. It is against a fixed, standard education system; wisdom suggests a dynamic and flexible method. Beside this, the main aim of wisdom all over the world is to give perspective and provide a holistic viewpoint for the human being. Not only in the three monotheistic religions, but also in many other religions, the concept of wisdom is the second element, with the first being God. Hellenistic Jews believe that God is the first and wisdom is the second Logos. The *Torah* (Divine Law) was identified with wisdom as a reference for all kinds of knowledge about God (Cohn-Sherbok, 1992). In short, at the very beginning of Christianity, wisdom was accepted as a gift of God and linked specifically to the Christian Revelation. As the word of God, it was manifested in the person of Christ because he was filled with wisdom from his childhood onwards. Thus belief in Christ empowers the believers with both the power and wisdom of God. For Muslim scholars wisdom is the practical application of the divine knowledge through the Prophet’s actions called *Sunna*.⁵

⁵Normative custom of the prophet Muhammad by which he clarified the application of revealed commands as a second important source of Islam after the Qurān.

It is clear that in these three religions wisdom is identified first with revealed knowledge, but in the course of time, scholars of religions presented wisdom mainly as one of the human characteristics given by God. Since the application of the revealed law requires the active presence of wisdom by the prophets in these religions, wisdom is defined as a kind of applied knowledge rather than a theoretical one. The Islamic understanding of wisdom is a good example of how the place of wisdom in religions is clarified. In Islam wisdom is not just a text but it is given a practical application (Tozlu & Önal, 2003; Önal, 2007) by the Prophet Muhammad. In the Quran, the concept of wisdom is used together with some other concepts such as book, Torah, Bible, kingdom, understanding, judgement, revelation and moral behaviour. They are seen as providing guidance for humanity through prophetic wisdom. Another characteristic of these groups of concepts is being practical and having an application for human life.

However, the great aim of wisdom is not just collecting information, gaining knowledge and learning data but having a dynamic and holistic application. Religions have a literature and a long history that can be called a tradition. Religions establish both a religious tradition and also embrace secular traditions mainly consisting of human experiences which existed before the evolution of that religion. This tradition is none other than a wisdom heritage which makes human beings live their lives in a deep and holistic way according to history, place, reason, humanistic understanding, emotional behaviour, as well as according to worldly and otherworldly thought. There is no other style of knowledge which focuses on the connection between all the parts of life and then puts it into practice. To reach this goal one needs to turn his face to the world with the help of a wise teacher and “a goodly heritage (Foster, 1943) of human kind” which can be called traditional institutions. Cophorne Macdonald (2006) in his talk concerning wisdom and education refers to the institutions which maintain wisdom tradition as follows: “Wise institutions, on the other hand, carry their wise values from generation to generation. Clearly, the more of these institution there are, the greater the influence they exert, and the greater their effect on the development of personal wisdom.” For him, the values that guide the lives of wise people would also guide society’s institutions and these values would be maintained on into the future. According to Raymond Polin, for different reasons, all modern attempts to find possible ways towards wisdom have failed. “In our western world, wisdom has to be a human and historical wisdom, and the sage an actually existing wise man, or not to be anything at all” (Polin, 1955, p. 15).

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, wisdom as a dynamic factor of education is represented in religion mostly by prophets and religious founders. They are the examples of wisdom as the application of divine commands and intelligence mediated by values towards the achievement of the common good of humankind. This is the way of balancing

worldly matters and divine life. According to Troy Dunn, wisdom is a beneficial harmonisation in all interactions like the entropy of temperature which provides a middle path and balance in nature for all kinds of created things. If one reaches the balance between his or her outside and inside, he or she can be called a wise person (Dunn, 2005). Prophets and founders of religions are examples of this kind of interaction and way of balancing by which they taught, at the same time, how to live and love. Their life, law and love were one with the teaching.

According to wisdom understanding, to follow a wisdom tradition requires one to know life from a holistic point of view. Just to remember the particular words or actions will not bring wisdom. In human history, there is no example which represents a balance between the whole aspects of life such as this world and the divine world, religion and daily experience, individual and community, theory and practice. Wisdom in religion symbolises an ethical quality, coming from belief in God and keeping his commandments, and applying methods of truth to one's conduct by the help of virtues accepted almost internationally. So, wisdom, like religion, belonged to everyone, while strict reasoning was the characteristic of philosophers and other intellectuals.

Inter-religious dialogue requires three steps: First, to know the other religions, their members or representatives and their rituals, and to accept each other reciprocally. Second, to study the shared beliefs such as belief in God, the prophets and beliefs about the afterlife. Third, one is to see the common aims of religions, such as behaving wisely. In this step the keywords are "prophets" and "founders of religions". In the three Abrahamic religions the "prophet" and in many others the "founder" can be seen as the representatives of wisdom. In other words, prophets facilitate the practical application of the divine command by human example. Thus inter-religious education as a natural result of inter-religious dialogue requires knowledge of the life of the founders of the religions and its prophets.

Moreover, the concept of wisdom could be consensually regarded as the core element of religion among different believers such as used as an agreed consensus among the different believers such as Christians, Jews, Muslims and Buddhists. Wisdom is also a tool by which the goal of religions can be suggested and put into practice. Not only this, but it is suggested that wisdom of religion, in general, is part of the proverbs of nations, the lessons taken from human common life and the moral and spiritual codes of humanity. Thus, there is a ground called wisdom-understanding in which the goals of religions meet and on which the teachings of a particular belief system could be built. In other words, wisdom should be part of all inter-religious education.

My recommendations for inter-religious education are: First, I suggest that wisdom should be built on the knowledge of the main goals of religions which would help in understanding the importance of wisdom. Only wisdom-understanding provides dynamic knowledge and a holistic worldview to see the shared ideas of religions in a realistic and rational way. Second, the concept of wisdom in scriptures must be investigated mutually and the biographies of founders of religions and prophets should be taught in a holistic way. Otherwise, the partial learning of the religious aspects or the words of the prophets will only build a wall between

religions and their representatives. Through the prophets human beings are confronted by God in the whole range of human affairs, private and public, national and international, political and cultural (Scott, 1961). Belief in God and the afterlife and the use of wisdom-understanding provides an “umbrella” that will ensure a firm ground for inter-religious education. Third, wisdom connotes the living together of different religions in a place and time in human history, and should be investigated as a human experience and a sharing of the common goods of the various traditions.

However, it is very important not to forget that this inter-religious wisdom education must be given first of all to teachers and families rather than targeted to students. Belief in God and teaching the biographies of prophets, as an example of the business of living rather than teaching the aims of religions as worldwide ethics and human rights, should be given to the student of inter-religious education, especially at an international level. Scriptures, the life of the prophets, founders of religions and the traditions of humanity are the best manual for finding international wisdom-understanding and applying it to inter-religious education.

I conclude this essay with an interpretation of the last wise sentence of Raymond Polin in the article entitled, *Against Wisdom*:

There is, then, no way to be wise, because, in our times, wisdom is inhuman. To be a philosopher, in this imperfect and historical world, is to understand and to love man in his diversity, in his imperfections, in his inexhaustible creations. Man has not to be a wise man; he has to live as a man. (Polin, 1955, p. 17)

He was not totally wrong to write this passage but it does not say we are not going to benefit from and use the heritage of religious and experiential wisdom at all. Neither does it mean that we have given up reflecting on wisdom-understanding and wisdom literature, because we all know that one of the important functions of wisdom is reflecting on the collective experiences of humankind and reaching a conclusion for the sake of each human being. To use wisdom in education will also preserve all religious people from radicalism or fundamentalism. Let me say, as a last word, that forgetting wisdom is the starting point of extremism.

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Islamic Education in the West: Theoretical Foundations and Practical Implications

Amjad Hussain

Introduction

After 9/11 it is nearly impossible not to hear of Islam in the media, be it about the role of Muslim faith schools, the Archbishop's proposal regarding the *Shari'ah*, or Muslim terrorism. These issues in the media can cause one to assume that Islam is something backward, violent, and alien. It is interesting to note the pleasantly surprising reaction of non-Muslims, when they finally do take notice of the wide variation in ideology, culture, and history of the Muslim people. Sadly, however, the reality of rich Muslim tradition appears not to affect the portrayal of the Muslims by the general media. "Islam is portrayed as monolithic and Muslims as homogenized; diversity and differences are ignored . . . all Muslims are one and the same" (Hafez, 2000). From this misguided perception, Muslims and Islam are unfortunately represented as a monolithic force that is "other." This is very much an illusory perception; in Britain this is demonstrated by wide variety of Muslims ethnicities who, during the 20th century, arrived from diverse geographical backgrounds. In Britain alone there are not only differences in national ethnical identity but there are even wide variations in terms of culture, class, and ideological standpoints. In present day Britain, for example, Muslims are constituted by a number of ethnic and racial groups; Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Turks, Arabs, Persians, Africans, etc. The main ethnic group in Britain which is becoming more recognizable is the white and African-Caribbean reverts group, who number around 10,000 presently (Census, 2001). As Aziz al-Azmeh points out, "the presumptions of Muslim cultural homogeneity and continuity do not correspond to social reality. Muslim reality in Britain is rather composed of many realities, some structural, some organizational and institutional but which are overall highly fragmentary" (1993, p. 4). The presumption of the monolithic Muslim socio-cultural reality is not something that only the West has misunderstood, but Muslims have had to grapple with this concept as

A. Hussain (✉)
Trinity College, University of Wales, London, Wales
e-mail: A.Hussain@trinity-cm.a.uk

well. This is what brings the author to the proposal that part of the aim of Islamic education in the contemporary world should be to take this variation into account.

A Theology of Islamic Education

To truly understand Islamic education in the modern world it is imperative for the reader to understand the adherent's view of Islam, which at certain times means to step back from a secular perceived reality. Islam is seen as a revealed "way of life" or religion by those who adhere to it. Michael S. Merry eloquently points out the link between education and Muslims as "... all consideration of human endeavor in Islam have God as their point of reference" (2006, p. 42). Thus, Islamic education for Muslims is just an element of the wider Islamic theology where primacy of science and autonomous human and secular reality are non-existent.

To understand this in more depth it would be perceptive to show the robust sense of the relationship between education and culture and the differences between Islamic and non-Islamic perceptions of the nature of education. In the secular West there are various functions of the education system. Consequently, the majority of Islamic scholars' concept of education are as numerous and diverse as the various concepts of education derived by Western scholars. They both seem, however, to agree that education is a tool to prepare and teach the individual to live according to one's society (Hanson, 2001, p. 14). The difference, on the other hand, lies in the appropriate way to educate the individual and what that entails.

Thus, it is vital to appreciate the wide difference between western civilization and Muslim civilization. Historically, western civilization is regarded as having commenced in a Hellenistic Greece where Plato is known to have presented the first education theory in the West. This education theory was devoid of any divine revelation and was based purely on reason. However, in Islamic civilization all education theories were based upon the dualistic existence of the human being, both the spiritual and the corporeal (Hanson, 2001, p. 1). This meant that the theories of Islamic education always consist not only of the human intellect, but also of divine revelation. It is from this divine revelation that Muslim scholars have coined and expressed the theoretical objectives of Islamic education.

A majority of the scholars agree upon the three Arabic words that stipulate the meaning of education in the Islamic sense. In the Qur'an there are two terms that explain and rationalize the purpose of education. The first term is *tarbyah*, which comes from the root word *raba*; it means to "increase and grow" (Ngah, 1996, p. 34). In the Qur'an, God says: "And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy and say: my Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did nurture me when I was little" (Al-Qur'an: 17:24). Therefore, the first term indicates that Islamic education is to nurture and care for the child.

The second term for education used in the Qur'an is, *ta'lim*, it comes from the root *alama*, which means *to know* (Ngah, 1996, p. 35). "He who taught you the use of the pen, taught man that which he knew not" (Al-Qur'an 96: 4-5). This

term explicitly indicates that one of the purposes of Islamic education is to impart knowledge. Yet, the Qur'an is not the only primary Islamic source that mentions Islamic education (Nasr, 1987, p. 123). The Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad also contains various sayings concerning knowledge and education. The Prophet himself specified a strong call for individuals to educate themselves when he said, "The Quest of knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim man and Muslim woman" (Al-Zarnuji, 2001, p. 1). Other sayings include *hadith*; "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave" and "Indeed, the people of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets" (Siddiqi, 1979, p. 1).

It is from the following *hadith* that the third and last Arabic term for education is derived. The Prophet Muhammad said, "My Lord educated me, and so made my education most excellent" (Al-Attas, 1979, p. 144). The term used in this *hadith* is, *ta'dib* and its root is, *adab*. The meaning of *ta'dib* is, "the disciplining of the mind, body and soul." It also implies the teaching of good manners, ethics, and politeness (Ngah, 1996, p. 38). The word *ta'dib* is a term that fully demonstrates the importance of the three parts of the human existence that Islam upholds: the mind, the body, and the soul. Hanson eloquently describes Islamic education to be the tool of society where "the idea is to create an ethical, moral, spiritual being who is multi-dimensional and who has a direction that is positive and healthy" (2001, p. 14).

Within this holistic definition of Islamic education above lies the theological proponent that all humans are born with the *fitrah* (Merry, 2006, p. 46). This word is sometimes translated as "innocence" (Hanson, 2001, p. 14) or as "the innate capacity for worship" (Merry, 2006, p. 46). In Islam the concept of "original sin" as presented in Christian theology is, therefore, non-existent. In Islam, sin can only be described as a continuous progressive deviation of the heart (not the biological muscle, but the core reality) of the human being while he/she is alive in this world (Merry, 2006, p. 44). In other words, the child is born with an inherent nature and only through deviating from this state does he/she become sinful (Hussain, 2004, p. 3). Furthermore, in Islamic tradition the Muslim theologically has to accept the covenant *mithaq* to recognize and acknowledge God as his or her absolute Lord. After the child reaches puberty, he/she has to take the responsibility *amana* of the covenant, thus making Islamic education imperative for the fulfillment of the trust (Hanson, 2001, p. 26).

In Islamic theology, therefore, the human being in their earthly life finds himself or herself to be constantly struggling to find a spiritual balance within its heart so that he/she can remain within or regain their *fitrah*. According to Seyyid Hussain Nasr, this struggle, is the greater *jihad* in which, "are found [emotions such as] love and hatred, generosity and covetousness, compassion and aggression" (1987, p. 29). Thus, in Islam it is an accepted belief that the human being has been given an intellect by God, but this intellect should not only emphasize rationalism which is limited by its own empiricism. On the other hand, Islam, due to its insistence on the dual nature of humanity, lays stress on both spiritual and corporeal world, so revelation and human spirituality is very much attached to everyday life as is the intellect. As a consequence, Islamic education is paramount for Muslim youth

because one ought not to deviate from the true path; divine guidance is needed for all three aspects of the human being's life: mind, body, and soul. A theological understanding of why there is a need for Islamic education must keep with the root understanding of Islam as "a way of life."

A Philosophy of Islamic Education

At first glance it might seem that the description of the theology of Islamic education seems to contradict the idea of the diverse *Ummah* because it appears to be highly unified and leaves no space for debate. However, it is important to understand that the monolithic shape of Islamic education derives from the *tawhid* factor found within Islamic theology. The Oneness of God (*tawhid*) is understood to permeate all aspects of life, spiritual and physical, thus no true dichotomy of sacred and profane exists, for all life submits to God (Merry, 2006, p. 46). Thus, according to Islamic theology all seeking of knowledge is seen as worship, since it brings one closer to God. Nonetheless, numerous educators through Muslim history have debated the concept of knowledge and education and come up with various routes of defining and understanding Islamic education.

What most Muslim educators would insist on regarding the philosophy of Islamic education is the position of the *heart*. They strongly argue that the *heart* is the center of the human being; they do not mean about the bodily organ that has a biological function. Al-Ghazali (d.1111) the renowned Muslim Sufi theologian, explained this term, heart, as other-worldly, sometimes called spirit or soul. The heart carries the ability of the human being to recognize Reality, i.e., God (Sharifi, 1979, pp. 78–79). So, Islamic education aims ideally to shape the human being to become God's vice-regent; this is seen as being the original state of the primordial human. While philosophy of Islamic education is to bring about inner perfection of metaphysical nature, this, does not mean that Islamic education ignores worldly knowledge. Rather, it stresses that worldly knowledge's attachment with a deeper meta-knowledge. Divine revelation guides human beings on the path of life, whereas the human intellect is in constant interaction with the physical universe on the levels of observation, meditation, experimentation, and application.

For Muslims an ideal Islamic education would insist on knowledge that supports life in this world, but also takes into account the life in the hereafter (Al-Attas, 1979, p. 157). Al Maturudi (d.944), the celebrated systematic theologian, argued that the sources of knowledge are three; sensory perception, reports, and reason. Al-Farabi (d.951) the renowned Muslim philosopher, classified knowledge into practical knowledge which deduced what needs to be done, and theoretical knowledge which helps the soul to attain the perfection, Ibn Khaldun (d.1404) the distinguished Muslim sociologist, argued that knowledge is of three kinds; knowledge by inference, knowledge by perception, and knowledge by personal experience (Hossain & Ashraf, 1979, p. 95). Even if these three different classifications of knowledge create distinct routes to understanding Islamic education, all

acknowledge not only the sensory and intellectual perception, but as well the spiritual perception, which is recognized as the highest level of discernment (Merry, 2006, p. 49). Thus, Yasien Muhammad argues that “the revealed sciences provide human beings with permanent objective truths which are important for their guidance and the acquired sciences provide the knowledge of sensible data necessary for daily practical use” (as cited by Merry, 2006, p. 50).

Hence, Muslim scholars do not recognize any difference between the sciences and the arts. All knowledge is as *ilm* (science), that is, any attempt to understand, explain, control, or influence events and relationships in the realm of human affairs as well as that of nature. The only distinction in Islamic knowledge is between the revealed sciences or the religious sciences, and the acquired sciences. Accordingly, the revealed sciences were connected to the Qur’an and Sunnah, whereas the acquired sciences include the human sciences, natural sciences, and so on. The second kind of science is the knowledge that humans acquire through speculation and rational effort based on the intellect (Al Attas, 1979, pp. 30–31). It was always argued in Islamic theology that there could never be any genuine contradictions between revelation and reason, since God is the source of both. Thus, the acquired sciences are seen through the Islamic world view where revelation is the decisive measure of truth. On the other hand, modern science and even the humanities are today functioning within a worldview that relies upon human reasoning as the ultimate criterion of truth; limitation of reality exists only in the physical domain and the relation between human and nature is restricted to the level of the senses and of reason (Nasr, 1976, p. 27). In the Islamic ethos, all sciences are required to accept and include the fact that the divine revelation is the ultimate criterion of the truth; reality is, therefore, more than what humans perceive as the physical domain. Reason and faith are seen to work hand in hand.

The philosopher and jurist Ibn Rushd (d.1198) explained eloquently the relationship between all the sciences:

Our philosophy would serve for nothing if it were not able to link these three things which I have tried to join in my “*Harmony of Science and Religion*”: A Science, founded on experience and logic, to discover reasons. A Wisdom, which reflects on the purpose of every scientific research so that it serves to make our life more beautiful. A Revelation, that of our Qur’an as it is only through revelation that we know the final purposes of our life and our history (as cited in Charafi, 2003).

It is vital to appreciate that seeking any kind of knowledge was seen as worship by Muslims since it meant to understand and achieve consciousness of God. Due to the nature of Islam, the starting point of Islamic education would obviously commence from its theological understanding of divine revelation just as Western education would have its starting point on neutrality, emphasizing rationality on the basis of empiricism and making all western education seem very monolithic. Even so, the variety of both Islamic and Western education systems throughout their respective histories can be seen across their nations and cultures. A good comparison of how two countries in the West perceive education and religion differently, are for example, France and England. According to Ann Doyle, this difference has

had a major impact on how Muslim faith schools are defined within these respective nations in the West (Doyle, 2006, pp. 300–301).

Islamic education in the historical sense is, therefore, more a social theological phenomenon rather than a static religious institution. This is shown effectively by editors Robert Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (2007) in their book “Schooling Islam; the Culture and Politics of Modern Islam.” The book gives the reader a very detailed background of the various styles of Muslim education across the world. It shows eloquently the heterogeneous socio-historical evolution of Muslim education depending on various historical and contemporary circumstances. Throughout Muslim history, education was a major component of any Muslim nation that continuously affected, positively or negatively, the whole of its society. What becomes clear after viewing Islamic education historically is that it cannot be understood as a single concept but as a social and theological phenomenon that has been influenced by various religious, social, and political forces throughout history. It is important to understand the impact of this diverse history which made Muslim education denominationally, institutionally, and epistemologically diversified throughout the Muslim societies. Shiraz Thobani (2007) rightly argues that “in the face of the complexities that Muslim societies are confronting today, and given the diverse nature of their situations, the idea of there being a universal panacea to the reform of Muslim education is a highly questionable proposition” (pp. 11–25). In fact, he concludes by arguing that it is the political and social realities of each Muslim society that will shape the pace, scope, and character of Muslim education. From these findings, it is arguable that even though there will be common patterns of Muslim education in the West, the pedagogy of an Islamic school will necessarily vary due to each individual national context.

Islamic Education in Britain

In Britain “the 1944 Education Act introduced free secondary education, divided into grammar, technical and secondary modern schools” (Doyle, 2006, p. 296). By the 1960’s grammar schools were seen as perpetuating the social class divisions in Britain by always attracting the ablest of pupils at the age of 11. This led to the establishment of comprehensive secondary schools during the 1970’s existing alongside declining secondary modern schools and the well-established older grammar schools (Doyle, 2006, pp. 296–297).

It was during the 1960’s that the first kind of Muslim education, the “Quranic School,” became based in the Britain. This was not an institution by itself but rather a form of supplementary education in the mosques that the first generation of Muslims mostly from the Indian sub-continent, established for their children. Since these early days Muslims began to rely on imported Imams for religious services and for basic Islamic education for the younger generation. Lessons for primary and secondary school level pupils were imparted by Imams to the pupils in the late afternoon after school hours or during the weekends (Lewis, 2002, p. 56).

In recent years these supplementary schools have been highly criticized by both Muslims and non-Muslims for their poorly educated Imams and outdated teaching skills (Van Bruinessen, 2003, p. 7). Many Muslims in the United Kingdom and in Europe are demanding that their Imams be better educated in revealed sciences and understanding of their respective European society (Hussain, 2007).

During the mid 1970's the first Muslim secondary/higher education institutions were established. These institutions were called *Dar ul-Uloom*, a traditional *madrasah* institute that was a replica from the sub-Indian continent. These *madrasas* were specifically inward looking and cut off initially from mainstream British society initially. As exclusive institutions offering a traditional course on revealed sciences, the *Dar ul-Ulooms* were not required to register with the Education Department (Mandaville, 2007, p. 230). However, this was not the preferred standard education institute for most Muslim parents who sent their children to comprehensive schools as well as to supplementary schools at the mosque to learn basic revealed knowledge. It is interesting to note that the new Muslim faith secondary schools (and later, primary schools) established during the 1980's, whose presence made such an immense public issue, were by all definition a result of an internal reform movement within the Muslim community in the United Kingdom (Nielsen, 1992, pp. 56–59). The new Muslim faith schools were strongly sponsored by those Muslim parents who wanted to have a modern education institution distinct from the *Dar ul-uloom* and the British Comprehensive School. They wanted their children to learn both the revealed knowledge and all the other subjects available in British comprehensive schools, but within an Islamic ethos. However, since the *madrasas* largely went unnoticed in British society, and by the time the new Muslim faith school's presence was felt, the political ambiance was one of immigrant tension with fear of a parallel education for Muslims, integration issues, and fear of isolationism. This social development seems to have been entirely missed. It is ironic to think that the people behind the new Muslim faith schools who were labeled as anti-integration and isolationists were in fact trying to restructure Muslim education to fit more within a modern society. The Muslim faith schools' mission was to offer British national curriculum in settings that preserved Muslim identity and social ethos. Paradoxically, the rise of the Muslim faith schools in 1980's eventually led *Dar ul-Ulooms* to begin to tune their education to the British national curriculum as well (Mandaville, 2007, p. 238).

Today, the majority of *madrasas* and Muslim faith schools are voluntary aided schools, following the national curriculum with incorporated Islamic studies. In the United Kingdom there are now 45 primary and 52 secondary Muslim faith schools. However, according to Nasar Meer (2007, p. 55), even though there are currently over 100 independent and even state-funded Muslim faith schools in the British education system, their status still remains a hotly debated issue. It is even more intriguing to find out that only a minority of Muslim pupils (3%) in Britain attend Muslim faith schools or *madrasas* (Mandaville, 2007, p. 230). This means that the majority of British Muslim pupils, who by their parents' encouragement want to learn the revealed sciences, are taught their basic religion in the supplementary schools in the mosques. Thus, the majority of British Muslim pupils today still seem

to learn their basic religion from the supplementary schools after school hours, but there are a rising number of pupils that have begun to enter Muslim faith schools. According to Ann Doyle, the establishment of Muslim faith schools has been very rapid since the 1980's due to the parents' wish for their children to learn Islamic knowledge within an Islamic ethos (Doyle, 2006, p. 298). On the other hand, even though there are pupils still entering the *Dar ul-Ulooms*, they seem to be a minute fraction of the Muslim population in Britain (Mandaville, 2007, pp. 238–239). From the explanation above, it is obvious that Islamic education in the United Kingdom has evolved, and multiple trajectories have occurred within the last 40 years. With this development, questions of identity, integration, and citizenship have come to the forefront with the rise of the highly publicized Muslim Faith schools.

British Muslim Faith Schools

In today's Britain, all primary and secondary Muslim schools differ from each other and cannot be seen as homogeneous. The main element of difference in Muslim faith schools is their cultural ethnic background. Each school operates according to the ethnic and cultural background of the British Muslims who have helped to set it up. This is similar to the manner in which the mosques and the supplementary schools of Britain were set up in earlier decades. Accordingly, wide differences exist between Urdu speaking Pakistanis, Gujrati speaking East Africans, and other numerous ethnicities, for example. Every Islamic school is based strongly on ethnicity and a racial structure, and the argument has been endorsed more than once that this makes the school more a cultural school than a religious one (Hussain, 2004, p. 6). Although the diversity of the Muslim population in Britain may be easily understood on the grounds of the varying ethnicities, and, therefore, perhaps cultures and languages of origin, the depth and breath of divergence between various groups runs at a much deeper level. This deeper level of diversity within the British Muslims stems from their difference in the interpretation of Islam. Also, most Muslim faith schools would either be organized around a general Sunni or Shia understanding of their faith. Within the Shia and Sunni understanding one would find further divisions. Even in various ethnic communities there have always been divisions. For example, in Indo-Pakistani communities there is the Barelwi tradition, based on popular Indian folk Islam during the 18th century, and the Deobandi tradition which originated in the 19th century to counteract this growing *folk* Islam. These kinds of sectarian division within Muslim communities can be seen across all Muslim ethnic groups in Britain and are very visible in the Muslim faith schools (Lewis, 2002, p. 200). However, in recent years British Muslims (third generation) have begun to move away from the concept of Islam being an "immigrant religion" and have begun to transcend this ethno-cultural bias towards defining Islam through a more universal approach (Mandaville, 2006, p. 228). The diversity of Muslims is further enriched by a newly evolving search for a new understanding of Islam among the new generations of British Muslims. Thus, at this point one of the main

issues debated within Islamic education in Britain is to define what it entails to be a Muslim today. But even at this point there are numerous different interpretations ranging from perceived traditionalism to the altogether unconventional.

Despite the many different types of Muslim faith schools with varying understandings of Islam, rigorousness, and ethnic affiliation, many overlapping similarities unite them as well. Merry (2006) rightly states that “Islamic schools are as diverse as the individuals who establish, work and study in them. It is therefore impossible to describe what an Islamic school, in any pure sense, looks like” (p. 43). However, the primary similarity is the promise of all the schools to unify spirituality with the material in the pupils’ education which arises from the concept of *Tawhid*, an awareness of God in all spheres of life (Merry, 2006, p. 51). In the Muslim faith schools, it is, therefore, impossible not to hear words such as *insha’Allah* (God willing) or *al-Hamdulillah* (Praise be to God) by both teachers and pupils. In addition, all Muslim faith schools have routine prayer times and specific space for ablution and mosque. Gender separation or even self-segregation by pupils themselves is a common practice within most Muslim faith schools. Most Muslim faith schools endorse specific school uniforms with the *hijab* (headscarf) for girls beyond a certain age being the most noticeable feature. The schools also provide *halal* food and celebrate the two important festivals: *Eid ul-Adha* (Festival of Sacrifice) and *Eid ul-Fitr* (Festival of the breaking of the Fast) (Merry, 2006, p. 51).

Thus in the Muslim schools curricula the education for Muslims includes both the religious and secular disciplines. According to Douglass and Shaikh (2004), these schools are described by Muslims as Islamic schools because the educators deliver both secular and Islamic education, i.e., the acquired sciences and the revealed sciences. However, the authors argue that “more accurately, these institutions may be considered Muslim schools, indicating the goal of living up to the standards of Islam, rather than implying its achievement.” They are stressing the theological reason for why it is better to call the faith schools “Muslim” and not “Islamic.” A Muslim faith school is seen to be a school that is trying to achieve Islamic standards, just like a Muslim is trying to live according to Islam but he or she is not “Islam” *per se*, nor is the school “Islam,” but rather the individual and the community are trying to live up to its standards through various appropriate understandings.

In addition, Muslim faith schools argue that they try to include a wider aspect of Islamic culture embedded within the teaching and ethos, which in the comprehensive schools are normatively filled with Christian-Euro centric understandings. This ranges from how history and science is perceived to even how Islam is understood in religious education classes. For example, according to Douglass and Shaikh (as cited in Meer, 2007, p. 60), Islam is seldom portrayed in the way it is understood by its adherents. Rather, it is often described based on the ethnocentric perspectives of editors so that the portrayal of the Prophet Muhammad as the “inventor” of Islam is presented as fact rather than presenting him as a messenger or prophet, which is imperative for Islamic belief. But how does the concept of Islam fit into the curriculum of Muslim schools? Is Islam, for example, primarily an object of study? In Muslim faith schools there are various differences regarding what and how they teach. However, again the similarity is mostly found within the institution’s

policy which is, broadly speaking, to carry out all teaching, mentoring, and nurturing of pupils in accordance with the principles found in the Qur'an and Sunnah (Mandaville, 2007, p. 231). Thus, in the curriculum there will be found Qur'anic instruction and recitation, the teaching of the Prophet's life (*Sirah*) and customs (*sunnah*) through *Hadith* and the historical period of the four "Rightly Guided" Caliphs (Merry, 2006, p. 52). It is interesting to note that all of these will be taught with moral guidance and piety in mind. It follows that Muslim faith schools by their *de facto* establishment do not challenge traditional sources, but may be more willing to interpret Islamic values through a set milieu.

Although all Muslim faith schools teach the same religious subject with Islamic piety and moral teaching in mind, they also aim to equip their pupils to succeed in the work marked. All Muslim faith schools offer the rest of their education through the British national curriculum where the methods and subject of instruction correspond to the British comprehensive schools. However, in many cases there are examples of Muslim teachers exercising their own judgment of how a *Hadith* or an Islamic principle that is relevant to the lesson can be used to supplement it, be it geography, history, or biology. It is apparent that teachers in Muslim faith schools see themselves as role models and try to exemplify Islamic values. Many Muslim faith schools have as well stressed the virtues of citizenship and incorporated civic education at the secondary level just like the government funded comprehensive schools (Mandaville, 2007, pp. 231–232). Yet, many Muslim faith schools fall short of the ideal due to social factors. A number of them, for example, are found in homes, mosques, and similar buildings that were established by a group of concerned parents and community leaders. They frequently established in low quality buildings, which lack numerous basic facilities found in comprehensive schools, and they are financially insecure. So, "many open and close depending on the resources and stability afforded by the local Muslim communities" (Meer, 2007, p. 61). This is one of the main reasons why so many Muslim schools are desperate to opt for "Voluntary Aided" school status.

The Debate Within the Muslim Faith Schools

From outside the Muslim community there is a debate raging regarding faith schools creating "segregation" and their effect on social cohesion (Mandaville, 2007, p. 239). Those who are against the establishment of Muslim faith schools among both Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain have continuously argued against it by contesting that this would cause segregation of the society; these schools would hinder the integration of the Muslim minorities into British society. In addition, they contest that such schools are against the modern norm of the separation between "Church and State." On the other hand, those who support this movement offer both theological and social reasons in support of their wish to have children schooled in a Muslim environment.

Within the Muslim community a totally different debate is taking place. Many Muslim educators within the educational arena are instead focusing upon an inter-religious debate by emphasizing that it is not enough that Muslim schools teach the Islamic religious sciences and have an Islamic ethos. They argue that all the other arts and sciences need to be Islamized. According to Osman Bakar (2008), “the fundamental aim of Islamization is to create a knowledge system in which there is a compatibility and harmony between the revealed religion and human knowledge that could ensure the wise production, use and application of knowledge in society” (pp. 216–217). There is a strong argument that this kind of education is not entirely opposed to the whole system of western education, but instead it is reiterated that any kind of education needs to be reconciled with the Islamic view. It was reformers such as Jamal al-Din Afghani (1838–1897) and Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905) who inspired Ismail al-Faruqi (d.1986) to begin debating the issue of Islamization of knowledge. The problem of such a program is that it would need to be conformable to an “acceptable” understanding of Islam, whereas among Muslims traditionally there have been more than one “acceptable” understanding of Islam. There is also the issue of Muslims needing to re-orient themselves with previous works on the revealed sciences and develop them for current situations. This brings us to the question of whether knowledge is understood as static or dynamic and unfolding. It is important to distinguish between revealed sciences, which have a fixed definition and may only be interpreted and developed through a set framework, and acquired knowledge which by its nature must be dynamic and unfolding. Many Muslim scholars believe that these two kinds of knowledge should complement each other in the framework of service to God in the contemporary world.

Conclusion

Islamic education is based upon a revealed religion. Islamic theology and philosophy regard education as a tool to not only understand the physical world but as well the meta-physical reality. As Merry (2006) points out, “Contrary to Western custom of reasoning by way of doubt and uncertainty, Muslims while encouraged to be critically minded – are called to an education built on the premise of faith in a divine order” (p. 62). Muslim faith schools provide their Muslim pupils with an Islamic ethos and knowledge that does not conflict with the Qur’an and Sunnah. This means that teachers are seen as role models, and, they are expected to try to live up to moral values and ethics that apply equally to all Muslims.

Skinner rightly argues that the movement of the Muslim faith schools to try to access the state sector to become state funded is indicative of “a modern society which is widely perceived as increasingly secular but is paradoxically increasingly multi-faith” (as cited in Meer, 2007, p. 61). There is a recognizable pattern within Islamic education, with the rise of British Muslim faith schools, the development of a Muslim ethos, multi-ethnicities, and various social and economic backgrounds represented in Muslim faith schools, of Muslims in Britain integrating numerous

understandings of Islam with their mono-faith. The question is whether they will be able to shape an acceptable understanding within a framework of having numerous interpretations. If it is achieved, it would truly be an immense success for the shaping of the identity of British Muslims, whose ancestors heralds not only from across the Muslim world but Britain as well.

The development of British Muslim identity requires Muslim faith schools to be able to provide British-trained theologians and jurists who can discuss theological and religious legal issues within the context of the contemporary British Muslims' life experience. The problem that faces Muslim youth in Britain today is not only Western understanding of life, but also the continuous struggle of how to interpret the various Islamic understandings while living in contemporary Britain. British trained theologians and jurists could help the new generation to understand the British society in which they live. British Muslims can only do so when they fully comprehend their own Islamic "way of life." Muslim faith schools are one way for British Muslims to comprehend and contextualize Islam in their British environment. In many ways this could help the Muslim community of Britain to understand Islam more clearly, to develop skills to deal with cultural obstacles such as forced arranged marriages, lack of women's rights, superstitions, etc., and to curtail extremism.

Glossary

Al-Hamdulillah: "Thanks/praise be to God." This is a standard response to anything good or pleasant that occurs, also to the inquiry "how are you?"

Eid-ul-Adha: The Festival of Sacrifice is celebrated throughout the Muslim world as a commemoration of Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail to God.

Eid ul-Fitr: The festival of the breaking of the fast is celebrated on the first day after the month of Ramadan.

Hadith: Reports on the sayings and the actions of the Prophet (pbuh) and what he witnessed and approved of are called Hadith. Hadith were collected following the death of the Prophet (pbuh) and organized by scholars in a number of collections.

Hijab: The word Hijab refers to the head covering worn by many Muslim women. While the head covering is the most visible element, wearing of Hijab involves adopting an overall modest form of dress.

Insha'Allah: Insha'Allah means "if God wills." It is used by Muslims whenever a statement about the future is made. It averts the assumption that human beings can control what they will do or what will happen in the future without God's will, for example: "I will see you at the lecture tomorrow, *insha'Allah*."

Madrasah: Historically the madrasah was a higher education college and seminary for Islamic sciences. Some madrasas also provided non-religious sciences. In the contemporary world, the term madrasah may refer to religious school offering intermediate and advanced instruction.

Peace Be Upon Him: The entire phrase or the initial letters are used after all the Prophets' names.

Qur'an: The holy book of Islam is called the Qur'an. Islamic tradition teaches that it was revealed to Muhammad (pbuh) from God through the Angel Gabriel for a period of 23 years. There is only one Qur'an and it is in the Arabic language.

Shari'a: The Shari'a is the revealed law of the religion of Islam. The two major sources of law in Islam are the Qur'an and the Sunnah; the rules from these two are interpreted and expounded by jurists within an established framework.

Sunna: Sunna means habit, custom or way of life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In a general sense it is the model of behavior for Muslims.

Tawhid: Tawhid (Unity of God) means to accept that God is One and Unique and actively negate any dualism and idolatry.

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Envisioning Family Ecosystems Perspective for Interreligious Education: A Christian View

Anthony M. Ozele

Introduction

The acceleration of immigration, globalization, religious diversity, and multiculturalism into issues of global phenomena has heightened the discourse of interreligious education over the past three decades. The reality of homogenous religious cultures and societies has come under close philosophical scrutiny following the expansion of the borders of cross-cultural understanding and religious pluralism. There are emerging signs in academia of concerted attempts to fashion interreligious curricula that will be both responsive and reflective of global diversities. Therefore, it is incumbent on religious educators to create alternative theories and practices that would instill the awareness of living together in harmonious trust, understanding, respect of similarities and differences, interdependence, and open-mindedness.

The family ecosystems perspective is one way of seeing each religious organization and the environment in their interconnectedness and multi-related reality, and of ordering this reality for dialogical, meaningful, and productive interrelational existence. Such an organic view of the psychosocial matrix of which individuals, families, groups, and communities are constituents provides a philosophical ground for doing interreligious education in the complexities of the crucible of life. The underlying principle of the ecosystem perspective is the attainment of stability and mutual consideration in all of societal transactions, as well as reciprocal cooperation between the various parts of the ecosystem. This transaction and cooperation is evidenced in the family which is the foundational and fundamental unit of the entire social and political order. Thus, the family ecosystems perspective is fundamentally pertinent for envisioning a curriculum of interreligious education that is creatively responsive to the dynamics of global existential realities.

A.M. Ozele (✉)
St. Francis College, Brooklyn, NY, USA
e-mail: frtonimario@yahoo.co.uk

Human Ecology

Hill and Darling (2001) insist that there is an increasing awareness that human beings are interdependent creatures in relationship with other organisms and the environment, and that all aspects of the environment are interrelated (p. 248). While anthropology studies the human person and his/her physical and socio-cultural aspects through history and prehistory, human ecology, not a sub-discipline of anthropology per se, investigates the connections between humans, and human societies or social systems, and the ecology of the planet of which they are a part. There is an underlying assumption that organisms both change their surroundings and are changed by their surroundings, and that healthy, authentic, and integrated selfhood occurs in the tension between individuality and community. Angyal (1965) argues that human life is a process of becoming which takes place in the interaction between the organism and the environment. He writes:

The dynamism of life does not result in a closed circle but in a process which through its two phases evolves in a definite direction. The process does not take place within the organism but between the organism and the environment. The organism cannot expand within itself; it can expand only in a medium originally external to it. The life process embraces both organism and environment; they are the two indispensable poles of a single process, life. (p. 5)

The holistic vision of nature represented by the concept of ecology and the ecosystem constituted a radical departure from mainstream Western thought. For over 2,000 years, cultural expression of all kinds embodied an atomistic and dualistic model of reality. In that model, spirit, whether in the form of God, the soul, the self, or the mind, is separable from a material world, which is composed of discrete entities that mechanically interact. This is evident in the individualism that has shaped Western economics, politics, philosophy, and religion. The tendency to dichotomize everything into oppositions of spirit and matter, soul and body, self and world, and culture and nature, can be traced back to the metaphysics of Plato, who differentiated the static realm of ideas from the dynamic one of their appearances in nature. This was built upon by Rene Descartes' "reductionism" which divided the object of investigation into parts and proceeding from the simplest to the most complex.

This "bottom-up" model of nature is what ecology has challenged from its Darwinian beginnings because the culture/nature dualism rendered theoretically unnoticeable the interdependence of the human species and other organisms on the earth. In *Origin of Species*, Karp (1968) argues, that Darwin strove to show that species interact with one another and evolve by natural selection, and that the life of one group of species depended on the actions of some other group of species, in "a complex web of life" (pp. 102–119). Not long afterward, the German biologist Ernst Heinrich Haeckel would introduce the term *Oecologie* into human relations as the study of this "complex web of life," proposing that organisms be studied within their environments (Hill & Darling, 2001, p. 248).

The prefix *eco* is derived from the Greek root of *oikos* which means "house" or "place to live" (Treston, 2000, p. 55). Human ecology thus refers to the body of

knowledge concerning the economy of nature; the investigation of the total relations of the human species both to its inorganic and its organic environment, including above all, its friendly and inimical relations with those other species with which it comes directly and indirectly into contact.

Family Ecosystems Theory

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the ecology and ecosystems theory has gained almost universal acceptance. Life is seen as occurring within an ecological context, which includes both the living and nonliving elements of the environment. In *Family and Environment: An Ecosystem Perspective*, Melson (1980) credits the British ecologist Sir Arthur Tansley as the first individual to name and define the ecosystem (p. 7). Angyal would argue that human life is a process of becoming which takes place in the interaction between the organism and the environment (Angyal, 1965, p. 5). Bronfenbrenner (2004) develops this view further in *Making Human Beings Human: Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development*, acknowledging that humans do not develop in isolation but in relation to their family, home, school, community, and other societal life forms or institutions.

Within the global ecosystem, family members are linked not just to one another but are involved in an intricate web of natural, physical, and social environments in a continuous mutual exchange. Thus, the first basic premise that underlies the family ecosystem perspective is that the family is in constant interaction with its environment.

Second, the family is observed to carry out certain essential functions such as physical, biological, economic, social, and nurturing functions for its members, as a collective, and for the society. Melson writes that “it is the family that creates, nurtures, and largely prepares new human material to function in the global ecosystem as producers, consumers, and regulators of energy” (1980, p. 6).

The third premise consists of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all peoples on the planet, with the various natural life forms and resources. The overall wellbeing and health of the earth and of its peoples dovetails, and none can be adequately considered in isolation. Treston (2000) argues that science itself is moving “towards a much more holistic appreciation of the interconnectedness of all things” (p. 56). He clarifies further that,

The new (old?) cosmology is recovering ancient wisdoms about our relationships with nature. The Gaia hypothesis of Lovelock, Miller’s General System theory and quantum physics propose new scientific paradigms that view the earth as organic and interconnected a fragile network of relationships. (p. 56)

Similarly, the family ecosystems perspective provides a framework for understanding the complexity of human interrelatedness and can be a basis for holistic pastoral counseling. Hill and Darling insist that “to more fully understand the persons for whom one is seeking to minister, one must understand all that is going

on in their lives or their ecology” (Hill & Darling, 2001, p. 256). Also, writing in *Foundations of Social Work Practice: A Graduate Text*, Mattaini and Meyer (2002) underlie the importance of the ecosystems perspective to the practice of social work when they write the following:

Since the beginning of the profession, practice has been focused on the person and the environment. This “psychosocial” focus is so important as a distinguishing feature of social work that it has become its identified purpose: to address the psychosocial matrix of which individuals, families, groups, and communities are constituents. (p. 3)

Although the ecosystems perspective has been largely applied to counseling and social work, it can be a valuable framework for religiously educating toward social-culturally and engaging interreligious education. Its value is not simply therapeutic in approach or content.

Network of Interconnectedness

As a circle of relationships among its comprising units, with its immediate natural and human-made environment, and within the overarching cosmic environment, the family ecosystem consists of three main elements: (1) the organism or human envired unit; (2) the immediate environment with its institutional forms of life; and (3) the network of mutual interactions and transactions between the organisms and their environment (Hill & Darling, 2001, p. 250). An explanation of these various elements follows:

The Organism or Human Envired Unit

This unit is composed of the individual or group of persons who are connected and share common resources, goals, values, interests, and identity. In this regard, the family, neighborhood, village, and city could be considered as a human envired unit. However, the family is considered as the central element of the human envired unit. Melson (1980) refers to the family as a “mini-world in which family members are in dynamic interaction” (p. 15). It is important to note, however, that families are not always smooth functioning. As Melson points out:

In fact, it often appears as if conflict, breakdown, and reconstruction are the hallmarks of families. Family forms themselves are no longer unquestioned verities, but subject to the flux of experimentation and innovation. In short, for both the individual and the family system, components will sometimes be in equilibrium, sometimes not. (p. 17)

The interdependence of the human envired unit is fundamental to the appreciation of contemporary systems thinking (Mattaini & Meyer, 2002, p. 7). Cahill affirms this perspective as follows:

The social nature of the family means both that families are interdependent with other civil institutions and that families participate in the common good through an open-ended commitment to other persons and families, especially the least well-off of their society. (2000, p. 129)

When seen from the perspective of an interacting and interdependent organism, the focus would then be on the relationships among peoples, and not so much as the attributes of the individuals or the group.

The Immediate Environment

As previously noted, the most fundamental premise of the family ecosystem theory is that the family is in constant interaction with its environment. Capra (1996) writes:

All members of an ecological community are interconnected in a vast intricate network of relationships, the web of life. They derive their essential properties and, in fact, their very existence from their relationships to other things. Interdependence – the mutual dependence of all life processes on one another – is the nature of all ecological relationships. The behavior of every living member of the ecosystem depends on the behavior of many others. The success of the whole community depends on the success of its individual members, while the success of each member depends on the success of the community as a whole. (p. 298)

This is premised on the perspective that sees “the world not as a collection of isolated objects, but as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent” (Capra, 1996, p. 7).

As a system in itself, the family is an interdependent subsystem of the larger social systems among which it exists. The natural resources systems, social regulatory systems such as political, economic, cultural, security, education, religious, and other such institutions all make up the complex web of the ecosystems with which the family constantly interacts. The central focus of the interaction may shift to individuals and these other institutions, depending on immediate or emerging exigencies, but very often the entire family is at the center of this constant interaction and transaction.

The immediate environment with which the family interacts is comprised of:

- a. The Natural Environment: Comprised of space, time, physical and biological components. The natural environment supports human life by providing the energy and materials on which all life depends.
- b. The Human-Constructed Environment: Comprised of the alteration and modification made by humans of the natural environment’s physical and biological components and other social and cultural constructions, which provide the basis for human activities, coordination, communication, and order.
- c. The Human-Behavioral Environment: Comprised of human presence such as physical posture, social behaviors, thought patterns, emotions, values, attitudes, and sentiments. It also includes the interaction among the different institutions.
- d. The Human-Learning Environment: Comprised of educational institutions such as schools or other forms of educational institutions, library, church, etc., which

provide a system of dynamic growth and sustenance of knowledge and discipline (Hill & Darling, 2001, p. 252).

As the individual goes beyond the boundaries of the immediate family, each of the other levels of environment assumes more importance which cannot be ignored without the possibility of grave or dire consequences.

Network of Mutual Interactions

The ecosystem is sustained by continued interaction and transaction, fueled by reciprocity among the various systems, institutions, and environments. Capra and Wilber are among those who have sought to broaden the horizon of understanding the manner and importance of the ecological interaction process by suggesting an integrated, holistic, and dynamic all level view of the environment, human body, the mind, the spirit, and all living organisms. This approach is aimed at avoiding any form of reductionism by acknowledging and respecting the vital role that all components play in the cosmic environment (Wilber, 2000, pp. 97–99).

One other implication of this view is nothing less than the overthrow of the Cartesian dictum that mind is synonymous with reasoning. Capra asserts that in the emerging theory of living systems mind is not a thing, but a process. It is cognition, the process of knowing, and is identified with the process of life itself (Capra, 1996, pp. 12–13, 174–175).

From the above, it could be argued that since human beings are dependent on the various systems and ecological components of the cosmos in which they live, the manner in which they interact with these will surely go a long way to determine the level of the needs of humanity that are met.

Christian Theological Support of Ecosystem Theory

The Christian faith community exercises every aspect of its ministry within the complex web of interactions between the individual, family, organizational and regulatory systems, and the pervasive circumstances of the environment. Even though dualism has had a longstanding influence on Christian spirituality, the creation tradition is gradually making its way into theological thought as foundation for issues of ecology and holistic religious education. Treston writes that “Creation theology is an exploration of the relationship between God, us, and our world” (1993, p. 18). Contemporary theology, religious education, and ministry then may be viewed from an ecological perspective.

Community living and ethnic solidarity has always been a cherished value among various cultural groups, especially those caught in the new wave of global migration. Very often the new socio-political and religious climate does exact considerable pressure on the people’s sense of community, and the sense of harmony with nature.

Hence, it may be argued that many contemporary societies are visibly in a state of transition, a stage of betwixt and between, with the attendant anxiety, tension, and confusion being felt at virtually every facet of life. The destabilization of the traditional life patterns has clearly left wide gaps in the social structure, particularly in the bonds of interpersonal and inter-group relationships.

The conception of familial and communal interdependence, interaction and transaction brings to the picture of church *koinonia* a deep intimacy between human beings, the ecosystem, and God, because everything comes from God. For Christians, one could employ the Christological approach of the relationship between Christ and the other two persons of the Trinity, in relating the connection between human beings and the sacred on one hand, and human beings and nature on the other hand.

The local church not only consists of families and neighborhoods, but also schools, the workplace and other economic institutions, culture and society. Employing the family ecosystems perspective, the church can play a vital role in the life of all, not in order to use religion to enforce morality, but as an interactive community, a place where people gather regularly to confront issues of life; a place where people share their common stories and children hear those discussions, and see what could be done as a result of them; a place where there is worship as well as integrated religious education curricula and pastoral programs that clearly articulate Christian values and tested wisdom. In sum, for effective religious education it is important to understand all that is going on in the lives of those to whom the church ministers, or their ecology.

The grounding of family ecosystems theory in values should be of great interest to practitioners of religious education. As families attend to the internal dynamics of needs, cohesion, collaboration, and mutuality, so too the church should attend to the needs and problems of groups and persons who lack or are deprived of power, self-determination, and access to the resources of the natural environment, as well as those who are subjected to violence, oppression, discrimination, injustice, and prejudice.

The family ecosystems perspective challenges the church, as family, to: (1) pay adequate attention not only to those who have, but even more so to those who do not have; (2) inculcate and inspire a sense of responsibility and stewardship for other living species and forms of life; (3) engage the energies of its members to work toward preservation and enhancement of the natural environment; (4) create awareness to the fact of the interrelatedness, interconnectedness, and interdependence of all forms of life that inhabit the earth; and (5) inspire respect and love for the dignity of other individuals and creatures.

In an age when globalization is turning the world into an interdependent global system of nations and is dramatically increasing nations' cultural and racial heterogeneity, the ecosystem concept provides a useful framework for religious education, as a way to integrate religion with other societal institutions, and the whole of nature in a mosaic of interactive relationships. Because of its association of interdependence with cooperation, it makes the establishment of more harmonious relationships among religiously and culturally different people appear inevitable.

Three key themes are fundamental to religious education from a family ecosystem perspective:

- The fundamental goal is the practice of religious education within a framework of creation in which the natural environment, economic development, and social life are seen as mutually dependent – and the interaction between them contributes to the sustainability and enhancement of the quality of human lives and the practice of faith.
- Such an integrative perspective of religious education implies an *across-the-curriculum approach to learning* which helps individuals and groups to understand the concepts of mutuality, interdependence, and reciprocal cooperation. The ultimate aim of such understanding is to help religious people develop caring and committed attitudes and the desire to act responsibly in the environment and toward each other.
- Therefore, the family ecosystems perspective of religious education is concerned not only with teaching conceptual knowledge, creedal statements, and doctrinal formulations, but also with the development of the values, attitudes, and skills which will motivate and empower people to work, both individually and with others, to help promote the sustainability of natural and social environments.

The issues of interrelatedness, reciprocity, mutuality, sustainability, and quality of life in this perspective of religious education pose crucial questions for the future of human society. They are important issues for every teacher to contemplate. The essential merit of this perspective is that it not only presents multidimensional dialogue which harmonizes with that which is immanent in human nature, it also induces an attitude, a dynamic, a will, an aspiration and an ethic, which facilitates the discovery and implementation of practical measures.

Purpose and Context of Religious Education

Harris (1989) offers a “broad and extensive” description of education as “form giving.” She writes, “Education, like all other artistic endeavors, is a work of giving form. More specifically, it is a work especially concerned with the creation, re-creation, fashioning, and refashioning of form” (p. 40). It can be argued that Christian religious education is applicable to the various forms of information, formation, and transformation of Christian believers by the communication of the Christian gospel to become part of a Christian process of social engagement and transformation. Vrame (1999) writes that “Religious education, as an effort of the entire community, strives to nurture all of its members in all stages of life toward whole personhood through the ministries and curricula of the Church” (p. 11). The faith that education nurtures is not just the individual’s trust in God or blind loyalty to particular defined doctrinal propositions, but an engagement of the individual’s intellect and affectivity which is subsequently

manifest and sustained by one's actions in the world. It is educating for a faith that is an existential reality. Vrame also writes that "religious education is seen holistically, that is involving: (a) the whole person – mind, body, spirit; (b) the whole community – all believers and their collective wisdom, knowledge, and experience of past and present; and (c) the whole Tradition – *orthodoxia and orthopraxia*" (pp. 11–12).

Historically, religion has been a pivotal guiding force for education. This was the case in the early Sumerian and Egyptian civilizations, and later in the Persian and Jewish cultures, where the priests also served as scholars and instructors. In the Middle Ages, learning was archived and transmitted through the monastic system, while philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas sought to harmonize faith and reason thus profoundly influencing educational systems. Education has the connotation of "leading out," which suggests that education has (a) a point from which the "leading out" begins, (b) a present process of leading, and (c) a future toward which the "leading out" aims. Groome (1980) writes, "In this sense, education has an "already," a "being realized," and a "not yet" dimension to it. While these three dimensions should never be separated in practice, they can be distinguished for the sake of analysis" (p. 5).

For Christians, what religious education aims at then is not merely information but living; not merely knowledge but dynamic action, because the purpose of faith ultimately is service to the reign of God. Thus, the religious educator must lead people into authentic service to God's reign by engaging them in an action–reflection rhythm of Christian praxis.

Freire (2002) argues that education is either domesticating (banking) or liberating, but never neutral. Freire used the concept of "banking education" to explain the framework for education that assumes that knowledge solely resides with the educator and that the purpose of schooling is to pour or "bank" that knowledge into the minds of the students. Banking involves subordinating individuals and propagating the current oppressive political structure. On the other hand, liberating education is the process of humanizing people who have been oppressed. Humanization is a politically subversive process as it empowers oppressed people to question their lives and position in society. Humanization requires individuals to achieve critical consciousness, which arises from questioning what one knows and making a conscious decision to see the reasons for the reality in which one lives. Freedom to live life to the full can only be attained when the oppressed achieve this critical consciousness and use that knowledge to gain "praxis."

The religious community's understanding of faith and the exigencies of the socio-cultural context of contemporary societies demand a religious education that is not simply indoctrination in an ideology or memorization of dogmas. In an age characterized by socio-political and economic emasculation and the devaluing of human life, religious education needs a pedagogical framework that enables people to understand themselves authentically and interactively in relation to a pluralistic, or interreligiously diverse, world and to commit to the concrete living of religious meaning and values.

Interreligious Education

Throughout history, religious traditions have existed in a reciprocal relationship with the world's civilizations and cultures. In this current social climate, religious discourse has gradually assumed a more embracing, inclusive, and interactive language. As religious practitioners explore the seminal influence of religion on the futures of individuals, communities, and societies, there is an increasing appreciation of interreligious education. Moran (1989) describes interreligious education as an understanding of one religious tradition in relation to other religious traditions and possibilities. Employing the metaphor of "language," Moran argues that people learn the language of others to enable them to (1) enter into conversation with them and (2) to understand them (1997, pp. 124–126). Thus, religious education must be necessarily sensitive to two factors: the inherent tension between the inner language of one's own religious group and the inner language of other religious groups. Religious education entails thinking through the meaning of one's own life as religious, and it must be done in relation both to those who share that life and to those who do not. And just as learning a second language is an obvious demand in communicative and international relation, religious education becomes an attempt to bring into conversation many religious languages.

Moran argues that interreligious education is fundamentally inherent to religious education. He insists that for religious education to be adequate for the future, it has to examine religions in particular, not in general; but one particular religion has to be related to other particular religions. Religious education in this context should be a lifelong process, from childhood to adulthood. Lee (1988) makes a similar point when he writes,

If we are to teach persons religiously, we must teach them for life in a religiously pluralistic society. Such religious instruction aims at empowering learners to actively work together with members of other religious groups in order to enrich the spiritual lives of those involved and also to bring the religious dimension of life more potently into society. (p. 60)

Subsequently, many educators are developing and advancing alternative educational methods. These educators recognize that nurturing productive citizens requires a holistic approach that takes into account not only the intellectual and doctrinal needs of faith practitioners, but the emotional and spiritual dimensions as well.

Every religious group surveys and participates in education, and religious groups are influential determinants of curriculum content and pedagogical trends. However, the expansion of catechetical and theological programs needs to go beyond mere familiarity with the religious heritages of others to more critical attentiveness to interreligious values and relationships which are critically important educational goals capable of bridging interreligious differences, promoting friendship, and instilling constructive attitudes among religious groups.

The Task of Envisioning

The task of envisioning the future may be common yet unfamiliar. Orientation toward the future is part of daily living, and much of human thinking and planning is focused on the future. Yet there is often a tendency to shy away from creatively engaging the future, especially when it is considered to be problematic. This could create a conflict of attitudes leading to either recourse to a settled past, contentment with the present, and the status quo or creative engagement of the unknown future. Envisioning is a central component of the third attitude, which is creative engagement of the future. Envisioning does not only assume that we can influence the future and make an optimal future more likely, but even as important it frees the mind from the notion that certain solutions are less plausible than others.

This essay employs the metaphor of Family Ecosystems as a perspective for interreligious education. Metaphors are invitations to see things in a new way. “Life is a journey,” “the human mind is as a machine,” “the world is a marketplace of ideas,” and “nobody is an island unto him/herself,” etc., are all rich metaphors that have ended up being regarded as profound truths and have become entrenched in human ways of thinking about the world. It can be argued that metaphors are very powerful and effective vehicles for understanding religion and theology because they captivate our imagination, and thus our understanding. Lopez (2003) argues that metaphors can be conceptualized as “catalysts” which lead to the formulation of new concepts, meanings and strategies. Hence, religious education can be a radical re-envisioning enterprise, completely reshaping, reforming, and re-imaging the world we live in.

Cohen (2004) argues that when religion employs metaphors, it is not condescension toward the past; rather it is the employment of integral language that opens the mind to endless possibilities. Metaphors can be interpreted indefinitely; they require us to imaginatively recreate the world of human existence, a task which is only limited by our own imaginations. While all metaphors may not be equally as compelling as others, there can be hardly any doubt that interpreting metaphors is a highly creative endeavor, just as creative as creating the metaphors themselves. Rahner (1964) makes a similar observation but he goes further to argue that metaphors or new words can both help to determine meaning and suggest new ways of envisioning conventional ideas.

The communitarian nature of the family ecosystem is a reflection of broader societal relations. The family constitutes the primary focus of group solidarity, mutuality, interrelatedness, and loyalty which represents an affirmation of the cultural conviction that the individual’s personal identity was strongly embedded in that of the community. Cohen (1997) opines that a metaphor may ask of us to consider a change in what we believe, but mostly it asks us to consider a change in how we see the world, not what we see in the world. It is more of a call for a change in attitude than a change in belief. The primary task of the usage of a metaphor is that of re-envisioning the world. And what the family ecosystems perspective proposes

is to conceive the world differently; to conceive religious education differently; and to differently conceive the manner and pedagogies of religious education.

Metaphors can also be subversively prophetic, liberating the imagination of the individual and exposing the creative dimension of the religious tradition. This is precisely what Freire's liberative education does, and is the task of envisioning, empowering the individual or faith community to imagine the unimaginable, and think the unthinkable.

Organizing the Curriculum for Interreligious Education

As a verb, curriculum implies an activity; a journey. Sometimes the modern curriculum development rationale could truncate the etymological connotation by reducing curriculum to a noun. Slattery (1995) argues that this could lead to perceptions of curriculum as merely a tangible object, lesson plans, course outline, subject themes and structures, rather than the very process of educating. According to Miller and Wayne (1990), "curriculum is an explicitly and implicitly intentional set of interactions designed to facilitate learning and development and to impose meaning on experience" (p. 3). However, whatever the conception of curriculum one subscribes to, it is obvious that a school, a religious organization, and any educational organization cannot function effectively without some kind of framework of what it intends for the learners. Curriculum is the entire content of education, including the systematic plan by which we seek to fulfill our educational purpose. In some ways it is about thinking through the whole course over which, or through which, the learners are intended to move.

From a learning perspective, interreligious education curriculum organizers will be helping faith communities actualize their shared vision of mission by learning and increasing their capacity for wise, intentional, culturally and scripturally informed action. And there is a corresponding necessity to create opportunities for individual and communal reflection and action. Covey (1989) recommends that leaders begin with the "end in mind" (p. 97–98) and help congregational members envision what their commitment to the reign of God means in terms of goals and action plans.

Steinke (1996) subscribes to the position that the discipline of systems thinking is valuable to enable religious educators and curriculum designers better able to see their distinctive role in the collaborative processes of pastoral planning, mobilizing community members for action, and empowering communities for critical reflection and creative engagement of their environment. With action on behalf of the reign of God as the underlying principle, the educational curriculum can become a catalyst for communal faith interaction and for the social transformation that such empowered communities could effect.

Using the systems perspective, religious educators may become more empowered to guide their congregations in developing the disciplines they need to clarify, harmonize, and continually expand their capacities for realizing their transformative missions in the world. In the process, these faith communities may enter into an ongoing rhythm of responsive faithful living, discover their ongoing journeys of

conversion, and be actively engaged in transformative education. Steinke writes, “As a system, a congregation influences its own health. By taking responsible action, it shapes its destiny. . . . A healthy congregation is one that actively and responsibly addresses or heals its disturbances, not one with an absence of troubles” (Steinke, 1996, p. 10).

Alternative Curriculum of Interreligious Education

The alternative curriculum of interreligious education is based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as tolerance, openness, compassion, and peace. Instead of an “academic” curriculum capable of condensing the world into instructional packages, the alternative curriculum aims at direct engagement with the interconnected environment in a holistic manner.

Aspect	Content	Goals
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledge of religion and religious encounter ● Knowledge of one’s religion ● Examination of religious traditions ● Examination of similarities and differences in various religious traditions ● Role of religion in personal, interpersonal and world affairs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build confidence 2. Promote respect and tolerance 3. Establish grounds for interaction 4. Appreciate diversity 5. Encourage collaboration
Affective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Freedom of religious practice ● Respect for others ● Power of religious beliefs ● Love of mutuality and interconnectedness ● Appreciating the positive in others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Broaden horizon of religious experience 2. Enrich faith practice and perspectives 3. Openness to becoming 4. Harmonious living 5. Ecological balance
Psychomotor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skills for service and conscious engagement ● Ability for constructing frameworks of peace and collaboration ● Integrating principles of worship, authentic values, and social concern ● Recognition of economic and justice concerns ● Mechanisms for integrating cultural traditions and practice of faith 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purpose of human existence 2. Promoting the common good 3. Develop talents and abilities 4. Offer authentic religious witness 5. Enhance initiative, creativity, and ecological harmony

The above articulation of a holistic alternative curriculum of interreligious education complements deductive reasoning, concept formation, mental imagery,

and analogical problem solving, with discernible aspects of human performance. The three-dimensional aspect is aimed at balancing structure and freedom, individuality and social responsibility, spiritual wisdom and spontaneity, in order to respond to each learning situation in its immediate presence. Any particular learner, in a particular setting, in a particular culture, at a particular point in historical time, should be addressed in that moment, and in that environment.

In this way, all things are seen in their wholeness rather than in fragmented and detached ways. Every object, idea, or living being is both whole in itself and part of an endless series of larger wholes that give meaning to it. The main purpose thus is not simply to transmit knowledge and preserve social traditions but to transform society by helping learners develop a perceptive and inquisitive consciousness of the conditions of their environment.

Vrame writes that “The educational process shapes people, contributing in a major way to the formation of both character and worldview” (Vrame, 1999, p. 137). Hence, there are ongoing efforts to contextualize the content of religious education, grounding it in the concrete realities of human life and the faith community. The curriculum of family ecosystems perspective utilizes the contextualized realities in engaging the lives and experiences of learners as the basis of interreligious education.

Conclusion

The fundamental principles of family ecosystems perspective challenge religious groups to apply the systems and family metaphors to create awareness to the fact of the interrelatedness, interconnectedness, and interdependence of all forms of life.

This author argues that the family ecosystems perspective which implies the interrelatedness of all life forms within the community is of great relevance to interreligious, interfaith, and ecumenical relationships and coalitions in any pluralistic environment. It presumes an atmosphere whereby individuals and groups with varying traditions, orientations, intelligence, and religions are faced with common realities which entail that they work together for the wellbeing of all and of the entire environment. The family ecosystems perspective respects the differences that exist while challenging all to place those at the service of the common good. The family ecosystems perspective respects particularity and individuality while focusing on unity, collaboration, and partnership. Thus, while particular religious groups or ecclesial communities may differ in doctrines and faith practices, the experiences of the transcendent reality impels all to work for transformation, liberation, justice, and peace.

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Religious Pluralism and Dialogue/Interreligious Dialogue¹

Evelina Orteza y Miranda

Introduction

It has become increasingly clear that the flourishing of various religions, their influence and impact on churches and society, has raised questions regarding the usefulness of The Paradigm.²

The Paradigm concerns itself with doctrinal matters but it cannot answer questions such as “what have different religions to do with each other? What have they to say to each other and in what ways may they benefit or not benefit each other?” A paradigm, broadly defined, could be regarded as a worldview expressed in a theory purporting to explain basic entities in a part of the world and their relationship to each other. It is an abstraction from reality. As changes and developments take place and new facts accumulate, however, a theory or paradigm may not be able to provide satisfactory answers to new questions that may arise out of them. As an abstraction, a paradigm may not be expected to account for all phenomena in a particular area or account for new facts of experience. There is, then, the need for a paradigm shift, or a new way of dealing with recent developments. In matters of religious pluralism, dialogue/interreligious dialogue has come to be accepted as a way to deal with questions, such as those mentioned above, that arise out of religious diversity and the relation of one religion to another. There is a new day, say M. Darrol Bryant and Frank K. Flinn, “. . . in the history of humankind’s religious life,” labeled “dialogue” (1989, p. ix). What, however, is a dialogue?

E. Orteza y Miranda (✉)
University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada
e-mail: orteza@ucalgary.ca

¹“Dialogue” and “interreligious dialogue” are used interchangeably in the essay even as the latter identifies religion as its specific matter of interest.

²See a brief discussion on the usefulness and limitation of The Paradigm in the first chapter of this volume. For concept of paradigm, see Kuhn, T. (1970, 1974).

Dialogue/Interreligious Dialogue

Dialogue, in its broadest sense, is conversation involving at least two or more persons. It suggests an exchange of ideas as one comments on what the other said and vice versa or as one raises a question to be answered by another. As conversation, a dialogue need not necessarily deal with a problem to be solved. It is a form of socialization engaged in by people as they talk about a wide range of topics or ideas with no intention to teach or convince another of the substantiality of their utterances evident in the expression “we were just chatting.” No one is an epistemic authority over another. Usually, conversations are not rule bound. Politeness, courtesy to each other and respect for one another are, however, expected.

Not all conversations are cases of a dialogue, however. When one dominates a conversation and other voices are silenced, this would be more of a monologue than a dialogue. Or, if these voices are heard but no one is listening to what is actually being said, then they are talking to the wind and not involved in a dialogue. If there seems to be no point to the talk, and all sounding like clanging cymbals, each one going on his/her own way, a multilogue is taking place but not a dialogue. Or, if there is an obvious lack of seeking mutual understanding between parties, each one not trying to enter into the thoughts of the other, instead preparing in advance to say what he or she will want to say, regardless of what others have said, a dialogue is not taking place.

Some conversations, of course, can be serious, for example, when an issue of truth or certainty about something is meaningfully significant to the participants. Here the ideas pertinent to the issue may be said to control the conversation and with no advance knowledge of how it could be concluded. Participants enter into these ideas which constitute the rule of the conversation. All other rules are suspended. There is a clear desire of coming to an understanding or settling, if possible, of the issue at hand. Structuring a conversation in this way is close to being a dialogue (Gadamer, 1993, pp. 91–199).

To engage in a dialogue, two or more parties must converse. But to converse is not necessarily to dialogue. There is more to dialogue than conversation as a form of socialization.

Consider the following statements on dialogue:

- Dialogue is “mutual listening and questioning” (Eck, 1993, p. 16).
- Dialogue “. . . is a truth seeking encounter, mutual transformation, encounter of commitments. . .” (p. 198).
- Dialogue is to “. . . develop real relationships premised on mutual understanding and not agreement” (p. 197).
- “The aim of dialogue . . . is the enabling of a true encounter between those spiritual insights and experiences which are only found at the deepest levels of human life” (World Council of Churches, as cited in Rice, 1982, p. 91).
- Dialogue “is a meeting of people of different faiths. . . to encourage mutual understanding and acceptance of persons of differing faiths. . .” (Bryant & Flinn, 1989, pp. ix–x).

What stands out in these statements are the words “mutual transformation,” “mutual understanding,” “mutual listening and questioning,” “meeting of people,” and “true encounter.” This suggests a reciprocal relationship, an interchange or sharing of the same feelings toward something or someone between two or more persons. It is a state of equivalence, “. . . an interaction between persons who both seek to know each other as they really are” (Barnes, 1989, p. 117), and to understand themselves through understanding each other. Self-recognition also includes recognition from others of who we are for we continue to live in part in the eyes of others. And even if their picture of us is distorted or unfair, it may still be the case that their picture of us influences us, to some extent, in our own view of who we are. We define ourselves, in part, in dialogue with others.

Dialogue is a language of mutuality and a meeting of persons, characterized by mutual respect, honesty, sincerity, and mutual trust, inspired by truth-seeking and sharing a common humanity with all its anxieties and deep-seated concerns. Dialogue, says Michael Barnes, “. . . is, first and foremost, something more profoundly religious and therefore more profoundly human: an encounter of subjects who . . . do bring with them their own interests, preconceptions and cultural values. . . (it) is . . . not just an exchange of comment and opinion but a meeting of persons who share a common humanity” (Barnes, 1989, p. 121). And they are not mere disembodied representatives of systems of thought but are simply who they are, human beings worthy of respect for simply being human.

Although it is common to list some purposes of a dialogue, e.g., to bring about understanding, to establish relationships, perhaps, a more appropriate purpose, considered as its overriding principle, should be that to engage in dialogue is its own end. To dialogue is to experience one’s humanity in a heightened and conscious way as a being who is relating and reciprocating, as Buber reminds us, and in this is one’s personhood, a fulfillment of meaningful existence. Human beings are created to relate to one another and to contribute a sense of wholeness to humanity instead of continuing a state of fragmentation and isolation. To bare one’s soul to each other, to confront each other with her/his mutual fears and deepest religious anxieties and to establish thereby a relatedness to others could be a transforming experience from being an isolated dehydrated spirit to one animated by exigencies of life with all its possibilities. To dialogue is to be human. Dialogue is relationship, a mark of our limited humanity in need of others and of God. “Dialogue is its own justification” (Lochhead, 1988, p. 79).³

It is not that specific purposes of a dialogue often mentioned are necessarily out of order. A concern is that these purposes could determine the dialogic process and what could be achieved is knowledge in the abstract of what mutual understanding is, how to dialogue, etc., in short, a dialogue on dialogue, instead of experiencing the reality of a dialogic process of mutual understanding, of entering into the life of another. Additionally, the participants could be used as a means to achieve these ends, treating them as objects, engaged in an I–It relationship. If so, the point that it

³For a discussion on Dialogue as Relationship, see Lochhead, (1988, pp. 77–81).

is not what participants come to know that is important in a dialogue but whom one comes to encounter and to know through the process is missed (Barnes, 1989).

To allow mutual understanding as a dialogic purpose, it needs to be clarified. To understand something and to understand someone are, obviously, not identical. The first suggests seeing connections in a state of affairs, or an object's composition, which enables one to comprehend it. It is to understand in a cognitive sense. To understand what a person says means that one comprehends the meaning of her utterances, their connections with other utterances, their epistemic import, etc. It is to say "I know the meaning of what is said." But this does not necessarily mean that one also understands the person saying it even if what is said can be figured out. One understands what is said but not necessarily the person saying it. It is to say "I understand what is said but why she is saying it is beyond my comprehension." Understanding a person, who he really is, is a much more difficult and complicated matter than knowing states of affairs or matters of knowledge. Several factors constitute one's personhood or self. And one can always withhold a truth about one's self. To understand a person, therefore, depends upon her willingness to open up to others in all honesty. There could be, of course, cases where what a person says is truly indicative of who or what the person is. He or she is in his or in her words, saying, for example, "I give you my word," such that to understand what is said is also to understand the person saying it. But this, admittedly, is a rare case. And when one succeeds in understanding a person, in the sense of comprehending him in all his ways, one could also become understanding, in the sense of sympathetic of/to the person. I do not only know why he thinks, speaks, and acts in a certain way but I am also being understanding of him. That is, I have a certain attitude toward him, e.g., appreciative, sympathetic. It is this sense of (mutual) understanding that could be argued to be a purpose of a dialogue and not merely to understand in the way we do with logic, scientific explanations, etc.⁴

The ideas and issues discussed are, therefore, the means through which one encounters another, hopefully leading to an understanding of each other or being understanding of him, he who animates these ideas to life. This is especially true of religious beliefs which are expected to be incarnated in one's life. They are not truly *believed in* but merely *believed that* if they remain external to the life of a believer, coded and sealed in official proclamations of a church. When the dialogue facilitates the meeting of persons, who they really are, a true relationship could develop not only for a time but for a lifetime. Such a relationship brought about by the dialogic process could encourage or, hopefully, even empower one to decide which ones of the various faiths provide him with compelling attractive reasons.

Dialogue is an intentional activity. It is, therefore, a moral activity engaged in by moral agents. Knowledge, understanding, and intentionality are all necessary in a moral act. The participants know why they are in a dialogue and are responsible for its total conduct and consequences be they in form of verbal agreements, resolutions, or actions. Care is, therefore, shown in what one says and how one says it lest one's

⁴For various uses of 'understand,' see Brodbeck (1963, pp. 309–324) and Martin (1970).

comments offend or harm others. Equal respect to all must be observed, even when there is disagreement among the participants, considering that they are all sincere believers and take their faith and its implications seriously. In short, one's full consciousness, heart-and-head together, must be involved in a dialogue and especially when coming to certain decisions and conclusions.

It is not necessary that participants must be epistemic authorities or academic scholars in religious studies. Religion is not restricted to academic discussions given to questions derived from certain disciplines that barely touch painful personal religious experiences. The interest of academic discussions is in developing the consistency and coherency of its area of study, establishing its respectability and validity. Crucial to these discussions is knowledge and scholarly expertise that participants bring into the discussion. Rarely, if at all, do personal religious convictions or experiences or spiritual intuitions enter into it. A phenomenological approach to dialogue among religious scholars is evident. Religion, however it is defined, is very much part of the fabric of human life, raising questions of identity, meaning and ultimate destiny. Anyone, therefore, regardless of academic expertise or scholarly credentials could want to participate in discussions about it.

Knowledge or some preparations on the part of the participants in a dialogue, however, is necessary, indeed, most desirable if they are to benefit from it. It is useless to dialogue on matters of which no one knows. Such preparation is especially needed when participants in a dialogue are committed to their religious traditions. It enables the participants to sort out comments, disagreements, argumentations, and to judge whether they are matters of fact about one's religion, matters of interpretation or matters of personal religious convictions. In this way, one would also know when to stop questioning, reasoning, and arguing, and to begin listening to, even entering into one's expressions of faith. It is time to be silent and to listen and hear the confessions of a friend, as she witnesses to others of her actual experiences with God.

A dialogue, with its atmosphere of openness, honesty, and respect for all, is especially needful and desirable for those who are committed to their faith and at the same time suffer from some crippling doubt about it which evades clarity and resolution. Here, one can freely express one's self and bare out his or her soul that is seeking for some relief, confident that she is among mutual seekers each one trying to learn from one another. Here, no one is an epistemic authority over others who knows most answers in the abstract to every question and doubt but only equals engaged in the most human activity, the dialogue, helping each other come to grips with problems of the soul.

As an intentional activity, a dialogue is, therefore, focused, concentrating on agreed upon issues, intent on observing the integrity of the dialogic process. It is not, however, inflexible or rigid. It does not consist of a set of procedural rules set apart from and independent of participants' participation and used as a basis for judging whether or not the process is going the right way. It is doubtful if there is, strictly speaking, a right or wrong dialogic process. It depends on how the participants proceed in their involvement and conversation with each other. There is no way of guaranteeing in advance how it will actually proceed or conclude, if it does

at all. In short, the dialogic process and the participants' participation are one and the same, constituting a dialogue.

However, it is reasonable to say that the content or subject of a dialogue could influence its manner of conduct complicated somewhat by varying interpretations of the nature of the subject matter. But this does not mean that in a dialogue, its end-results are predicted or guaranteed prior to the dialogue. In its written form, of course, it can be stylized, contrived, and scripted to conform to the author's purposes, hence the outcome is rarely surprising. A question which is sometimes raised is whether a conversation with its aim specified in advance, for example, ". . .to make Christ known" or "to seek to make disciples of Christ," qualifies as a dialogue. It is important to know the specified aim especially if the participants come from various religions in order for them to decide whether to join the dialogue or not. Honesty and openness to one another, sincerity of intentions are necessary attendants to a meaningful dialogue. While the former could be interpreted to mean "to impart information about who Christ is," and could pass for informational dialogue with no intention to persuade or convince, the latter could be perceived as conscious attempts at securing a goal identified prior to the dialogue and which is decided by one religious tradition. In this way, the conduct of a dialogue could be controlled solely by the specified goal and a desire to achieve it by whatever means. It will not allow for creativity and imagination in the asking of questions but disallows hearing of voices that may dissuade achievement of the goal. But a dialogue is not simply a sharing of knowledge or truth which the participants already know. Rather, it is to come to know something, arrived at collectively, which everyone previously did not know. And this is an emergent of the dialogic process. More important, a dialogue does not always and only emphasize what one knows but whom one comes to know through the process. If dialogue is a meeting of persons, then knowledge that a person is judged to possess must not be confused with who the person really is. What he knows and what kind of a person he is or who he really is are two different matters. Clearly, if the contents and aims of a dialogue are determined a priori, they become the dominant and the dominating voice, judging whether one's participation is in line with them. If not, she need not be heard. The dominating voice carries on, not a dialogue, but a monologue. It listens to and hears only its voice.

If it is granted that "to seek to make disciples of Christ" must be the goal it is because such a goal came about as a result of the dialogue engaged in by all but not because it is a specified goal prior to the dialogue and independent of its process. There is no disconnectedness between the dialogic process, as a means, and its outcome otherwise it would be an imposed or false outcome because it is not related to the process. In short, a goal, contents, etc. must be intrinsic to the dialogic process and arise out of it in order for it to be an authentic dialogic goal or content. A dialogue, putting it exaggeratedly, does not come readymade with its aims, goals, manners of deliberations, etc., formulated in advance. Rather, these decisions come about as a result of the process itself, suggesting of flexibility and openness of mind. Does this mean that for a dialogue to be a dialogue, the participants at the outset must divest themselves of all their presuppositions, core beliefs, etc. and come to a dialogue "empty-headed," so to speak? Formulating the question in this way may not be instructive. Far better to ask: "When may we lay aside our presuppositions,

core beliefs, etc. when participating in a dialogue and for what reasons? When may we bring to a dialogue our core beliefs, presuppositions, etc. and show that they clearly influence or even determine our ways of thinking on significant matters?" It depends upon the kind of issue or question that is being discussed.

The necessity of distinguishing the different religious issues, whether they are theological, institutional, practical, confessional, etc. is, therefore, helpful in order to avoid confusion. Discussion on formulated belief systems, official church proclamations, for example, is abstract and academic. Knowledge and scholarly expertise are necessary and essential to these discussions, mastering the logic of a religious discourse and official proclamations. One's personal beliefs or religious convictions are not necessary and can be laid aside for they are not considered essential in establishing academic respectability or institutional integrity. This could be a dialogue of experts. It could be said that a religious studies scholar is not necessarily expected to be an adherent or practitioner or believer of/in what he teaches or studies. His core beliefs may differ significantly from the religious beliefs that he teaches.

On institutional matters, it is to be expected that one's religious core beliefs could play an important place in the discussion along with one's knowledge of religious institutions and their relationships to other societal institutions. Here one does not put aside one's beliefs about the importance of the church, for example, as a spiritual institution or organism, sanctioned by God. For purposes of the essays in this collection, problems of believers' religious experiences and commitments, how to figure them out in the context of religious plurality, how to deal with doubts and uncertainties about them, etc. require a full acknowledgement of everyone's religious beliefs. These are the issues of a dialogue and the presuppositions, core beliefs, etc. of all participants constitute the dialogue. There is nothing academic about it or pretending to knowledge but a personal interrogation of one's soul and her relationship to the God she believes in. Everyone brings to the dialogue her/his complete set of religious beliefs which is open to everyone and subject for discussion and dialogue. Here the participants willingly submit to the critical assessment of the other, subjecting each other to an analysis internal to her own system or from an external one. It is to encounter each other in all of her/his vulnerability and strength. This could provide a deepening and enriching of one's own religious experiences as one tries to enter into the experience of another and vice versa, of seeing one's self as others see her/him and seeing others as seen by her/him. This type of dialogue which is essential to resolution of personal religious problems could be fraught with painful difficulties encouraging emotional vehemence but it is desirable and needful for the cleansing of one's soul. The hope is that we could come to conclude that, in the words of a poet, Rochita Loenen-Ruiz (as cited in Miranda-Feliciano, 2007, p. 12).

When we recognize each other in the purity of light,
 We will call each other
 brother, sister, friend
 I, being you; you being me; we bring us.
 There will be no more boundaries, no more borders,
 no more walls.

Consider now Martin Buber's notion of dialogue which is in line with the discussion in this essay.⁵

Martin Buber's Dialogue

Buber's I-It and I-Thou, briefly sketched here, may be said to be ultimately a confrontation between God and human beings. After the Fall, when Adam and Eve sinned against God by disobeying Him, God calls out to them: "Where are you?" It is not that God did not know where they were. Rather, the question told them that they were in the wrong place and God had to find them, in a manner of speaking, in order to communicate with them. It suggests that their previous relationship with Him has been broken. Its urgency demanded of Adam to reply, albeit haltingly: "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." Insecure and feeling displaced, Adam and Eve had become a problem to themselves. Since then, a brokenness of all kinds in human and nonhuman relationships seem to characterize life, relieved only momentarily by attempts to search and hope for a dialogue with God, the eternal Thou. This does not mean that Buber is solely concerned with spiritual or theological issues. Rather, his concern was philosophical anthropology, study of "the wholeness of man" and to hallow his everyday living. The study involves

(human beings') special place in the cosmos, (their) connection with destiny, (their) relation to the world of things, (their) understanding of (their) fellowmen, (their) existence as (beings) that know (they) must die, (their) attitude in the ordinary and extraordinary encounters with the mystery with which (their) life is shot through. . . . (Buber, 1969, p. 150)

Even so, Buber seems to suggest that the I-Thou relation precedes and provides the background of the I-It relation.

I and Thou explores two basic attitudes or relations of human beings, namely, I-Thou and I-It. Without these relations, a person may not be said to exist or exist meaningfully. For the "I" does not exist independent of a "Thou" or an "It." Nor does an "I" exist by depending on her relationship with herself. For the "I" to develop or grow or to be a whole, there must be "the Other," be it a "Thou" or an "It." Human beings are potentially relating and reciprocating individuals rather than self-fulfilling. A person comes into being in the act of relating to or with another. And the relation generated between the speaker and her object depends upon the manner in which one relates to it. I could relate to another in one of two ways, I-Thou or I-It. If I treat someone with no awareness of or respect for the depth of her personality or as one subject to causality and fate, to calculations and predictions, following the orderliness and certainties in the world, then I am engaged in an I-It relation.

⁵Socratic dialogue, an instance of doing philosophy or Socratic philosophizing, is familiar to many readers, hence, I decided not to write about it. Instead Martin Buber's notion of dialogue is presented briefly. Among the sources used are: Buber (1958, 1969); Friedman (1955); Murphy (1988); and Wood (1969).

Or, if I deal with her through what I know of her, which is past knowledge, thus disregarding her present concrete actuality, hoping to use her, then she is an object calcified by my knowledge about her. Like any other object, she is without potentiality. Although she is an "Other," she is an "other-for-me," for my use. I am not interested in her uniqueness but only in my knowledge of her which I can use for myself. But there is no sense of a genuine appreciation of the other for her own sake, who she is and, more important, who she could become. There is no mutual confirmation, nor inclusion of each other, hence, not a genuine relationship or no relationship at all. Everything that I do with her is important only to the extent that it is for my use. She enters into my calculation only in this way but not into a relationship where a Thou addresses me and vice versa. An I-It relationship takes place but it is not a genuine dialogic I-Thou relationship where each one responds to and enters into the life of the other with one's whole being.

In the I-It relationship, I enter into it not with my whole being. Using my knowledge of my friend to calculate her responses in advance, hence, treating her as an It, a part of me is an observer or spectator thinking if my predictions of my friend are right. I am not fully present to my friend, hence, not also fully participating in the relationship. A part of me remains outside of the relationship. What may be touched or subjected to inquiry is that which *seems* or *appears* to be my inward self and mistaken to be my true self.

In contrast, I-Thou relationship is characterized by mutual appreciation of each other, a desire to enter into a living relationship, an experiencing of the other. It is to know the other to be this particular kind of a person in his concrete actuality. In this dialogic relationship, we come to know each other in our "real filled present." But this is not to influence him, say, to change him in relation to a certain truth in order to be in accord with me but to enter into his experience of something in the way he does even as I also experience it from my side. A sense of togetherness, full acceptance, and confirmation of each other is generated. But there is no mystical absorption of one by the other. Each one remains himself, still different from the other.

Participating in an I-Thou relationship is an act of one's whole being. Nothing is withheld by the "I" who addresses a Thou. Therefore, the "I" could be vulnerable to some risks from which there can be no refuge except to revert to an I-It relation. Additionally, the "Thou" is addressed in the full freedom of his otherness. No advance expectations of anything is possible. And calculations and predictions, as past knowledge, may have nothing to do with the richness and mysteries of the present. I-Thou relationship is a living in the present, as one engages in genuine listening to the other. Genuine listening is not knowing in advance what one will hear from the other. If this is possible, there is then no need for one to listen to what he already knows the other will say. Or, he can *pretend* to listen, which is usually the case in many relationships. To claim to know in advance what one will say about something is also to claim that this individual, like any object, is bereft of any potentiality for growth and so has nothing new to say. In genuine listening, one empties his mind of preconceptions, prejudices, a priori expectations, etc. in order to listen and to hear what the other is actually saying. One is fully present to the other.

Buber's dialogic relationship is not a consequence of a meaningful dialogue but its precondition.

Among some of the important characteristics of Buber's dialogic relation are mutuality, directness, presentness, confirmation, intensity, authenticity, trust, and ineffability. And it is within this relation that an individual may become a personality or a person. The primacy of relation is, for Buber, the fundamental reality of human life. Of all these characteristics, the idea of confirmation, in my judgment, is most pertinent to meeting some of the often mentioned purposes of interreligious dialogue, e.g., mutual understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of differences.

Confirmation

To confirm is to validate or verify an assertion to be true which may have been previously doubted or judged false. It is to approve of its truth. Confirmation, for Buber, is necessary for the realization of an individual's potentiality. To confirm someone is to encourage her and her efforts to realize her potentiality. This means that I am present to her and so I know her wishes, feelings, thoughts, etc. I do not merely accept them or affirm her in her desires, in her present actuality, but help to stimulate a process of growth in what she is doing and what she can do. It is not merely an acceptance or affirmation of what she is now but confirmation or validation of what she can become. To confirm her is to help her discover the person she is meant to be and to assist her in its realization. It is to verify her efforts at becoming a better person and actualizing a good that is in her. Confirmation is a deep regard for a person's worth and potentiality, an expression of hope. In Buber's words:

Confirmation means . . . accepting the whole potentiality of the other and making even a decisive different in his potentiality. . . I not only accept the other as he is but I confirm him, in myself, and then in him, in relation to this potentiality that is meant by him and it can now be developed, it can evolve, it can answer the reality of life. (Buber, as cited in Murphy, 1988, pp. 102–103)

In short, to confirm is to encourage and assist the potentialities for growth in a person's life even in unexpected and unpredictable directions in response to life's mysteries and uncertainties.

So, efforts and struggles to deal with problems and tensions of religious differences could be opportunities to confirm in each other her/his potentiality to grow in her/his understanding of seemingly intractable religious matters and in her/his faithfulness to one's faith while being open to others. Wrestling with each other with our differences and trying to make sense of our rationality could be a most edifying experience, inviting of humility and grace. This dialogic relation, labeled a meeting of Persons, is illustrated in a conversation between Jesus Christ and a Samaritan woman at the well (see John 4:1–42).

A Meeting of Persons: Jesus Christ and a Samaritan Woman

The conversation opens with Jesus Christ's request to the Samaritan woman, who was at the well to fetch water: "Give me a drink," he asks. Their shared human need for water showed their need for each other, establishing a connection between them. His breaking cultural rules by talking with her (who was of questionable repute) and asking for a drink (among other things, it was unthinkable for a Jew to drink from a Samaritan vessel) led the woman to ask: "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" The identity of Christ puzzled her, raising inwardly the question: "Who are you, that you act in ways disapproved of by your fellow-Jews?" Jesus does not answer her question but in reply associates Himself with the "gift of God" and claims to be able to give her "living water." His use of a metaphor, "living water," instead of a high sounding theological term, is contextually appropriate. It arises out of their conversation and paves the way for the woman to continue the conversation, asking Him where to get this living water, whether He is greater than father Jacob, and at the same time showed Him that He cannot do what He claims to do: "You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep." The question of who this person is who claims to do seemingly impossible acts continues to intrigue her.

Christ allows the woman to say whatever she wants to say. He does not argue her points, showing who is right and who is wrong, nor correct her or insist on the abstract "right answers." Had He done so, perhaps, the conversation would have stopped with the woman thinking "Nothing that I say is right, why bother to go on?" And they would have missed an experience of a true encounter of each other. But being made comfortable and at ease in their conversation enabled her to carry on with their conversation. In turn, Christ was able to draw out of her age-old thinking or traditional beliefs about religion.

Christ does not always answer her questions but focuses on the topic of their conversation. He differentiates between the water from the well and living water: "Water from this well will not quench one's thirst forever; but the water I give, will." Additionally, it becomes a "spring of water welling up to eternal life" in one who receives it. The question is not where, but from whom, to secure this "living water." Eagerly responding, "Sir," she says, "give me this water, that I may not thirst nor come here to draw." Christ does not interrupt the flow of their conversation, saying for example, "Wait a minute. You don't understand what I am talking about. Let me explain further. According to Westminster Confession. . ." Had Christ done this, he would have dominated the conversation reducing it to a monologue with his abstract theologizing and losing sight of the woman who is thirsting to know who He is. But taking her response seriously, Christ says: "Go, call your husband, and come here." "I have no husband," she replies. Christ commends her: "You have well said for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." Opening up and telling the truth she indicated a potential to want to be good. Christ stops at the factual description of her situation. He does not take off to lecture on sexual immorality, questionable lifestyle, etc., sending the woman to despair and a state of hopelessness (after five husbands, what hope is

there?). A broken reed Christ does not bruise further. For the point is not that Christ should show her how morally upright and knowledgeable he is but to enter into a mutual relationship, meeting the need of each other and both in their concrete filled presence.

Surprised, perhaps, that Christ knew something of her life, she concludes: "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet." So, you must be knowledgeable and should know the answer to the question of where we ought to worship. Christ's answer is that the place matters not but that God seeks for true worshippers to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Without commenting on what Christ said, she, however, acknowledges that when the Messiah (who is called Christ) comes, He will explain all things to us. Now she knows who has the answer to all her questions, ending her thirst for "water/living water" and which could be the beginning of a better life, a meaningful existence. With arresting simplicity and obvious gentleness, with no fanfare, no exaggerated claims about himself, Christ discloses Himself to her so simply: "I who speak to you am He." Christ used their questions and answers together to encourage further questioning which would eventually lead her to what she was, in truth, seeking and looking for, not merely the water at the well but "living water."

Throughout the dialogue, Christ showed respect to the woman by accepting her questions and answers as sincere and honest expressions of her desire to know and understand what Christ was talking about. It was not just a mere chattering on her part. He accepts her as a human being worthy of respect, regardless of her status in life, simply because she is a human being. And Christ *confirmed* in her a potential to be and to do good, evidenced by the fact that He asks for a drink of water and she spoke truthfully. This potential power to be a better person and to do good to others was released by means of the dialogue that brought them together, experiencing a true encounter of each other. Her isolated life, with no social use, has been transformed to one of community value, of relatedness to others, and to wholesomeness leading to a transformation of her personality. Whereas previously she was filled with shame re her lifestyle, not wanting to be in company of other women of the community (hence she had to go to the well at a time of day when there would be no one around due to extreme heat), and with no sense of purpose, now, she bursts forth into the community, not ashamed of herself but with boldness and with an inspiring and inviting message declares to all: "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

Christ does not point out to her or direct her to her real need, to what she was truly looking for but their conversation enabled her to arrive at the conclusion, on her own, about herself and "the man who knew everything I ever did." Christ never strays out of the dialogic process but is always intent on developing a relatedness with her. There are no dramatics, high sounding theologizing and moralizing and attempts to coerce or force His views on her. Common terms constitute the dialogue. In sum, the dialogue shows that Christ was not evasive but always focused, direct, never wandering or aimless. But in His directness, there was no rudeness, only respect and love for the Samaritan woman.

Conversion

Conversion, a pivotal event in one's life when a person, on his own volition, leaves behind his faith to join another religious faith, is a possible consequence of one's participation in an interreligious dialogue. Some, therefore, find it intimidating or a challenge and a risk, even when conversion is clearly not its intended end. Indeed, Panikkar is straightforward on the aim of dialogue which is mutual understanding of each other's faith but not to win over the other (Panikkar, 1978, p. xxvii). It is, however, reasonable to expect that in a dialogue believers would express their core beliefs and deep commitment to them, a sharing of their witness to truth to others, even if they contradict religious claims of other participants. A dialogue does not suggest that it is impossible to start from opposing points with one point seemingly subordinating other claims. There is a kind of wrestling with truth, not its suspension, in a dialogue which challenges its participants (Kuschel, 1997). Since one joins a dialogue with no prejudices and preconceived solutions, one does not know in advance what will affect him, what will be affected in him, how his religious beliefs and attitudes could be changed, or what he will learn and decide to claim for his own.⁶ Joining a dialogue, says Panikkar (1978), "...one knows full well he may in fact have to lose a particular belief or particular religion altogether. ... He may lose his life—he may also be born again" (p. 27). And so as one listens to explanations, arguments, tales, and narratives about one's religious experiences, it is possible to be attracted to the person's religious story and find it satisfying emotionally, theologically, and intellectually compared to one's own faith.

There is nothing objectionable to conversion if and only if it is experienced without coercion, manipulation, psychological threats, force, bribery, etc. It must be a conscious volitional decision of the individual and always on one's own grounds. There is no violation of one's personal moral agency, an impoverishment of one's moral autonomy. This is necessary to a conversion experience. For it is not a mere matter of changing one's mind over something, or over an aspect of one's religion, but it is a total and complete transformation of one's life so complete that the Bible labels the person "a new creation:" "...if any one (now) is in God, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (II Corinthians 5:17). Being a new creature means, according to St. Paul, a renewed and transformed mind, from one who could only view things in their visible and temporal settings to one who could now also view them in relation to the invisible and eternal plans of God. In the words of Professor Alvin Plantinga, philosopher of religion at Notre Dame University, Indiana:

To the believer the entire world looks different. Blue sky, verdant forests, great mountains, surging ocean, friends and family, love in its many forms and various manifestations – the believer sees these things as gifts from God. The entire universe takes on a personal cast for him, the fundamental truth about reality is truth about a Person. (1974, p. 2)

⁶See, for example, the story of Rami Mark Shapiro, Rabbi of Temple Beth Or, Miami, Florida, in Bryant & Flinn (1989, pp. 31–40).

To convert from one religion to another is not a trifle matter. And when there is bafflement, puzzlement, or disappointment with a friend converting to another religion, he or she must be respected for the decision he or she made, assuming moral autonomy on her/his part.

While certain individuals, agencies, experiences (in a dialogue, for example) may be said to be instrumental to one's conversion, Christianity teaches that conversion is not the work of human beings. It is the work of God, the Holy Spirit, who enables people to respond to the call of God's grace and love. From beginning to the end, involving illumination, regeneration and the transformation of the will, is the work of the Sovereign God. God's direct involvement shows the supreme significance of a conversion experience.

Interreligious Education

Interreligious education to be personally meaningful to all participants must be dialogic in nature. This is its necessary condition. It is premised on acting toward others with utmost respect, assuming rationality of all, convictions, feelings, decency, etc. This means that it is a true meeting or encounter of persons. They are not used as means or instruments to the fulfillment of other ends. But they are treated always as ends in themselves, so Kant declared.

Interreligious education which encourages dialogue between and among various religious beliefs, exposing learners to different religious views, even if contradicting of each other, and involving them in practical activities, hopes to develop in them educational values of rationality, respect for person, respect for evidence, weighing of reasons, grounds of commitment, etc. In short, its long-range goal is to develop learners' capacity to make informed decisions and choices on important first-order activities. It is also to initiate learners into a pluralistic world characterized by distinct, even mutually incompatible values, and of varying religious beliefs that are seemingly effective in the lives of the believers. The point is not to overwhelm learners with the complexity of a modern, pluralistic world, nor to encourage mere acceptance of these differences, saying "everything is valid for one and not valid for another," but, more importantly, to develop in the learners a disposition to find out what is true or false about our beliefs, values; what is reasonable or unreasonable about them; one's reasons for holding on to his/her beliefs, and why others disagree with him/her, etc. It is to heighten one's awareness of one's reasons for believing what one believes and so understands its implications for daily living. The challenges to one's religious beliefs prevent one's religious practices from becoming static, inert, degenerating into hollow practices or mere legalisms. Additionally, when religious traditions remain unchallenged, unopposed by differing views, the challenge of being moral by showing and treating other moral agents morally is removed. There is no need to show serious considerations to ideas which differ from one's own or to observe "... a duty to understand ideas which may be alien and unpalatable, even evil, but which have a valid claim to our attention because they too are deeply held convictions of human beings. . ." (Nicholson, 1985, p. 165).

Interreligious education employs religious phenomena and beliefs to secure educational purposes and, at the same time, it introduces learners to a dimension of reality and a way of thinking of existence beyond the empiricist's world and, alas, sometimes also beyond her or his understanding. For religion creates a distinctive vision of a world and depicts a certain kind of reality such as heaven, or nirvana, suggestive of a life of bliss with God. It begins right here on earth and on to eternity. This indicates immanence and transcendence. It talks of afterlife, the next world, the world beyond even as it also talks of the ultimate contingency of the world, which is its nature, and our human predicament while living in it. And, above all, religion talks about God (other religions may have a different term) which is also to talk of reality as "transempirical," which means that God's existence is manifested unmistakably by signs in this world to be the actions of God who transcends it (Leahy & Laura, 1997, pp. 335–336).

Some may say that it is not worthwhile to take religion seriously. But unless those who make such a judgment have undertaken the study of religion and its practices, then their judgment may be baseless. In order for them to have a sound basis for their judgment and for their judgment to be taken seriously that religion is not a worthwhile study, they must first undertake the study of religion/interreligious education. Then they can judge whether it is worthwhile or not and their judgment would be appropriately informed by knowledge which is integral to religion. The study of religion/interreligious education, in short, enables one to answer the question "What is religion?"

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Part II

The Pedagogical Aspects of Interreligious Education

Marian de Souza

Any discussion about interreligious education needs to be contextualised by the backdrop of international migration that had become a global phenomenon by the end of the 20th century and the high numbers of displaced people in the world who, for a number of reasons became refugees and asylum-seekers.

Arguably, the large movements of people across different social, cultural and religious divides may be attributed to technology. To begin with, one reason why people move from their homelands into strange and, often, alien surroundings where they endeavour to rebuild their lives is that they have been displaced by war, natural and/or other human made disasters. The human causes may be linked to advances in science, industry and commercial endeavours, and sophisticated weaponry which have contributed to such displacement whether it is because homes have been ravaged by war, or jobs have disappeared because of offshore commercial enterprises or particular skills are no longer required and new ones have replaced them. As well, the media, another noteworthy product of technology, assists in bringing to large numbers of people, news and images of lifestyles and opportunities in other parts of the world which encourage people to make decisions to move in order to procure a better lifestyle for themselves and their children. Equally, technology has made the world a smaller place because of the speed and efficacy of travel today. Thus, many parts of the world are accessible to many people who may be desirous of getting there. These were the characteristics of the 20th century and they have still been clearly evident at the beginning of the new century. Nonetheless, one of the factors that make these characteristics take on different hues in this century is the fact that the effects of colonisation were far-reaching enough through the last century so that when new arrivals came to settle in new countries, in general, the movement was mostly from the developing world to the developed nations (Massey & Taylor, 2004). Very often this was a move of non-European cultural and religious practices to countries where the culture was predominantly western European. Often this meant that there was an expectation that the newcomers would assimilate by rejecting their own culture and adapting to the new one. Berkman and Macdionah (2008) recognise this when they discuss the prevailing interpretation of the concept of multicultural as one which 'focuses on a dominant public sphere to which minority, ethnic, and indigenous groups supposedly need to accommodate' (p. 4). As a

result, if they continued to practise their different cultural and religious beliefs, for instance, in Australia, this was done within the confines of their own communities and often had little impact on the wider society or the mainstream culture (Mackay, 1993).

In the globalised world of the new century this situation has changed. Transmigration is occurring across the globe with a flow of people into the US, Europe, Argentina, Australia and Canada and the newly industrialised countries of Asia (Massey & Taylor, 2004). Accordingly, there are new generations in some western countries who have little knowledge or experience of a colonised world. Instead, many children have grown up alongside others whose cultural and religious practices may be different from their own; their world has been shaped by a media that, at one level, has taken them out of their immediate community and made them somewhat knowledgeable about a world community; and they live with an awareness that the world, as they know it, is changing rapidly and that there may be serious consequences for this planet if current lifestyles and practices continue.

On top of that, there has been the event that has become, for many, a defining moment of the new century, the assault on the twin towers or, as it has become known, 9/11. This moment brought the world's collective attention to the deep problems that had evolved between the western world, as signified by the major political powers, such as the US and its allies, and various religious groups from the Muslim world. When this became centred on the Middle East leading to the subsequent war on terrorism, relations between different Christian and Muslim groups across many parts of the world erupted quickly into overt signs of intolerance, hostility and violence, helped along by reactive media coverage and some political attitudes and commentaries. This deteriorating situation has challenged proactive members in pluralist communities to find ways to increase knowledge and understanding of different religious traditions and cultures as a means to promoting social cohesion. Such interest and related activity is evident in the funding of research projects and conferences, particularly in Europe, that are examining interreligious education. Some of these are described in the chapters that follow.

Certainly, it would seem that just as the 20th century may be recognised as a distinct stage in human history that witnessed the rapid, sweeping changes determined by technological advances which caused, assisted and encouraged the huge shifts of groups of people across the globe, the 21st century, although it is early days, may possibly become distinguished as the century with a resurgence of interest in religious and spiritual matters. Pertinent to such a scenario is the discussion of interreligious education. In particular, there is a need to examine the characteristics of effective interreligious education which will raise awareness of, knowledge and understanding in, and empathy with people from different religious beliefs and cultures. Part II in this handbook presents a range of ideas and practices in this field from a variety of countries around the world. As such, they provide global perspectives about pedagogical practices in interreligious education which will be useful in informing future directions and approaches in this area.

In general, the chapters in this part may be broadly divided into three areas, the first four focus more on theoretical discussions of learning and teaching within the

field of interreligious education. The next eleven chapters ('Dialogical Education for Inter-religious Engagement in a Plural Society', 'Promoting Inter-faith Education Through ICT: A Case Study', 'Learning and Life-Modelling in the Critical Community: Educating University Students for Inter-religious Engagement', 'Envisioning the Possibilities for Inter-religious Dialogue in Christian Colleges in Asia – The Case of Chung Chi College in Hong Kong', 'Self-Understandings of Religious Education Teachers in Structural Identity Consultation: Contributing to School Identity in a Multi-faith Context', 'Informing the Pedagogical Practice Inter-religious Education: Critical Social Science Directions', 'An Inter-religious Basis for a Denominational Religious Education: A Paradox?', 'Finding a Way Forward: Inter-religious Education and Religious Education in Aotearoa, New Zealand', 'Is Difference Good for Us? A Report on the Hampshire and Its Neighbours' Social Cohesion Project, UK', 'Contact as a Means of Inter-religious Engagement: The Role of Religious Culture in Peace-Building Activities', 'Learn Young, Learn Faith: Inter-religious Encounter and Learning in Dutch Kindergarten') which follow discuss the practical applications of theory to particular programmes. These chapters also provide a breadth in contexts since they reflect thinking and activity from a range of countries around the world. The final three chapters ('Using a Contextual Approach for Preparation of the Syllabus for Inter-religious Learning', 'Multi-faith Multicultural Youth Mentoring: Young People Creating a New Agenda for Diverse Australia', 'Balancing the Particular and the Universal in Inter-religious Education') bring a different perspective in that they examine current multi-faith approaches and programmes and situate them within a theoretical base which informed their planning, process, practice and evaluation.

Accordingly, Paul Hedges in his chapter, 'Can We Still Teach "Religions"? Towards an Understanding of Religion as Culture and Orientation in Contemporary Pedagogy and Metatheory' provides the framework within which a discussion of interreligious education may be conducted. Hedges queries whether there is any validity in teaching a course on world religions if we support the notion that 'religion has no independent existence apart from the Academy'. While he acknowledges that such questions belong more to discussions framed by contemporary metatheory of religious studies rather than pedagogy, he argues that these two disciplines should be interrelated and proceeds to present a typology for teaching world religions which is 'embedded in metatheory', but which was generated by pedagogy. In the end, Hedge's typology and his discussion of its application provides a useful and proactive way forward for educators to teach religion in contemporary interreligious and interfaith contexts.

One of the significant aspects of interreligious education is the need to know and understand ethical beliefs and practices within different traditions. Hence, Richard Wade, in his chapter, 'Bridging Christianity, Islam and Buddhism with Virtue Ethics', provides an interesting study of the ethical dimensions of three religions, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. By drawing on the writings of acknowledged teachers from these faith systems, Wade explores the religious ethics of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism through the category of Virtue or Character ethics. He describes the Virtue ethics of Thomas Aquinas in the Christian tradition and

Al-Ghazali in the Islamic tradition, noting similarities and differences, some of which relate to the different contexts in which they were founded. Wade also discusses Virtue ethics in the Buddhist tradition in the light of Aristotelian ethics. This historical and descriptive approach which crosses cultures and religious traditions points to a common religious ethic as a starting point for meaningful ethical dialogue.

Effective interreligious education requires that acknowledgement is given to the complementary nature of eastern and western perspectives in this field and this is provided by Yoshiharu Nakagawa in his chapter, 'Oriental Philosophy and Inter-religious Education: Inspired by Toshihiko Izutsu's Reconstruction of "Oriental Philosophy"'. Nakagawa recognises the importance of maintaining a multicultural and pluralistic perspective in a global world besieged by tensions that have been generated by the exposure of different religions and cultures to one another. This has led him to draw on the oriental philosophy of Toshihiko Izutsu's to propose Izutsu's methodology based on 'synchronical structuralization' as one approach in inter-religious education. Such an approach aims to promote both knowledge and wisdom in a multi-layered structure and would require an examination of religious world-views and the learning from wisdom traditions from an ontological perspective. As well, there would be a focus on the individual's spiritual growth by engaging in self-realisation which should lead to a transformation of one's being and Enlightenment. Thus, the movement in transformational learning in this multi-dimensional view is 'a two-fold path of seeking and returning in contemplation'.

Peta Goldberg situates her writing against the backdrop of religious citizenship. In her chapter, 'Developing Pedagogies for Inter-religious Teaching and Learning', she argues that if an aim of society is to develop critical citizenry, then the education programmes within such social systems need to recognise the multi-religious nature of society. Proceeding from this point, Goldberg provides a concise discussion of the different approaches to a study of religions over the past 30 years, particularly in Australia, highlighting some of the ways in which they have laid the foundations for interreligious education. Finally, her analysis of particular pedagogical frameworks in interreligious education identifies the fact that there is a distinct need to be attentive to particularism and receptive to pluralism. As well, she notes that the requirement that makes a dialogical model effective is sound levels of knowledge and involvement in the home tradition as well as knowledge of and insight into other traditions.

Another view on the use of a dialogical model for interreligious engagement is provided by Charlene Tan in her chapter, 'Dialogical Education for Inter-religious Engagement in a Plural Society'. Tan writes about the situation in Singapore where there is an emphasis on interreligious dialogue at different political and societal levels in an attempt to promote interreligious harmony and social cohesion in a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society. Tan agrees with Goldberg's contention when she states 'dialogical education aims to balance openness and rootedness with perspectives from inside and outside the religious traditions'. In particular, she argues that in order to develop a culture of tolerance there needs to be an emphasis on comparative experiences and interreligious engagement which acknowledges each

person's identity in a context that is characterised by different religious backgrounds and worldviews. An interesting aspect of Tan's chapter is the fact that while interreligious dialogue has been given attention in the wider social arena in Singapore, it has been neglected in the formal education programmes for children and young people. Tan claims that this has led to religious ignorance and dissatisfaction in young people and claims that there is a need to introduce a programme in Spiritual Education which will incorporate 'dialogues underpinned by an ethos of openness and rootedness, where people of different faiths could participate in interreligious engagement for sustainable development'.

The next chapter 'Promoting Inter-faith Education Through ICT: A Case Study', examines how interfaith education can be enriched through the application of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Using a classroom experience of teaching a Muslim student about particular aspects of Judaism to generate her discussion, Zehavit Gross identifies various challenges for learning and teaching in interfaith education and argues that ICT can be used effectively to build communities of knowledge exchange in interfaith education. She attributes this to ICT's ability to combine 'interplay of flexible time – being simultaneously in the past and the present – and in different places . . . which makes the transformative process possible and creates flexible 'mental environments' that prepare the ground for more openness'.

Toni Tidswell and Majella Franzmann shift the perspective in their chapter, 'Learning and Life-Modelling in the Critical Community: Educating University Students for Inter-religious Engagement'. Here the focus is on interreligious programmes for university students. As the authors argue, this should be an essential education programme for all students who live in a multicultural and multi-faith society. They examine the various disciplines of Religious Education, Religious Studies and Theology as obvious areas where interreligious education may be included and then identify some of the challenges that may arise such as an exclusivist or confessional approach to studying religion. Ultimately, Tidswell and Franzmann highlight the benefits of a hermeneutic approach which 'attempts to bring the students' life experience of learning and problem solving outside the university into the classroom so that students may learn how interrelated the different contexts of their approaches to learning are'. Their argument is that the hermeneutic model can, in fact, be used for interreligious engagement in disciplines other than the three obvious ones.

Along similar lines, the chapter 'Envisioning the Possibilities for Inter-religious Dialogue in Christian Colleges in Asia – The Case of Chung Chi College in Hong Kong' identifies the need for Christian educational institutions in Asia to promote interreligious dialogue and engagement. Peter Ng discusses the reasons why it was considered important for a Christian college in Hong Kong to address the religious needs of those of their students who belonged to non-Christian faith traditions. He, then, provides a description of the processes and methods that were used to achieve this purpose and concludes that it is, indeed, possible for a Christian college to become a platform for interreligious dialogue and engagement between different faith traditions and between east and west.

The following chapter, 'Self-Understandings of Religious Education Teachers in Structural Identity Consultation: Contributing to School Identity in a Multi-faith Context', moves into a different space since it discusses a project in the Netherlands that focused particularly on teachers and their practice in addressing multi-faith classrooms. Col Bakker and Ina ter Avest describe the multi-religious and multi-cultural society which emerged in Holland as a result of immigration. This led to what was known as a pillarisation process in the school system which meant that some schools were organised according to different Christian denominations and they existed alongside the public school system which was based on a humanistic worldview. However, in Dutch society today, there is a need to recognise that students come from other religions such as Islam. This has raised questions about how teachers in Christian schools address the religious development of Muslim children. The Structural Identity Consultation (SIC) research project was developed in response to this situation and Bakker and ter Avest present the research process and findings of the first stage of the project.

The authors of the next two chapters, 'Informing the Pedagogical Practice Inter-religious Education: Critical Social Science Directions' and 'An Inter-religious Basis for a Denominational Religious Education: A Paradox?', Leona English from Canada and Adrian Gellel from Malta, discuss interreligious education from the Roman Catholic point of view. They both explore the notion that Catholic religious education needs to commit to 'engagement with the Other' and then discuss the whys and wherefores of their respective stances. English begins by examining relevant church documents and existing curricula in adult education to identify the areas where dialogue, openness and engagement with the Other may be evident. Finally, English proposes an approach to interreligious education which may be drawn from Critical and Postfoundational Theories in the Social Sciences which, she asserts, will be more effective at promoting dialogue and engagement with the Other. The other author, Gellel, considers the possibility of including interreligious education in a Denominational Religious Education programme without reducing its confessional character. He proposes a formation programme which would require students to 'be able to grasp their *mother tongue* in order to be able to master the skill of understanding, appreciating and possibly, using other *tongues*'. Thus, from a Roman Catholic perspective, Catholicism needs to be placed at the centre of the learning programme but, at the same time, students need to be introduced and exposed to the diversity that they encounter in their everyday lives. Gellel contends that 'in understanding diversity, reflected not only in nature but especially in human beings, as a natural outcome of God's eternity, it should be relatively easy to make students aware of the difference that exists in their faith tradition'. Thus, his argument follows, if students move from the familiar to accepting what is non-familiar within their own faith tradition, this should help them change positions of non-acceptance to one which accepts life stances that are non-Catholic. The aim of the model Gellel proposes, then, is more than promoting tolerance; it is about the 'acceptance of reality which should, in turn, lead to respect of the other and, at a deeper level, awe for the infinite ways of being human and reflection on eternity'.

Also coming from a Roman Catholic viewpoint, but from a different country is the next offering by Kevin Wanden and Lyn Smith in chapter 'Finding a Way Forward: Inter-religious Education and Religious Education in Aotearoa, New Zealand'. They begin with an overview of the historical context of Religious Education in New Zealand and deliberate on the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi and the commitment to biculturalism for educational programmes. They stress that 'bicultural education seeks to adopt a culturally responsive pedagogy that responds to the learning needs of students' and, therefore, it provides a useful starting point for interreligious education. They discuss the aims of some of the existing approaches to interreligious education and conclude, that while interreligious education is still in its infancy in New Zealand, the rapidly changing nature of their society from one dominated by Christian values to one that is pluralistic, should encourage further developments in this area.

Moving hemispheres, in his chapter, 'Is Difference Good for Us? A Report on the Hampshire and Its Neighbours' Social Cohesion Project, UK' Clive Erricker presents the methodology and findings of a project in the Hampshire County in the UK which focused on school religious education programmes as a means of promoting social cohesion. The project aimed to conduct a student-led inquiry into 'the concept of difference to determine to what extent and in what ways forms of difference impacted on pupil's experiences and attitudes as they pursued the subject'. The study was situated and informed by relevant literature which identified some of the complexities associated with the attainment of social cohesion in a multi-cultural and multi-faith context. Erricker adds that the project was not confined to the religious education programs but addressed the broader curriculum. It focused on the celebration of diversity, that is, it emphasized the positive aspects of diversity. In the end, the findings of the project raised many issues that have as yet to be resolved, for instance, the need for 'greater attention to be given to how pupils can interact with one another across schools, not being in competition but learning from one another to inform a broader perspective on life and the skills that accompany such interactions'. Nonetheless, the positive findings were that, once the opportunity was provided for them, students did work well with students who were different from themselves. This led Erricker to suggest that 'shared futures is a possibility but not without changes in perceptions and new conceptions of social interaction being promoted between schools'.

That 'religion can be examined both as the root and sustenance of conflict and as a ground for conflict resolution and enhancing peace' is the subject for the following chapter, 'Contact as a Means of Inter-religious Engagement: The Role of Religious Culture in Peace-Building Activities'. Yaacov Yablon focuses on the conflict of the Jews and Arabs in Israel and argues that religion may serve as a unifying factor which brings people together for positive interaction. Beginning with an overview of the historical context that provides the backdrop for his study which addressed Muslim Arabs in Israel, Yablon notes that 'peace' and 'equality' are already embedded in both Jewish and Muslim sacred writings and suggests that the application of a theoretical framework of 'meaning systems' to the study of religions may explain 'the dynamic and function of religion in people's lives, including their striving for

either war or peace'. Yablon then proceeds to discuss the methodology and findings of his study. In particular, he found that, as a result of the inter-faith encounters that were part of the religious programme, the participants had more positive feelings and perceptions of the Other although it did not positively change their willingness for further social interaction. One of his conclusions was that affective aspects in the learning programme are more influential than cognitive ones in the enhancement of tolerance and understanding between conflict groups, and that religion has the potential to be a powerful tool to bring students together.

Along a similar theme of promoting intercultural and interreligious formation, Ina ter Avest and Siebren Miedema, in their chapter, 'Learn Young, Learn Faith: Inter-religious Encounter and Learning in Dutch Kindergarten', explore the processes of participation and imagination of kindergarten children in the Netherlands. They express their sincere belief that intercultural and interreligious education should start from the earliest years and deplore the fact that it usually begins above the age of six. As in the earlier chapter in this part by Bakker and ter Avest, they describe the distinct characteristic of Dutch society, the pillarisation process, where separate religious denominational schools had been set up alongside non-denominational schools for families with no specific religious convictions or ideologies. In recent years, with the increase of a Muslim voice in Dutch society, Muslim schools have also been established. The distinct nature of these schools has meant that, for the most part, there has been little interreligious education in Holland. However, there has been one exception where one Christian school has included Christianity and Islam in its curriculum and it is their study made of the religious development of Christian and Muslim students in this school that becomes the focus of this chapter. The study examined the approaches of two teachers as they attempted to develop the 'religious sensitivity and feelings of belonging that are at the heart of interreligious education' and identified three phases – Acquisition/articulation (of tacit knowledge), Exploration (of knowledge) and Creation of new knowledge together. The authors found that this approach 'paves the way for the real dialogical encounter . . . where pupils work together to build up a new form of knowledge about living together in a culture characterized by diversity'.

The next chapter, Chapter 'Using Contextual Approach for Preparation of the Syllabus for Inter-religious Learning', is by Pille Valk from Estonia. This chapter would be one of the last pieces of writing from Pille who, sadly, died in late 2009. Certainly Pille's presence and her significant contribution to the field of religious education will be missed by her colleagues. Her chapter is clear evidence of her input into religious education in Estonia as she discusses the design of a religious education curriculum which has interreligious potential. To begin with, Valk describes the historical and political contexts which have had implications for the development of religious education programmes in her country. She then examines a theoretical framework for a contextual approach to teaching and learning in religious education and follows this by introducing a model of contextual analysis which assists in determining the basis for religious education and interreligious learning.

The next two chapters, 'Multi-faith Multicultural Youth Mentoring: Young People Creating a New Agenda for Diverse Australia' and 'Balancing the Particular and the Universal in Inter-religious Education', are interesting in that they describe inter-faith programmes for young people that come from different sides of the globe, but which are striving to achieve similar outcomes. What makes these programmes interesting is the fact that they both were developed as a community's response to obvious needs of young people growing up in multicultural and multi-faith contexts. First, Nadine Liddy discusses the context, planning, methodology and evaluation of a multi-faith programme in Melbourne, Australia which aims to 'strengthen the dialogue between young people from multicultural and multi-faith backgrounds and mentors from the corporate, community, faith and government sectors to increase young people's participation and engagement in the wider community'. By creating safe spaces for intercultural and interreligious engagement and dialogue to take place, the programme enables young people to explore their complex and multiple identities. The second programme is portrayed by Afroza Nanji from Calgary, Canada and, again, it was generated by the recognition that young Canadians had increasing contact with people from different religious and cultural backgrounds which had some implication for the formation of their identities. Accordingly, the programme was concerned with the contextual and contemporary influences that shaped the personal and collective identity of young people. Nanji also presents in detail 'the inception, development and impact of an interreligious youth initiative that contributed to a deepened individual religious identity, increased understanding between diverse religious communities and coming together to work for the common good' as well as the successful outcomes.

To conclude, the length and breadth of the offerings in this part are an indication of the complex issues that have become apparent in contemporary societies which have become multicultural and multireligious in the last few decades. The associated concerns about identity and formation of children and young people certainly require appropriate responses and the collection of chapters, here, provide sound evidence that it is through education that interreligious dialogue and engagement with the Other may be enhanced thereby promoting harmonious relations and social cohesion within communities. Certainly, the writings here provide notice to governments and other educational authorities, who make decisions about the education of future generations, that immediate action is required to consolidate the research findings and practices that have been discussed within these chapters so that future citizens may be tolerant and inclusive of and engage with Others who are different.

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Can We Still Teach ‘Religions’?: Towards an Understanding of Religion as Culture and Orientation in Contemporary Pedagogy and Metatheory

Paul Hedges

Introduction

Famously, J.Z. Smith has stated that ‘there is no data for religion. . . . Religion has no independent existence apart from the academy’ (1982, p. xi). If we take this claim seriously, and I believe that we should, then the whole enterprise of teaching about religions, especially introductory courses on ‘World Religions’ is called into question. For the most part, educators in the sphere seem happy to leave such troubles to the realm of metatheory, and get on with teaching students about the various ‘religions’, with, perhaps, some cursory acknowledgement that ‘religion’ is a difficult term. Certainly, in some senses, such a debate belongs more to discussions within the contemporary metatheory of Religious Studies than pedagogy. However, it is a subject that is increasingly hard to ignore, and to pretend that we can readily talk about ‘religions’ without considering the agendas, politics and disputes behind the term is to do our students a disservice. Moreover, I would contend that metatheory and pedagogy need not, indeed should not, be poles apart. While embedded within metatheory, the typology presented came directly out of a pedagogical context, that of teaching a ‘World Religions’ course. In the first sessions, I asked students to think about these two very problematic terms (‘world’ and ‘religion’), especially the latter, considering various definitions, their failings and reasons why a definition was considered impossible, while, as a theme, it ran throughout two semesters of study. Further reflection on this led me to disputes on metatheory, where the work of such theorists as J.Z. Smith, McCutcheon, Asad and Fitzgerald has led some to suppose that the term ‘religion’ is unviable. However, I believe a workable definition is possible, in what Fiorenza has termed this ‘contested site’ (2000). Therefore, I will begin by presenting various pedagogical and metatheoretical issues, before outlining and explicating a typology for the definition of religion, which I have

P. Hedges (✉)
University of Winchester, Winchester, UK
e-mail: paul.hedges@winchester.ac.uk

previously advanced elsewhere (Hedges, 2006a, 2006b, 2007).¹ I will conclude with some reflections arising from the debates and issues encountered.

It may be useful, at this stage, to introduce some important aspects related to pedagogy that come from this chapter. First, in an increasingly multi-cultural world educating about faith is less often a question of discussing the dominant paradigm (faith tradition) of a country, with, perhaps, a passing glance at other traditions. Instead, we are surrounded by, either in our immediate neighbours or through the news from our global village, an awareness and immediacy of other faiths. Yet, it is a world where, although religion has become a significant feature of our times again (I recognise the parochial – i.e. predominantly (parts of) North-Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand – nature of this statement, for in most places it never went away) there is also a strong call for religion to be taught, if it is taught, from a secular, often meaning anti-religious, perspective. Therefore, if we are seriously to engage in interreligious and interfaith education we are called upon to investigate the very basis upon which this can happen. Such thoughts underpin what may be seen as the abstract discussion of metatheory that form the main basis of this chapter, yet, from it, I hope that a number of tangible results for practical pedagogic practice can be seen to emerge.

Metatheory, Pedagogy and Religion

Religion as a Sphere of Human Culture

At the most basic level, the definition of religion matters in teaching, because we need to know what type of material we should be laying before students, and how to organise this data. If ‘religion’ is no more than an arbitrary academic category, then the attempt to define or categorise it is simply a matter of drawing rings around a set of random data. However, while I would fundamentally concur with J.Z. Smith and others that no idealised form of ‘religion’ exists, this does not mean that we must abandon any attempt to seek meaning in the term. If we tell our students that there are a number of religious traditions around the world, such as Islam, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Shinto, I believe that we are doing more than stating that the academic world has decided to treat these phenomena together, but that it is purely arbitrary. We stand here between two poles, on the one hand,

¹It has been used as a discussion paper with academic colleagues and educators in other contexts, while Fitzgerald has been kind enough to read it and offer his comments. It is his belief that I have not sufficiently considered his critique of religion, though I, and others, feel it does respond to what he says. It is, therefore, offered as part of what may be seen as a live and ongoing debate in the field.

certain parts of Religious Studies seems to see religion as a human response to an identifiable transcendent, universal in form and content around the globe.² On the other, McCutcheon has suggested that what we term 'religion' is simply one aspect of culture that is arbitrarily pared off for separate study, but that no dividing line exists between it and any other cultural phenomena (2003, pp. 18–19, 107, 127ff.).³ McCutcheon and others are reacting, rightly I believe, against the use of Religious Studies as a quasi-theological discipline, directed to discourse on the transcendent. However, where I would take issue with both him and J.Z. Smith is in the assertion that it is an entirely arbitrary creation of the academy, or even of the broader Western cultural and intellectual milieu that birthed the modern academic disciplines. Rather, I would argue that those areas of culture we define as 'religion' occupy a similar territory in human culture, where it looks to move beyond the purely phenomenal human world, towards an area that may, loosely and for present purposes, be defined as 'transcendent', 'spiritual' or 'religious' – I fully recognise that these are not precise or analytic terms in themselves, but will fill out an understanding as we proceed. By speaking of what may exist after death, by seeking cosmological answers that transcend human capacities to know, and by creating frameworks for society and its guidance through regulations and norms claimed to be beyond society, a cultural area is opened up that we may term 'religious'. As Arthur has put it, there has been a common interest in 'religious questions' even if the answers have been 'multi-various' (1990, p. 124). It is not the place of this essay to argue a detailed case for this, however, it is important to set out a rationale for the attempt to create a typology of religion as something more than a naïve and outdated exercise, owing more to nineteenth century theological essentialism than to contemporary theoretical concerns and paradigms, and so I will sketch some important aspects of a defence of this position in what follows.

²Although a certain amount of objectification, even parody, is involved in the rhetorical denunciation of such tendencies, there is some legitimacy to such criticisms.

³It is noteworthy here, and a pointed irony, that a certain amount of common ground appears between two disparate poles in the study of religion. On the one hand we have McCutcheon, who sees any theological or religious incursion into Religious Studies as invalid, asserting that 'religion' and 'culture' are not two separate areas, but simply that the former is an invalid categorisation of part of the overall category of 'secular culture'. On the other hand, we have Radical Orthodoxy, exemplified through John Milbank, who agrees that 'religion' and 'culture' are not separate, but rather part of the same continuum, however, for him, it is 'secular culture' that is the invalid category, with only 'religion', or, more technically, 'theology' being the only true reality, and the other being a misapprehended aspect of it (Milbank, 1990). Evidently, the two stand diametrically opposed, but the very similarity that allows them to be such polar opposites on the same continuum suggests that they are intimately linked, quite possibly both being children of the same tendencies within post-modern thought. It would be a separate work to trace the genealogy of thought in both of them that led to these conclusions showing, perhaps, the very kinship both would no doubt seek to disavow.

How We Understand and Teach ‘Religion’ and the ‘Religions’

As already observed a definition and understanding of the subject matter is important because the way we understand religion to operate will have distinct implications for how we teach it. In an interesting paper, H. Smith suggests that one of his principle concerns in teaching introductory courses on world religions is questions of truth (1995, pp. 242f.). For him, the religious world presents values and concerns beyond that of our everyday world. By way of contrast, McCutcheon suggests introductory courses in religion should not teach facts about ‘religions’, rather we should attempt to show how religious belief can be accounted for from a sceptical social-scientific basis (2003, pp. 101–126). I think that neither of these is wholly viable. H. Smith appears to believe that the cultural phenomenon of religion refers directly to a transcendent realm that can be used to critique our general world of experience. I would quite agree that students, if they are to appreciate what religions are as phenomena, should be taught about the radical way in which different traditions present alternative views of reality and being, especially those that exceed or contradict our everyday norms.⁴ However, he also observes that many undergraduate students, just leaving adolescence, are starting to think beyond the embodied ‘I’, making it a good time to introduce them to questions beyond this scope, which can inspire and open up new realms (Smith, 1995, p. 247). I am worried about the implications of this (though I am sure H. Smith does not, as he says, attempt to make students believe any line), as it suggests the quasi-theological agenda critiqued by Fitzgerald (2000). McCutcheon’s reaction, however, goes to the opposite extreme, and he advocates that the only academically credible standpoint is to assume they are quite false and to deconstruct them as such. While such explanatory and deconstructive theories have their place within a rounded Religious Studies curriculum, it is but one approach, and is far from ‘neutral’ or ‘objective’, involving, as H. Smith observes, its own inherent prejudices (1995, pp. 244–245). This is not to say that there is not a valid place for such things in introductory courses, but, *contra* McCutcheon, who believes such an approach should be central to make Religious Studies a securely academic discipline, rather than a quasi-theological one (2003, p. 125),⁵ I would suggest it is not adequate in itself. In particular, this approach is not providing a basic requirement for knowledge, about what people believe, where they believe it, how they believe it and what effects this has on their life, behaviour

⁴Arthur believes presenting an uncomfortable set of propositions is central to religion (Arthur, 1990, p. 59).

⁵The language about ‘theological’ approaches is embedded within a particular context. McCutcheon, and other critics of the H. Smith/Eliade approach to Religious Studies, employ it to mean seeking to explain the universe as a ‘spiritual’ thing. However, as someone who has studied and taught in UK departments of ‘Theology and Religious Studies’ as part of ‘secular’ universities, I sometimes find the claim that ‘theology’ and ‘religious studies’ have antithetical approaches as odd. Teaching across both disciplines, I tend to explain to students that, in terms of what they will encounter from me and the department, that ‘theology’ is teaching about Christianity from a Religious Studies perspective, while ‘Religious Studies’ is teaching about other faiths.

and interactions with the external world – certainly recent events should make clear to us that unless we can allow students to empathise and understand the variety of religious viewpoints the world presents us with then more harm than good will result from such misunderstanding.

We must learn from both McCutcheon and H. Smith. If we only teach religion as history, or approach it from a social sciences explanatory standpoint, where the transcendent aspect is seen as something to be dismissed or explained away then we cannot allow students to fully understand what a faith can mean to its adherents. Arthur has suggested that teaching about religion should not just be an overview of facts about different faiths, but, rather in 'addition to a *knowledge about* religions, some sense of the *value of* religion ought surely to be fostered', otherwise it can be 'a rather pointless trudge around a series of meaningless names, ideas and images' (1990, 68, italics his own).⁶ It is possible to suggest to students that religions see themselves as responding to a transcendent, without either suggesting that this is something 'real' about the universe, or simply trying to debunk it. Rather, and, here I side with McCutcheon against H. Smith, it must be understood as that part of human culture that sees itself in relation to the transcendent. This is not to say that the study may not, in itself, help students articulate their own spiritual path or agenda (Grimmitt, 2000, p. 44), and certainly recent studies have shown that while this is not an aim of most faculties, it is something students seek in the study of religion (Walvoord, 2007, pp. 18, 21). Simply, I do not think that educators should seek to foster any single understanding of the religious data they present.

This discussion suggests that our understanding of religion may guide us in ways that will avoid both poor pedagogy and poor metatheory. The approach advocated herein, exemplified through the typology, seeing religion as a part of culture that aims, for want of a better term, to the transcendent, avoids seeing it either as reality or fiction. Moreover, by being open and flexible, it may help avoid the idea that each religion can be defined according to any set of propositions, and, in particular, any idea that we can define the 'essence' of any particular religion. However, it is certainly not the case that a typology on its own could underpin, or function as, a pedagogical strategy, my claim is a weaker one, that it could support good practice, not provide it (see Grimmitt, 2000, pp. 27–28).

In practical terms, I hope that my discussion has outlined why we should avoid the extremes of a quasi-theological approach to teaching religion, one that tries to give students certain accepted norms of what religion is about or should be. Certainly, in an interfaith context, problems arise if we try and promote any one vision. Indeed, even the assumption of a 'neutral' 'pluralistic' position has been increasingly critiqued, and with it the idea that we can speak of a set of core values common to all. However, the alternatives, on the one hand seeing all religions as inherently different is also highly problematic (space does not permit us to expand

⁶Some have noted the problem of just presenting a 'religious bazaar' (this term is from P. Mullen, cited in Arthur, 1990, p. 135) where students simply sample a host of perspectives, something which I think is overcome by emphasising the value of faiths for their believers and the cultural and social contexts in which they operate.

upon this here, but see Hedges, 2008, especially pp. 122–130), and, on the other, of seeking to discredit religion as a ‘neutral’ approach is also flawed. We must highlight what religion is and means. However, to do this we need to have a clear understanding of what religion may be, to which we now turn.

On the Possibility of ‘Religions’

Another major metatheoretical issue still looms, which is whether the various faith traditions are unrelated phenomena, and not part of a family of ‘religions’. My contention, that there is an aspect of human culture that aims towards a ‘transcendence’ of itself – that seeks beyond the limits of physicality, mortal life, and phenomenal knowledge – is, I will argue, a cross-cultural reality. Therefore, I will now briefly seek to demonstrate that it is not untenable, to assume a similar ‘religious’ urge to transcendence occurs across cultures.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith

W. Smith’s seminal work, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1978 [1962]), demonstrated that the use of the term ‘religion’ to define traditions of belief, was an invention of the modern Western (European) world. Yet, his suggestion that we should substitute ‘religion’ with the twin terms ‘cumulative tradition’ and ‘faith’ does not necessarily help. Indeed, Fitzgerald, McCutcheon and others argue that their work goes into a metatheoretical space beyond W. Smith’s (McCutcheon, 2003, p. 14). Nevertheless, his ideas are, I would argue, still a fundamental starting point for their critique, and deeply insightful. His work also raises two key issues of importance to us here.

First, despite W. Smith’s broadly accepted critique, the term ‘religion’ has not been replaced, suggesting that, while a recent innovation, it is useful. Notably, while the (modern Western) term ‘religion’ lacks a synonym in most traditional language systems, there are words that speak of religious traditions, such as *dharma* in Sanskrit, or *jiao* (教) in Chinese. This suggests we are not searching in vain for an academic fancy. However, we have been looking in the wrong direction, which leads us to the next issue. Second, he observes that we do find terms similar to the adjective ‘religious’ cross-culturally. While there is no common idea of the ‘religious’, we can suggest there is an area of culture that relates to ideas that we term ‘religious’ or ‘sacred’. This would suggest that the search for a definition (the modern preoccupation as post-modernism would tell us) is not entirely futile. However, we are surely searching in vain if we are seeking a definition of ‘religion’ as a *sui generis* category. What we should seek is ‘religious’ aspects of culture, and where these are found within a system, I suggest, we may still, *contra* W. Smith, label by the noun form, ‘religion’. I believe we can do this without using it, as Staal has argued, as a naming category from the West misapplied to the East (1982); for one

thing, as McKinnon has argued, the term is now widely used and translated (2002), while other reasons for this will be presented below. The typology will suggest these things 'religious' are essentially an orientation, a direction given to life, that marks off that area of culture.

The Universality of 'Religious' Phenomena

The search for this 'transcendent' area of culture is not the preserve of theologically minded scholars of religion, but appears across the humanities and social scientific spectrum. Whether we see an origin in human psychology, in evolutionary biology, in societal factors or in an ontologically transcendent realm, there does appear to be an area of life which is able to be demarcated as distinct from other areas, although on a continuum with them. As will be seen from the typology, the religious is often seen in particular manifestations within human culture. Also, this area of culture seems to function in certain similar ways cross-culturally. This seems to be strongly supported by some significant voices in contemporary anthropology, for instance, according to Boyer, 'although anthropology generally assumes that the systems of ideas grouped under the label "religion" are essentially diverse, a number of recurrent themes and concepts can be found in very different cultural environments' (1994, p. 4). Further, arguing from the 'biological history of the species' he argues that we should see common ground between the different manifestations of 'religion' (1994, pp. 6f., 295f.). He is not alone, and the notion of a 'spiritual quest' being a common feature in humanity across cultures has been argued by Torrance, who suggests that despite very severe reservations about speaking of human uniformity we should not reject, 'the very possibility of meaningful common human denominators' (1994, pp. xi-xii).⁷ As noted above, Arthur suggests 'religious questions' are asked in various places, and despite the plurality of answers this should not be ignored.

More significantly, a cultural study of the history of religions would also tell us that 'religions' have clearly identified and related to each other in their development. To cite some examples: the three Abrahamic traditions clearly have common roots; Islam came to regard both Zoroastrianism and the Hindu family of faiths as 'religions of the book', their adherents being subject to *jizya*, indicating it found them comparable to Christianity and Judaism; the Sant tradition suggests Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism shared a common recognition of each other's value as 'spiritual paths'; Matteo Ricci's initial adoption of the dress of Buddhist monks in China indicates it fitted his understanding of what it was to be 'religious' and so offered a root for inculturation, while his subsequent adoption of Confucian identity, and the Terms and Rites controversy, shows again a supposition of similarity, which

⁷As Eagleton has argued the idea of totalities in themselves is not *a priori* fallacious, rather it is certain types of totalities that are the problem (Eagleton, 1997, p. 11 and passim). This I would suggest is also true of the concept 'religion' and its application.

also entailed competition; the fiercest debates Buddhism had in making inroads into China were with the Daoist tradition, as its nearest rival. This brief and selective coverage of contacts between the Abrahmic, Indian and Chinese faith traditions is given as indicative that it is not simply a modern academic convention to identify religions as similar, but is something that these traditions have been doing throughout their history. Meanwhile, numerous commentators have found commonalities, Arthur notes as examples Burke, Toynbee and Eliade (1990, p. 128), and while there may be a suggestion that some of these figures have done this with a theological or essentialist perspective, it does not detract from the fact that we have a great plurality of voices seeing similarities cross-culturally. Indeed, not recognising the interrelationship of religions is highly problematic (Hedges, 2008). I am not, here, saying all these traditions say similar things, or are of some generic type, but rather relate to a comparable area of human existence. In pedagogical terms, Arthur suggests teaching on religion should show the ‘universality of religion’, while keeping an eye on the varied answers given throughout history (1990, p. 124).

The Metatheoretical Context

The previous discussions have raised questions about how to understand and teach ‘religion’ in an academic context, and the legitimacy of using the concept ‘religion’. I believe that the typology offered herein provides a useful prism to approach these questions. Concerns may still be raised, however, about the attempt at a definition, even allowing that there is an area of human culture that can be termed ‘religious’. I will, therefore, now seek to round up these discussions by defending the attempt offered herein, considering six issues that might be raised.

First, we will consider critiques regarding the legitimacy of any attempt at a typology. While, by their nature, typologies (indeed, all definitions) define, and, of necessity, involve constriction – that is to say that something fits the term ‘religion’ while something else does not – this is unavoidable, for we can neither teach, nor understand, nor live in the world without some kind of guiding framework (see Griffin, 1989, pp. 35–39). Second, despite problems inherent in universalisations and objectifications associated with the term ‘religion’, I would argue, it may still be seen as a distinct and definable category, while, through the lens of religious orientation, I believe that the definition I am offering here is not essentialist.⁸ Third, by

⁸Although, as one of my colleagues at the University of Winchester, UK, Dr Anna King, has noted, the vehemence with which scholars of religion deny they are essentialist is almost to a measure equal to that which the subject of their study, religious devotees, believe and assert in an essentialist reality. It, therefore, raises questions about the appropriateness of Religious Studies methodology to tackle its subject.

positioning the definition into terms that apply phenomenologically⁹ to religious traditions, while still a second-order concept (that is, an academic construct applied to the primary data of religious belief and practice), it seeks interplay between insider and outsider worldviews, recognising that it cannot be representative of religion if it emphasises only externally identifiable features. That is to say, it offers categories, as hopefully will be seen, that are applicable to the self-understanding of religious traditions, but from the perspective of academic enquiry – this is an issue that will be picked up within the discussion around the typology and its rationale, where its significance will become more apparent. Fourth, it is primarily an academic definition, and I would call it semi-realist, in that I believe it says something useful about a discrete category of definable phenomena in the world, although not a set and monolithic account of what they are or should be, nor an entirely *sui generis* category. As I have outlined above, I believe there is reason to see 'religion' as more than simply an arbitrary category, but what value we give to this is debateable. I would, with McCutcheon, agree that it does blend seamlessly into the broader area of human culture, but this does not mean that we cannot see it as something distinctive in itself. Fifth, I hope, through careful and reflexive attention to the areas mentioned above, that it avoids at least some of the power implications of all 'outsider' definitions. In particular, I believe it avoids Fitzgerald's contention that any usage of the term 'religion' imposes Western concepts onto non-Western data (2000; see also Asad, 1993 and Staal, 1982). Notably, I have tried to avoid Saler's notion of religion as based in prototypes of the Abrahamic traditions (Saler, 1993), and believe it is as applicable to 'Eastern' as to 'Western' faith traditions. Indeed, parts of the typology have been inspired by both, for instance, in the fourth factor, relating to transformation, two of the three aspects were inspired directly by reflection on, in one case, Protestant Christian against Orthodox and Catholic Christian notions and, in another, Northern Chan Buddhist against Southern Chan Buddhist notions, yet I believe both have more general and useful applications that cross traditions. I do realise, however, that the typology may rely upon notions of the 'great traditions', for this is where my expertise lies and so formed the basis of my thinking. I will leave it to others to determine if it may usefully be transposed into reflection on indigenous traditions and such things as modern paganism.¹⁰ Sixth, one thing the typology does not imply is that there are such things as 'Christianity', 'Hinduism', 'Daoism', etc. Each is perhaps best understood as an inter-related (and intra-related)

⁹The term 'phenomenology' is one that needs some unpacking. I am not using it here in a Husserlian sense, that one may, by bracketing out your own pre-understandings come to know, eidetically, the true essence of something. Rather, I am using it simply to refer to the physical manifestation of things as phenomena, and, as such it is not based in knowing 'essences' of things, rather their varied and diverse historical manifestations.

¹⁰There are also questions about how it might be applied to implicit religion, and I should thank Dr Mike Grimshaw, of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, and Adrian White, one of my former students, for leading my thought in this direction, on which I hope to produce a paper in due course.

nexus of religious orientations in culture. While Fitzgerald rightly criticises the reification of traditions as distinct ‘religions’, I believe the usage here avoids this kind of imposition, for, as will be seen in the typology and its application, it is open-ended to a high degree, and while still an external (Western) academic taxonomic tool, it seeks to speak from the traditions as diverse phenomena rather than boxing them into pre-existing categories.

Definitions and Typologies

Having outlined some context for the typology, I turn now to outlining it. I will begin by saying why, I think, previous definitions have failed, which will lead me onto the rationale behind my typology.

Simple Definitions

Simple definitions are one or two line definitions that seek to say what religion is. Typical would be the words of Tylor, that religion is, ‘a belief in spiritual beings’ (1871). Like all simple definitions, it includes or excludes on the basis of one factor, which hardly does justice to the vast variety of what we have come to call religions. This particular definition is normally taken to exclude Theravada Buddhism; as this has come to be classed as a religion – one could hardly imagine a book or course on ‘world religions’ which excludes it – I suggest this is a problem; especially because, although some may define Buddhism as a philosophy, Mahayana Buddhism certainly fits within most categories of ‘religion’, and therefore further problems are raised if we exclude other branches of this tradition. I believe the problem can be solved by the typology given here.

Other simple definitions like that of Conze, ‘A religion is an organization of spiritual aspirations, which reject the sensory world and negate the impulses which bind us to it’, (1951) also run into problems. Judaism or Confucianism, generally seem more concerned about living within the ‘sensory world’ than rejecting it, for instance. While Tillich’s notion of ‘ultimate concern’ (1969) could be whatever men value. Also, simple definitions often leave us with phrases such as ‘spiritual’ which go unexplored, but are just as problematic as ‘religion’ itself.

Beyond the one-point simple definition, multi-point variations, such as Geertz’s multi-layered definition, generally leave the field wide-open for any range of value systems from Marxism to being a skinhead:

Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (1973, p. 91).

Ninian Smart's Typology

If such definitions prove inadequate, evidently something more is needed. Probably, the most widely used and accepted definition of religion is Smart's typology. Although widely known I will briefly outline it, in order to explain why it has proved unsatisfactory, and place my typology in relation to it.

According to Smart's typology, which he first advanced in 1969, but then subsequently expanded, there are eight (originally six) principle dimensions which define a religion (see 1981[1969], pp. 15–25, and 1996)

1. The Ritual Dimension
2. The Mythological Dimension
3. The Doctrinal Dimension
4. The Ethical Dimension
5. The Social Dimension and
6. The Experiential Dimension
7. The Material Dimension (added later)
8. The Political and Economic (added later)

This I would term a phenomenal typology, describing, as it does, particular phenomena, which may well be apparent to someone adopting an etic, outsider or scholarly perspective. That is to say, it can be seen that certain rituals are performed, while there are stories and doctrines told and accepted by the group, alongside ethical injunctions, etc. One weakness of this, in my opinion, is that it could include certain worldviews we would not normally call religions. Marxism, for example, as it has developed (although arguably no regime has ever truly been Marxist) can be found to have all of the aspects found in Smart's typology, with the possible exception of the experiential, though, arguably, it has this. Moreover, I suggest, within this typology, Smart mentions things which would not be defined as the essence of the religion from an emic or insider perspective; I doubt very much, if asked, many religious believers would say that what was important was that their faith offered rituals, doctrines and material artefacts. The remit is too general – baseball, for instance, may have rituals (the performance of the game), doctrines (the rules) and material artefacts (stadiums, bats, etc.), even the excitement of the fans might be termed an experiential dimension, but no one would call it a religion, in any meaningful sense.¹¹ If 'religion' is something distinctive, then we should be looking for that which is specifically 'religious'.

¹¹This is not to deny the fervour of sports fans may not sometimes be closely paralleled on the continuum of culture of which religion is a part (while the same may be said of nationalists and Marxists, etc.).

Frank Whaling's Typology

A move in this direction, to centre definitions upon the religious, is found in Whaling's modified version of Smart's typology (1986). It is based around eight 'inter-linked elements', with some commonalities to Smart's. The linkages to Smart's typology are given in parenthesis

1. Religious community (Social)
2. Ritual (Ritual)
3. Ethics (Ethical)
4. Social Involvement (Social)
5. Scripture/myth (Material/Mythological)
6. Concept (Doctrinal)
7. Aesthetics (Material)
8. Spirituality (Experiential)

However, what makes Whaling's definition differ from Smart's is that he adds two further aspects: 'transcendent reality' and 'religious intention'. He notes that both of these are, unlike his eight elements, invisible and illusive. However, for him, they give meaning to the elements. Whaling describes the transcendent reality as 'lying behind' the elements, but is made clear by a 'mediating focus', something more tangible, which the devotee can relate or aspire to; for example the Qur'an for Muslims, either a personal deity or Atman for Hindus, etc. The religious intention is the individual human response to this 'mediated reality', or, in W. Smith's terminology, 'faith'. This definition goes beyond Smart's because it addresses the specifically 'religious', beyond the merely phenomenological. However, I do not think it goes far enough, because it remains divorced from the typology itself; almost a concession to the fact that, for religious people, their faith tradition is more than externals.

A Religious Orientation Typology

We come, therefore, to my typology which, as has been indicated, I will term an 'orientation' typology, as opposed to Smart's 'phenomenal' typology. So, I should say something about this term 'orientation'.

While it is perhaps presumptive, I would suggest that one of the most important features of a religion is that it orients a life towards certain specifically religious goals. My definition of what these are will be found in the typology, while my rationale for including them is essentially pragmatic: they are things which apply to those traditions we call 'religions', while not applying to those we do not.¹²

¹²I recognize a charge of circularity could be made here, that my definition identifies things already classified as 'religions' within this category and so may be said to provide self-fulfilling criteria. In part I would accept this charge because, as I have argued, religions have identified themselves into a

Therefore, in part, the typology is denotative, taking description as central, and looking cross-culturally and cross-traditionally for its answers. I am assuming, also, that a 'religion' is something that does (or, at least, ought to) regulate the life of its devotees – it sets goals and aims, defines the parameters of right and wrong and provides a framework in which this makes sense. This is what I am terming as 'orientation', those things which set and determine the pattern of life. In one sense, the same may be said of Smart's typology; such categories as 'doctrine' or 'mythology' may be seen as orientating, however, people do not follow 'doctrine' (that is a set of ideas or beliefs) as a general concept, but rather specific life-orientating doctrines or beliefs. The factors within this typology are those things which are specifically religious and towards which people orientate their lives.

Six Factors

The typology consists of six factors, which signify the religious, but not all of which are necessary for something to be termed a 'religion'. Rather they represent a set of 'family resemblances', a concept which has been used for definitions of religion by Byrne, Saler and Smart (Byrne, 1988), but has been criticised by Fitzgerald because it ends up being too broad to be meaningful (1996). However, I believe my usage avoids Fitzgerald's criticism, which, as noted above, was one of my concerns with previous definitions. Rather, by focusing upon 'religion' as the sites of seeking transcendence in culture, exemplified by those things which give a 'religious orientation', I believe an overly broad approach that can apply to Marxism or baseball is avoided. Many of these six factors are, as will be seen, closely inter-connected, and I would suggest that where half or more are found we have something that may be termed a 'religion'. Also, as will be seen, they are mutually connective, so only by having a system which has, and relates, these factors do we find a 'religion'. The six factors are

1. Belief in a spiritual power or being(s)
2. Interest in the afterlife
3. Guiding societal and/or ethical norms
4. It is transformative
5. Methods or procedures for prayer or meditation
6. It explains the human and natural situation

similar category and so, to some extent, we already know what are and are not 'religions'. I believe that the role of the typology is then to work towards a satisfying definition for the traditions and systems that mark out this area of culture in a way that is both pedagogically and metatheoretically satisfying.

I will now briefly describe each, and will note again that not all are necessary to define something as a 'religion'.¹³

Belief in a spiritual power or being(s) may involve belief in a supreme God, or in some form of spiritual power behind and pervading the universe, yet again, in lesser deities or spiritual beings. The core or essence of this factor is that it is a belief in something that transcends the purely physical or phenomenal universe. It is not just a belief that something directs or guides the course of phenomenal events, but is itself phenomenal. Rather it suggests that there is another layer to the universe, the 'spiritual' or 'divine'.

Interest in the afterlife involves teachings on what happens after this life, suggesting that the individual human existence is not the end. Often, teachings will offer rewards or punishments for our behaviour in this life. Normally, the continuity will involve a fixed 'soul' that links the 'I' in this life with the 'I' in the next, but this is not always the case.

Guiding societal and—or ethical norms is the area in which a religious worldview most overlaps with non-religious worldviews, for both may provide a 'way of life'. This factor may manifest as guidelines for the individual, or as social and cultural systems into which the individual is bound. It is, of course, possible that, in different settings, and at different times, the same religious tradition may function in both ways. This way of life will be determined by the other factors, such as belief in deity, the afterlife, the way to transformation, etc. It should be stressed that the wider application of this factor would offer a critique of the notion that there are 'religious' and 'secular' areas of culture, which is essentially a modern distinction and not recognised in many traditional cultures, where each interpenetrates the other.¹⁴

It is Transformative, so it seeks the reorientation, or transformation, of the devotee. Generally, it is recognised that the way we live, or our essential nature, is somehow impure or not correctly aligned or adjusted to the ideal. Therefore, through a variety of methods, a solution is offered to orientate the devotee in a manner determined by the other factors. Exactly how this happens can vary not just from

¹³For a fuller account see Hedges, 2006a, although the fourth and fifth categories are modified and extended herein.

¹⁴It may, therefore, be seen as problematic that I define the 'religious' as that part of culture that tends to 'transcendence' and so represents a distinct area of culture. I suggest this is not actually a problem, because while, for many traditional societies, divine laws or energy may permeate, saturate or be completely interwoven into the area we would in modern Western cultures call 'secular', there is still a demarcation in most, if not all, societies and cultures. For instance, while a Hindu vaishya householder may be following his dharma by being a merchant in the world, his way of life is still distinguished from the temple officiating Brahmin priest or the sunnyasi (renouncing holy man). Again, while Shariah law and the Sunnah of the Prophet is woven into the whole of a Muslim's life, time given over to prayer or recitation of the Qur'an is still distinct from this. As I have stressed, I do not see a clear demarcation between the 'religious' area of culture and the whole, while whatever lines of demarcation are drawn vary between cultures. However, this issue needs to be born in mind. I wish to thank Fitzgerald for pointing out that this was an issue not well developed in an earlier draft of this chapter, and refer readers to his work for a clear discussion of the problems of the 'religious-secular' divide (especially, 2007).

tradition to tradition, but also within traditions. Three aspects of transformation should be considered: (1) two different *forms* of transformation may occur; (2) both of these within one of two *timescales* (3) and, as one of two distinct *types*. First, as to the forms, these are 'weak' or 'strong'. In a 'weak' transformation, the devotee decides to follow the religious path and sets out to live according to its strictures and principles; however, he/she is not inherently changed, except by making a commitment of faith. A 'strong' transformation, on the other hand, sets out to fundamentally alter the nature of the devotee; through the practise and use of various techniques, and, perhaps, with direct 'mystical' contact with the divine, the devotee will be reshaped or reformed. In the former, we may say the devotee follows the religious path because it is required, in the latter, once transformed, the devotee follows the religious path because that has become their nature. Second, the two timescales are before and after death. That is to say, the change we undergo may be within this life, or it may be a post-mortem transformation. Finally, the two types are 'sudden' and 'gradual'. In the former, one instant experience or event is what catapults the devotee into a new state of being, in the latter, the process of alteration is long and drawn out, often involving various stages that can be identified to a final endpoint, or it may just be seen as a gradual walk into a more 'holy' frame of mind or being. Each of these, we should note is not necessarily exclusive of any other, some traditions seeing various transformations happening at different times or in different ways either generally or to individuals.

Methods or procedures for prayer or meditation may appear phenomenological, rather than an aspect of the orientation of the religion, however, while it is certainly the former, it also operates as the latter. Apart from ethical behaviour, the devotee shows his orientation to the religious aspects of life through what may be described as specifically religiously orientated actions. These behaviours range from giving adoration or thanks to the divine, making petitionary intercessions, seeking to 'attune' oneself with the divine, or reaching some form of self-understanding or transformation. Whatever type of behaviour it is, it is one that seeks to orientate the devotee towards that which the religion sees as most important within life and to relate or adjust to it, as such it must be placed in relation to factors 1, 2 and 4. Also, it is behaviour that stands outside of the ordinary course of secular life; it is what can most properly be called 'holy', as being set apart from the mundane concerns of the world to dedicate to one's beliefs – though, generally speaking, this time out should inform the mundane life as well. Within this category, we should also consider not just personal prayer, but also corporate prayer, either of which may be stressed as of primary importance. Moreover, these activities can also be both regular and occasional. That is to say, a daily or weekly set of activities may be one form they take, while they may also manifest as a series of, often annual, festivals and rites in which the religious life is played out. Such festivals will themselves be seen as forms of orientation to that which the religion defines as beyond the secular course of life. All forms of activity of a ritualised nature that orientates the devotee towards the religious are included within this, from personal prayer, to static group rituals, to pilgrimages. These events may have a particular geographic focus or not.

It explains the human and natural situation so describes where the devotee is and what she or he should do in this situation. Explained in terms of other aspects of the religion's orientation, it may discuss the causes or origin of such things as the world, human suffering, etc. Some cosmo-theologic questions may be described as beyond human knowing or simply not important. It differs from such things as Darwinian evolution, which may be said to explain the human and natural situation, by relating it to the other factors.

Applying the Typology

Having set out the typology, I will very briefly sketch how it relates to some different traditions. First, I will discuss Buddhism, before briefly reviewing the Abrahamic faiths, and the Hindu family of religions, all of which we will see classed as 'religions', before discussing why Marxism is not.¹⁵

Buddhism(s): as noted, Buddhism, especially the Theravada tradition, or considered as the 'Buddha's own teachings', sometimes falls outside definitions of religion, unless they are so broad as to include things we do not class as religions. Certainly, seeing the Buddha as human, it does not accept a supernatural force or deity for its originator. However, it fulfils the other five factors: it is orientated to life after death, though seeking to avoid this by teaching the way off the wheel of samsara; the way to nirvana is transformative via the eightfold path; it teaches a whole code of ethical conduct as part of the eightfold path and the five precepts; specific meditative practices are essential; and, finally, it explains, through dependent origination, what the human situation is, though, of course, the Buddha famously never answered the question of how it came to be. It is worthy of note, however, that, traditionally, Buddhism has never been wholly atheistic, for, while ignoring the gods, they were never denied. Indeed, given the occurrence of many Hindu deities within the Theravadin scriptures, and the practise, of most non-monastic Theravada Buddhists, to seek intercession from spiritual beings, it may well be said that for most Buddhists in this tradition, throughout history, their faith could be said to fulfil all six factors. Moreover, it is not entirely clear that the Buddha was merely human for the early tradition. He is recognised as being changed in appearance in the early scriptures by those who meet him, moreover, it is suggested that he need not die having overcome the karmic impulses, but decides to let nature run its course.¹⁶ It is possible, therefore, that we might see Buddhism in nearly all its forms as fulfilling all six factors. Certainly, Mahayana Buddhism in its various forms, Pure Land, Ch'an/Zen and Tantra, fulfils all six factors. For factors two through six the

¹⁵An extended discussion including reference to Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism and Scientology can be found in Hedges, 2006b.

¹⁶I am indebted to Dr Doug Osto, Massey University, New Zealand, for bringing the transcendent nature of the Buddha in some of the early Pali texts to my attention, and helping confirm my suspicions that the Buddha could be seen as something more than human for the early tradition.

same applies as for the Theravada. However, with the historical Buddha clearly deified, a host of other Buddhas and bodhisattvas filling out the pantheon, and the trikaya, or Three Bodies Doctrine, exemplifying that Buddha is indeed a spiritual, trans-phenomenal deity, it clearly fulfils the first factor as well.

The Abrahamic Faiths: the family of Christianity, Islam and their elder sibling Judaism, follow, in most cases, all six factors. Though, despite their similarities, they often demonstrate very different fulfilments of the factors. In brief, as to the their general fulfilment, by accepting belief in One God, believing in heaven and hell, having guiding principles for life, speaking of a transformed life after death, offering ways of prayer and setting out the idea of creation, these faiths fulfil all six factors. However, their differences are notable. Islam, for instance, offers, in the Shariah, a whole matrix for socio-economic life unparalleled within Christianity. Yet, our typology offers such broadness – factor 4, guiding societal and/or ethical norms, speaks of providing a worldview, which may be more or less comprehensive over all aspects of life. Indeed, this is not necessarily a weakness, for vast differences occur within the faiths themselves. For example, within Islam, the Sufi movement offers the possibility of a transformed life in the love of Allah within this lifetime, rather than waiting for the Last Judgement. Indeed, we might say that Sufism offers a 'strong' transformation, while Islam as a whole offers a 'weak' transformation. Broadness of definition is, therefore, needed to encompass the vast divergences within traditions. Perhaps more significantly, historically, one sect of Judaism, the Sadducees, Josephus informs us, did not accept the idea of life after death. Of course, while this sect would fulfil only five of the six factors, we would still accept it as a religion.

The Hindu Family of Traditions: While it is difficult to speak of Hinduism as a single tradition, I believe enough unity exists amongst the 'Hindu family of faiths' to class them together here. Whether we are speaking of the Vedic religion, classical yoga, Advaita Vedanta, the bhakti traditions, renouncer traditions or goddess traditions, I believe that all fulfil the typology with all six factors. However, for reasons of space, and the complexity of considering these traditions, I will only be able to sketch a tentative outline. Briefly, however, we may say the following. All of Hinduism embraces some transcendent spiritual, whether it be the personal supreme God of the bhakta, or the Brahman of more monistic Advaitin traditions. Again, samsara and reincarnation run throughout the later traditions, while the earlier Vedic tradition saw an afterlife within the realm of the ancestors. Moreover, Hinduism may be seen broadly as a cultural form which provides a thorough ethical and societal basis. We may again see diversities within one tradition here, because some renouncer traditions, especially the tantric forms, explicitly break the taboos of normal society, thus no single set of guidelines about what these ethical or societal norms may be would be valid across the traditions. Briefly, we may also say that, in some way or another, all Hindu traditions are transformative, offer prayer and meditation and explain the human situation. Limits of space would not let me detail this, but I think few, if any, would challenge this assertion.

Marxism: Marxism fulfils Smart's typology, however, it is an aim of this typology to show that it is not religiously orientated. We should, therefore, run through

each aspect in turn. As for it accepting a spiritual force or being, this is certainly not fulfilled. Marx's idea of the guiding historical principle which will lead to Communism may be said to be within the phenomenal world, not beyond it. Second, it does not accept or speak of life after death. As for the third, it does fulfil this, offering a social doctrine for a way of life – although, if we see this as guided by the other factors then, arguably, it must fulfil these too, before we can accept this. Fourth, as regards it being transformative, the argument could be said to be disputed. The workers in a Communist society will, in theory, work for the common good, against the greed engendered by capitalist society. However, the transformation is essentially a social one, not a remaking of the human spirit in relation to other factors of the typology, and so I would suggest it fails to fulfil this aspect, particularly if, as suggested, the transformation must be in relation to the other factors – if these are not fulfilled then the transformation is not of a religious nature. Fifth, it certainly offers no form of prayer or meditation. While some parallel activities may be found in collective rites these are primarily directed at achieving a societal coherence. Finally, to what extent may it be said to explain the human condition? Rather than speaking of the human condition, I would say it speaks of the social condition, what society is like, though this may in turn explain what people are like. Arguably, therefore, it could fulfil this. However, I would argue probably not. As such, Marxism may fulfil, at most, one or two factors within our typology, perhaps none, and therefore may be said not to be a religion, but is rather a philosophy or worldview that offers something akin to a religion, but is not religious. However, the fact that it has points of contact with the factors is significant, showing religion is far from *sui generis*, and meaning that in as far as Religious Studies may be seen to be a part of cultural studies, that it should not close its doors to such systems, but see Marxism, nationalisms and humanism, etc. as legitimate areas of enquiry as part of its larger remit in analysing and decoding this aspect of culture.

Conclusion

I hope this typology provides a satisfactory definition of 'religion', based on an orientation towards the religious. In this, I believe it has been seen that 'religions' should not be seen as a *sui generis* category, but rather as one part of a larger range of human culture. I hope, though, that I have made a case that there is a discretely identifiable area of human culture that we can classify as the 'religious' domain, through a range of similar concerns and activities which are seen to arise cross-culturally. However, I believe that the intersection of these with the rest of culture should be noted, making it part of a continuum with other activities rather than something entirely separate, yet marking out that area of human culture that seeks to the transcendent. By setting out the notion of religious orientation as one which looks to a spiritual power or being(s), the afterlife and an explanation of the human and natural situation in terms of such qualities, I believe some indication of what the transcendent may mean is given. However, I would suggest that the transcendent

is not something purely 'other' or noumenal, but finds a concrete expression in the way the religions expresses these beliefs and aspirations through its societal and—or ethical norms and methods or procedures for prayer or meditation, while an interaction of the mundane and transmundane may be said to occur in the fact that the transformative aspect is also involved (this outline, of course, suggests all six factors are involved which they need not be).

Of course, one key question of this typology is its pedagogical use. As I have indicated, I believe it can support good practice, by suggesting an understanding of religion that is neither based in a set of theological presuppositions nor in an anti-religious bias, yet, at the same time, is not antithetical to either. I believe it can also help indicate some key areas within the coverage of Religious Studies. Whether it is due to the typology, or simply the way I teach religion, I may note that the final session at the end of my most recent World Religions course (which occurred the same month I finished the first draft of this chapter, at Queen's University's (Canada) ISC campus, UK) found students most common suggestion about what they had learned was that religion and culture were deeply entwined, but also raising issues of the historical connection between faiths, the diversity within individual faiths and the problems of speaking of a common notion of 'religion', but seeing some strands of thought as present across traditions (barring a few issues, such as the historical mutations of faiths from their origins to contemporary manifestations, this, much to my surprise, largely mirrored key themes I hoped they would take from the course). I had certainly not used the typology as a centre point for teaching, and since raising it in discussions around the problem of defining religion in the first sessions of the previous semester, had not formally mentioned it again till this final class. Nevertheless, I would suggest the understanding of religion that lies behind this is something that is useful and needed in teaching religion in the world today. In as far as the typology can help in an empathetic, yet critical, approach to the phenomena of religion I believe its application in pedagogical terms is clear, providing a tool to explore the nature of religious phenomena: as discrete, yet not isolated, aspects of culture; challenging notions that 'religion' is any single thing; and, stimulating thought about how religions in their diversity relate to each other.

In the light of what has been said above, I would suggest that the typology outlined here provides the best option so far presented as a pedagogical tool for introducing 'religion' in interreligious and interfaith contexts. We have spoken of the contemporary situation wherein 'religion' needs to be taken seriously, yet cannot be presented in quasi-theological terms nor essentialist ones. These issues have been raised and discussed in relation to the metatheoretical issues discussed, as has the problematic nature of typologies and definitions of religion; nevertheless, I would suggest that the answer outlined herein provides one possible way forward.

Naturally, the success or failure of this typology will depend upon how far it is, or is not, accepted and used. It stands open to further amendment in the light of this. It is presented, nonetheless, in the belief that it will help people wrestle with the long-disputed question of how to define 'religion'. It is my hope that people will find it useful as a contemporary way to (re)present these phenomena, rather than as

a definitive answer, for, as Berger has said, ‘Definitions cannot, by their very nature, be either “true” or “false,” only more useful or less so’ (1967, p. 175).

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Bridging Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism with Virtue Ethics

Richard Wade

Introduction

What are the characteristics of a noble and dignified person within the Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist traditions?¹ What are the values and virtues that are the aspirations of these traditions? This article seeks to explore the concept of virtue ethics/character ethics within Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, and in so doing, to find links and common ground between them. The method is descriptive and uses virtue ethics as a category and bridge that crosses all three religious traditions.² Virtue ethics is concerned for the good and happiness of the person, and what it is to be a well-balanced individual. Jesus, Mohammad, and Buddha were concerned for the good of the human person. In numerous ways, they pursued the virtues of peace, love, compassion, and righteousness, and they nudged and pointed people toward a better humanity. They are exemplars of moral character and figures of hope in a world fractured by selfishness, greed, injustice, conflict, and fear. Virtue ethics is an example of a morality that is common to all three religious traditions. By understanding the virtue/character theories of Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam we can enrich our self-understanding, and at the same time use these theories as a resource to build bridges of understanding, peace, hope, and justice.

R. Wade (✉)

Australian Catholic University, Ballarat, VIC, Australia
e-mail: Richard.wade@acu.edu.au

¹This article is limited to the exploration of virtue ethics in Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. It is written by a person with specialization in Christian ethics. I use ethics and morality interchangeably and I consider religious ethics in terms of the good of the person in relationship.

²See Stalnaker (2007) for a discussion of the challenges in comparative ethics.

Christian Virtue Ethics

Within the Christian tradition, the virtues act as a bridging category between the different sources of ethics (scripture, tradition, natural law, experience, church teaching). As a bridge, it unites and integrates the Christian Scriptures and ethics. New Testament ethics is expressed and interpreted meaningfully within the framework of virtue ethics. Virtues are moral qualities that help people live good lives and they are considered characteristics of Christian discipleship. Discipleship is an important context and theme for exploring the virtues in the Christian Scriptures.

The moral example of Jesus and the qualities he embodied such as wisdom, love, compassion, and forgiveness are sources of inspiration for Christians. Jesus encouraged people to cultivate moral qualities that reflected a commitment to the virtues and vision of the reign of God. The personal and social characteristics of discipleship are reflected throughout the New Testament (Harrington & Keenan, 2002). The Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew 5:3–12 is one example of a reflection on the virtues of discipleship.³ It is a summary of the wise and loving teaching of Jesus and an example of a Christian ethic which may be categorized as virtue ethics (Harrington & Keenan, 2002). In the Sermon, the emphasis is on a way of life that forms the character of a Christian. It identifies particular actions and capacities that are required for personal and social transformation in the name of the reign of God.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (RSV Holy Bible, 2001).

The beatitudes play an important role of exhortation. They are counter-cultural and a turning of the world's values upside down. This radical virtue ethic provides an example of the kind of life that will change both the world and the human person. It is the kind of life that is expected of Christian disciples.

Aquinas (1225–1275 CE)

Saint Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican theologian was born Thomas *d'Aquino* at *Roccasecca* in the Kingdom of Naples in 1225. He is considered one of the greatest theologians in the Catholic tradition. Aquinas' virtue ethics is one of the most significant theories in the history of Christian theology. Aquinas is concerned with the good of the person and what it is to be dignified. In this context, he explores

³See, for example, the following catalog of virtues 2 Cor 6: 6–7; Gal: 5: 22–23; Eph 4: 2–3, 32–5:2. Virtues occupied a key role in early Christian exhortation or *parenesis*.

the twofold human good of reason and happiness (*beatitudo*) or human flourishing (Porter, 1997). Some key features of his ethical theory, such as moral psychology and the acquired virtues, are influenced by his reading of Aristotle (335–322 BCE). Aquinas defines a virtue as a stable interior disposition (Aquinas, 1969). It is a capacity for personal action and requires intentional practice over time (Pinckaers, 1995). According to Aquinas, there are two kinds of virtues for carrying out noble actions: supernatural or infused virtues (faith, hope, and charity) and human virtues acquired through practice (temperance, courage, justice, and prudence) (Porter, 1997). However, these two kinds of virtues have different goals or ends (Keenan, 1992). Theological virtues have as their end the perfect happiness of sharing in God's own knowledge and love in the Trinitarian life of God (Keenan, 1992). Union with God is achieved by charity, the principle of good works. The acquired virtues have as their end the happiness and natural fulfillment of the person. They are functional virtues in the sense that they enable us to flourish and to be happy, given our capabilities and frailties.

Living a rightly ordered life in the light of these moral virtues leads us to God. For Aquinas, the natural and supernatural good cannot be wholly separate. His notion of moral agency is built on nature, assisted by virtue and perfected by grace (Bowlin, 1999). However, without the virtue of charity, no virtue is possible. Charity directs all the virtues and the individual good works toward the loving vision of God which is our complete happiness.

To understand Aquinas' moral theory of virtue ethics, it is important to situate it within his philosophy of the human person, and the context of what it means to act well in the search of happiness. According to Aquinas, the human person is a psychosomatic unity of the nutritive, sensitive, and rational faculties. The rational faculty includes the active and passive intellect and will. The will is the locus of love and desire. The rational faculty is higher than the nutritive/vegetative faculty (nutrition, growth, and reproduction) and the sensitive faculty (five exterior senses and four internal (memory, imagination, "common sense," and awareness). The sensitive faculty, which includes active emotions, wants something because it is sensed or imagined. Two kinds of sensitive emotions/appetites are described as concupiscible and irascible. Concupiscible emotions are associated with spontaneous desires/emotions of attraction/avoidance and impulse (pleasure, sorrow, joy, love, desire, and hatred) (Aquinas, 1969). The main focus here is the desire to attain the pleasant or avoid the unpleasant. For example, the desire for food that is healthy and unhealthy. Irascible emotions (hope, despair, courage, fear, and anger) are aggressive, forceful, and struggling powers.

Aquinas' ethical theory of virtue operates within this moral psychology. Aquinas considers virtues as dispositions or a well-established readiness that humanize the active emotional life, but does not oppress or subdue the emotions. Rather they are integrated into the rational life of the person. These dispositions develop the emotions and natural inclinations, the will and intellect, and they direct the person to act rightly, as if by second nature.

Consequently, the virtues enable a person to act according to his nature as a rational being and translate the knowledge of a right understanding of what it means to

be a good person in particular actions (Keenan, 1992). The moral virtues as sources of morally right actions are a “mean” between extremes. Good actions which are noble and morally right conform to reason and perfect the powers of the person in terms of actively integrating the emotions, will, and intellect.

Underpinning this moral psychology is an anthropology of grace (O’Meara, 1997). Aquinas understands that the human person’s origins are in God and that his true destiny and happiness is in the loving vision of God. This is the ultimate end or *telos* of the human person, which is the goal of moral choice. Aquinas believed the human person has a natural inclination toward happiness, love, and truth and he sought to answer the question of what it is true happiness consists. Pleasure, knowledge, power, and wealth, are goods that attract us and entice us to choose them as our ultimate goal/*telos*. However, Aquinas states they do not ultimately fulfill us and that our true happiness is discovered in the God of revelation made present in the grace of Jesus Christ (Pinckaers, 1995). While the theological virtues are supernatural gifts from God to the human person, God’s new relationship of grace is vital to acquire all virtues. Through the gift of God’s grace, the individual freely chooses to develop the virtues and grow in God’s grace.

The continuity of Christian commitment enables a person to develop stable dispositions to act virtuously rather than have to struggle continuously in the face of moral choices. While the virtues are indicators of a good person in Aquinas’ thought, he also develops his ethical theory to include the gifts of the Spirit (wisdom, counsel, courage, understanding, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord), the Beatitudes, and the fruits of the Spirit (charity, joy, peace, patience, humility, goodness, endurance, mildness, faith, modesty, contingency, and chastity) which give further details of the picture of a well-balanced person.

Each of the seven virtues is associated with a gift and a beatitude that disposes us to receive divine inspiration to enable action (Aquinas, 1974). Finally, God’s grace and the Spirit, the gospel and the sacraments nourish and sustain the human person in living the virtuous life as the possibility of ceasing to live a virtuous life is ever present.

Aquinas’ picture of a noble and well-balanced individual is of a person who develops the seven virtues. This is a work in progress and involves a commitment to the common good and individual well-being. The Scriptures show a picture of a person who is committed to radical Christian character ethics.

Islamic Virtue Ethics

An important strand of Islamic ethics which gives an insight into the Islamic moral life, is the theme of character ethics or virtue ethics. Islamic virtue ethics is the response to God’s benevolence and mercy. It is concerned with religious obligation and voluntary obedience to the commandments of God and it focuses on the development of good character (Rahman, 1983; Siddiqui, 1997).

Good character places the human agent in a right relationship with the Creator, and reflects the individual's standing as God's vice-regent on earth (Sajoo, 2004). The goal of a morally upright person is to beautify the soul through virtue and to offer it as a precious gift to God Who is *the Beautiful*. Islamic ethics is understood and discussed within the concepts of *islam* (submission), *iman* (faith), (*ishan*-virtue), *Shar'iah* (law), *Tariqah* (the Path), and *Haqiqah* (the Truth) (Hossein Nasr, 2006; Rahman, 1983). The moral example of the Prophet Mohammad and the good character he reflected in words and acts of forgiveness, compassion, wisdom, mercy, and righteousness is an inspiration to Muslims and a starting point for Muslim ethics (Ramadan, 2007).

The Qur'an (Muslim Holy Book), the *Hadith* (traditions of what the prophet Muhammad said and did), and the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law which is drawn from a combination of sources including the Qur'an) are major sources of character and virtue ethics.

The ethical vision of the Qur'an is best expressed by the term *al birr*, that is, righteousness, which is identified with good character or virtue (Fakhry, 1994).

Qur'an 2:177. "It is not piety (*birr*) that you turn your faces to the East and the West. True piety is this: to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets, to give of one's substance however cherished, to kinsmen and orphans, the needy, the traveler, beggars, to ransom the slave, to perform the prayer, to pay the alms. And they who fulfill their covenant when they have engaged in a covenant and endure with fortitude misfortune, hardship and peril; these are they are who true in their faith, these are the truly godfearing."

Good character is expressed in behaving righteously and with piety. These virtues are articulated in faithfulness to God's revelation, and in commitment to the articles of faith, prayer, and good works. Later in the *Muslim* cannon of the *Hadith*, good character is viewed as undertaking duties in relation to fellow muslims, such as avoiding backbiting and injustice.

However, righteousness/piety is not simply to be explained in terms of exterior actions, it is also found in the heart or in the intention of the moral agent. Both intention and the works of piety play a critical role in character ethics (Fakhry, 1994).

The virtue of love or charity is considered an indispensable aspect of Islamic ethics. The *Muslim* and *Bukhari* cannons of the *Hadith* stress the love of the Prophet, and love of God and neighbor as expressions of genuine faith. The Qur'an emphasizes that God loves the doers of charity and just actions (2:195, 3:134, 5:13) (Fakhry, 1994).

The Qur'an and *Hadith* also highlight the virtue of *ihsan* (spiritual virtue, beauty, and goodness). This is a key concept in Islamic ethics. The heart of *ihsan* is the love of God which is expressed in generosity, kindness, and compassion. *Ihsan* is also associated with a sense of being at peace at one's center where God also lives (Qur'an 90:4). Those who practice the virtue of *ihsan* respond with the beauty of their souls in creative acts and words. They are people of good character who are open to Divine compassion and mercy and they are the "eyes, ears and hands" of God (Siddiqui, 1997).

Virtue ethics and living righteously is also a significant theme in the *Shari'ah*. The *Shari'ah* teaches virtues such as respect for parents, kindness to neighbors, charity, truthfulness, promise keeping, compassion, care of the needy, and honesty. The principle of *Ma'ruf* (what is acknowledged and established as good for human relationships) is the criterion for applying *the Shari'ah* (Sajoo, 2004). It has its roots in the Qur'an. "Let there be among you" proclaims the Qur'an "a community that calls to the good, bidding virtue (*ma'ruf*) and forbidding vice (*munkar*)" (Qur'an 3:104). The *Shar'iah* is a source of character ethics which assists the human agent in following the path of the *Tariqah* to attain the Truth or *Haqiqah* (Hossein Nasr, 2006, 2004).

Al-Ghazali (1058–1111 CE)

Al-Ghazali is regarded as the greatest religious authority of Islam following the prophet Muhammad (Sherif, 1975).⁴ Al-Ghazali developed an ethical theory which integrated the philosophical/rational, religious, and mystical insights of Islamic thought. He defines ethics as the knowledge of the soul, its dimensions and moral qualities. This knowledge is essential preparation for the knowledge of God (Qur'an 91: 9–10). "He who knows himself best, knows his Lord best." Al-Ghazali's ethics is concerned with virtues, character traits, the qualities of salvation, personal well-being, and happiness in heaven (Sherif, 1975).

Happiness, according to al-Ghazali, is the primary good of the human person and can only be attained if knowledge (*ilm*) is linked with action (*amal*). Every action and every knowledge (self, God, world, hereafter) must be intended to acquire the virtue of love of God in this life to achieve happiness in the next.

The meaning of action in this framework is "the harnessing of the passions of the soul, the controlling of anger and the curbing of those propensities so as to ensure that they will submit to reason" (Fakhry, 1994).

Al-Ghazali's analysis of the powers of the soul (nutritive, sensitive, rational) is borrowed from Aristotle and is also followed by Aquinas. To the degree that the passions are rightly ordered and controlled by reason, virtues arise in the individual which results in happiness, and they are a means to otherworldly happiness.

The path to otherworldly happiness requires the assistance of subordinate goods, which are in the service of the mystical virtues. These goods include the four principle virtues of the philosophers (wisdom, temperance, courage, and justice) which are viewed as indistinguishable from the "fundamentals of religion." The philosophical virtues are a mean between two extremes.

⁴Sherif (1975, p. 1) Majid Fakh discusses Islamic ethics under four categories. Scriptural morality, Theological ethics, Philosophical ethics, and Religious ethics. He identifies al-Ghazali as the principle exponent of religious ethics. The key dimensions of Islamic religious ethics include the Quranic world view, theological concepts, philosophical categories, and in some instances Sufism (Islamic mysticism). See Fakhry (1994, pp. 6–8).

The mean is discovered by practical wisdom which judges the rightness and wrongness of actions. Al-Ghazali identifies the mean as the straight path of the Qur'an and God's guidance is needed to keep to the path. Other goods include external virtues of wealth, kin, social position and noble birth, and divine virtues of guidance (assistance from the Holy Spirit), good counsel, right direction (guiding the will), and support (Fakhry, 1992).

All mystical virtues are qualities of salvation. They are also described as "stations/stages" or spiritual states which emphasize their hierarchy. Each virtue is a step up from the preceding one, commencing with repentance. They are the highest kind of virtues and are sought by "the few" in the search for God. Al-Ghazali's lists the principle mystical virtues as: repentance (the starting point – a well-known Islamic practice), patience, gratitude, hope, fear of God (a positive disposition), poverty, asceticism, divine unity, trust, and love. All of these mystical virtues, he believes lead to love, the most important mystical virtue. The other principle virtues of yearning, intimacy, and satisfaction are considered the "fruits" of love. Six further mystical virtues are listed namely resolve, sincerity, truthfulness, vigilance, self-examination, and meditation. These virtues are also qualities of salvation, but he does not refer to them as "stations." Each virtue is contemplated in the light of three rational aspects: knowledge, positive disposition, and action (Sherif, 1975).

Mystical virtues are the modification of character and are viewed as the interior dimensions of the law/divine commandments. They are directed toward God with the intention of making the soul obedient to God.

Virtues are gifts from God and no virtue is simply the result of human activity. The virtue of charity/love, which is God's friendship with human beings, is considered the essence of knowledge and moral guidance.

Underpinning al-Ghazali's mystical virtues is a theology of Divine illumination and guidance (Qur'an 20:50). Divine guidance is the cornerstone of all the goods (Qur'an 20:50). Among other effects, it assists in discerning between good and evil.

The individual is called to strive to grow in the awareness of God's presence through the science of *Taqwa*, that is, developing God's consciousness. This requires persistence and it must be focused and resolute.

"The few," al-Ghazali maintains, understand both the internal meaning of the religious law and the external commandments, while the understanding of "the many" is limited to the external aspects of the religious law. Al-Ghazali's division of "the few" and "the many" is a reflection of his hierarchy of religious-legal virtues and mystical virtues. This theory explains his two tiers of otherworldly happiness.

In the *Mizan al-Amal* (Criterion of Action), his principle work on ethics, al-Ghazali explains that perfect happiness is participation in the vision of God in heaven.

Otherworldly happiness consists of life without death, pleasure without pain, wealth without poverty, perfection without defect, joy without sorrow, glory without disgrace and knowledge without ignorance- all eternal (Sherif, 1975).

He considers the voluntary fulfilling of the divine commandments especially as expressed in Islamic teaching as a necessary requirement for deserving otherworldly happiness. Otherworldly happiness is divided into two categories:

- Paradise: lower and more general consists of rivers, sounds, foods, drinks, nymphs, servants, palaces, colorful dresses which are shared with the beasts.
- The vision of God or encounter with Him-Highest. This experience of God makes the individual forget the other delights of paradise (Sherif, 1975).

The Qur'an and Traditions show us a picture of a noble and righteous human person who is beautiful in character. Al-Ghazli, building on the Qur'an and Traditions presents a picture of a well-balanced person who is concerned for God, self, and others. Those who have developed the mystical virtues grow closer to God and enter into the higher level of paradise.

Buddhist Virtue Ethics

Siddhartha Gautama (b. 580 BCE) in present-day Nepal reflected over many life times on the best kind of life to live. He gradually discovered the perfect/noble kind of life to live in his transformation into the *Buddha* (Awakened One/Enlightened One). This discovery by the *Buddha* is revealed in the doctrine of *Dharmma* which is considered the foundation of Buddhist ethics. Understanding, practicing, and living out this doctrine over many life times leads devotees to transformation into the *Buddha* (Keown, 2001; Keown, 2005).

Dharmma has a number of layers of meaning. Its primary truth is the belief that that the cosmos, including all creatures is conditioned by the universal natural law. This natural law in its moral and physical understanding points to an intrinsic order and *telos*/purpose for the universe and all creatures. Other meanings of *Dharmma* include the teachings/practices and path of the *Buddha* with the goal/*telos* of reaching timeless *Nirvanah*/enlightenment. A life lived in the light of *Dharmma* leads to happiness, fulfillment, and liberation/enlightenment. However, to disregard the doctrine of *Dharmma* is to live in constant suffering (*dukkha*) within the cycle of *Samsara* (rebirth/reincarnation) (Keown, 2005).

The Buddha's reflections on the *telos*/purpose of human nature within the world of experience and rebirth (*samsara*), led him to the discovery of the teaching of the four noble truths: life means suffering, the origin of suffering is clinging attachment, the cessation of suffering is attainable, and the path to the cessation of suffering.

That path to the cessation of suffering is discovered in the noble eightfold path which is divided into three categories. Category one: Insight (*prajna*) is right understanding and right thought; Category two: Morality/virtue (*sila*) consists of right speech, right action, and right livelihood; Category three: Meditation (*samadhi*) involves right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration (Harvey, 2001; Keown, 2005). The eightfold right outlook is formed by the disciplining

of the emotions and the will, to enable the person to make moral choices that are fruitful/wholesome (*kusala*) and reject moral choices that are unwholesome (*akusala*).

Fruitful and unwholesome activity is understood within the cause/effect of the doctrine of *karma*. “*Karma* is the overall psychological impulse behind an action that which sets going a chain of causes culminating in a karmic fruit.”⁵ The law of *karma* is a natural outcome of particular actions, which has consequences for present and future lives. It is not a rewards/punishment ethic associated with good and bad rebirths. It oversees the rebirth of beings in terms of the nature and quality of their moral choices, actions, and outcomes. At death, the karmic effect shapes the outward form for rebirth. This outward form is a reflection of the moral character developed over the previous life time. “It is intention (*cetana*), O monks that I call *karma*; having willed ones acts through body, speech or mind” (A. iii. 415).

The nature of moral choices and their karmic fruitfulness/unwholesomeness are evaluated in terms of meeting the following criteria; intention (purpose), motivation (greed/generosity, hatred/compassion, and delusion/understanding), outcomes (causing suffering/happiness), and level of contribution to spiritual progress toward *nirvana* (Harvey, 2001). However, intentions alone do not justify any means to achieve an outcome no matter how good the outcome. Actions must be chosen for the right reasons and actions considered unwholesome are forbidden. A wholesome/fruitful karmic action is praiseworthy and uplifting.

It is distinguished by a calm, healthy, and stable mind which strengthens the moral character of the person, and is crucial in the spiritual movement toward *nirvana*. Its opposite is bad karmic fruitfulness which is blameworthy and impacts on the character of the person and the welfare of others and the world. It has a fundamental impact on the spiritual progress toward *nirvana*. The “right outlook” is a religious and ethical concept cultivated within the framework of karmic *kusala*/wholesome activity and thoughts and karmic *akusala*/unwholesome activity and thoughts, and their consequences for the achievement of happiness now and ultimately in a future *nirvana*. This *karma-kusala/akusala* discovery of the *Buddha* is another level of the meaning of the doctrine of *Dharmma*.

The development of moral character through the cultivation of virtues is fundamental to the ethical life of Buddhism in its primary objective of overcoming suffering (*dukkha*). Karmic wholesomeness is meritorious and frees the mind and emotions from vices (*klesas*) such as delusion, anger, and hatred. To develop moral progress along the *Buddha*’s path, the moral qualities or virtues (*sila*) of non-attachment (absence of selfish desire), benevolence (attitude of good will to all creatures), and understanding (knowledge of Buddhist teaching) are required. These three cardinal virtues/roots of wholesome action are necessary for liberation from the three roots of unwholesome action/vices (*klesas*), that is, greed (clinging

⁵Harvey (2001, p. 17) For a discussion of intention, knowledge, and degrees of unwholesomeness in actions see pp. 52–58.

to ideas/lust/avarice), hatred (resentment and anger), and delusion (distorting the truth). These are the cause of all suffering (*dukkha*), as revealed by the Buddha. The cultivation of mental and emotional habits/virtues, formed by Buddhist beliefs and knowledge, enables the devotee to offset negative dispositions/vices and make wholesome moral choices.

Moral and intellectual virtues central to the development of karmic wholesomeness and the undermining of vices include:

1. Generosity (*dana*). The moral virtue of generosity is a central ethical pursuit as it reflects a detachment from self and creates karmic wholesomeness. Examples include, hospitality, listening to others, distributing wealth and possessions which are also expressions of sharing karmic wholesomeness with all creatures. Kindness and compassion radiate out of the virtue of *dana* (MacMillan, 2002).
2. Keeping of the precepts/teachings (*sila*). This is concerned with the practices of the moral virtue of righteousness. Examples of the precepts include:
 - i. Non-injury (*ahimsa*). Its counterpart is kindness and compassion.
 - ii. Abstaining from taking what is not given; that is, shunning theft and cheating.
 - iii. Abstaining from misconduct concerning sense-pleasures (avoidance of sexual misconduct). Its counterpart is contentment.
 - iv. Abstaining from false speech; that is, to shun lying. Its counterpart is honesty, trustworthiness, and dependability.
 - v. Abstaining from alcoholic drink or drugs. The counterpart is mindfulness and awareness (Harvey, 2001).
3. Patience or forbearance (*kshanti*). This is a moral virtue of self-sacrifice which is similar in spirit to loving kindness. It is perfected in meditation and is helpful in defusing conflict especially in the face of provocation. It is also associated with humility, endurance, and the absence of anger and desire for revenge.
4. Vigor (*viryā*). This is a moral virtue of courage and determination in the face of challenging circumstances and difficult situations.
5. Meditation practice (*dhyāna*). This is an intellectual virtue of concentrated awareness on mental and physical occurrences within and without the person. The practitioner is assumed to be praiseworthy and free from unwholesome activity. Meditation is associated with right mindfulness, and assists the practitioner to grow in greater sensitivity to the other virtues (Harvey, 2001).
6. Wisdom/Insight (*prajñā*). This is an intellectual virtue that leads to wholesome moral choices and clarity of mind. While the goal of the eightfold path is indeed wisdom, the virtue of wisdom is also concerned with practical morality (MacMillan, 2002; Keown, 2001).

A noble and happy person in the Buddhist world view is a person who lives life committed to the doctrine of *Dharmma*. Moral character is an intentional activity which is rightly focused on overcoming suffering.

Conclusion

An understanding of the virtue ethics/character ethics of religious traditions other than our own, can be a source of inspiration and nourishment of the aspiration to develop in virtue. We see through the glass more clearly of what it is to be fully human and to live a decent life. The development of a virtuous character is something we grow into, but without care, it is also something we can grow out of over time.

This exposition of virtue ethics in the traditions of Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, though limited in scope has demonstrated that we share a common understanding of the human condition, of human relationships and challenges, and indeed common aspirations. It is evident that our goals are the same in aspiring to virtues such as love, compassion, and wisdom which are paramount not only in our efforts to live good lives, but in our yearning for the divine/*nirvanah*. While acknowledging that these virtues are the basic framework for character development, and that cultures and social contexts and religious traditions will creatively influence their application, it would be helpful to apply virtue ethics in a cross religious framework to moral issues. This would be an enriching cross religious experience in itself and a creative approach to tackling moral issues such as conflict.

The similarities in the virtue ethics across the three traditions are striking. Particularly interesting are the notions that good intentions in themselves are not enough. It is the intention, motivation, and external works that must be considered in totality in pursuit of a life of virtue. Charity/compassion/generosity is the pivotal virtue in all three traditions. The traditions universally include teaching on the cultivation and nurturing of the virtues and also on the fruits of virtuous actions. Virtue ethics has much of intrinsic value to offer and not least as a movement toward tolerance and mutual understanding between different religions and cultures. This richness of human understanding of what it means to be a happy person can only continue to grow in the light of knowledge and openness to various religious traditions. The virtues are a bridge toward a better humanity.

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Oriental Philosophy and Interreligious Education: Inspired by Toshihiko Izutsu's Reconstruction of "Oriental Philosophy"

Yoshiharu Nakagawa

Tasks of Interreligious Education

In this emerging era of global transformation, interreligious education is expected to play a significant role to promote mutual understanding among people with different values and beliefs. Many societies that used to be monocultural and monoreligious are undergoing radical changes into postmodern societies where it becomes urgent to have a multicultural position and a pluralistic perspective. As a way of reducing conflicts or disagreements, we need to know the differences in values and beliefs of others. Therefore, interreligious education should focus on an effort to cultivate an attitude of openness to diversity. As Wayne Teasdale (1999) clarifies in his conceptualization of "interspirituality," "*Inter* means an openness to learn from others, and the wisdom of their traditions; it is a trust in what will be found; it is the conscious assimilation of whatever is valuable to aid one's own journey" (p. 27).

Interreligious education also needs to go beyond a relativistic view of just recognizing the co-existence of different perspectives. It is true that diversity in religious, moral, and spiritual lives should be respected as it is, but it is simultaneously important to find interrelations and common strands among diverse orientations. In viewing different traditions, we need to inquire into interconnections, resonances, and similarities among them. As an educational practice, interreligious education should be concerned with understanding basic patterns or structures that are seen commonly in diverse views of religious thought.

In addition to this, interreligious education should contribute to bringing a greater understanding of human spirituality and cultivate personal spirituality. Truly, to know others is one of the best ways to know oneself. Reflecting on differences and similarities, we learn to know who we really are and find an essential way to

Y. Nakagawa (✉)
Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan
e-mail: ynaka@lt.ritsumei.ac.jp

cultivate our own being. Furthermore, we can be enriched in our spiritual lives by engaging with different views and ways.

Dale Snauwaert and Jeffrey Kane (2000) proposed two ways of defining the meaning of “spirituality” as a “worldview” and as “a process of development toward Self-realization” (p. 2). Here “worldview” refers to “a worldview that places the individual in a multidimensional, sacralized universe, wherein the transcendent, Soul, Spirit are recognized as real” (p. 2). Since wisdom traditions of the world have provided us with a great variety of sacred worldviews, according to Snauwaert and Kane, “in its broadest sense a spiritual education would entail an exposure to the sacred worldview as expressed in the major religious and wisdom traditions of the world” (p. 3). And learning about the sacred worldview helps us identify a way toward Self-realization. Snauwaert and Kane conclude their discussion on spirituality in education as follows:

A foundation can be laid in formal education for a spiritual life via exposure to the sacred worldview, which opens the possibility of Self-realization. This opening appears when the individual asks the basic existential question: Who am I? The sacred worldview can offer a profound framework for the exploration of this question, leading eventually to an exploration of one’s true condition and an opening to deeper dimensions of the self. It is conceivable that schools could be organized and curricula designed to expose students to the sacred worldview and to begin an engagement in the developmental process of Self-realization (p. 3).

What Snauwaert and Kane have proposed sounds to me equally significant in defining a way of interreligious education, for it involves as its essential parts learning about the sacred worldview and engaging in Self-realization. Therefore, we need to ask how we approach the sacred worldview within a framework of interreligious education. I have made such an effort within the domain of “holistic education” – a postmodernist education that has introduced teachings of wisdom traditions into curriculum theories (see Miller, 1988/2007, 2006). I have especially drawn on wisdom traditions of the East – Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Sufism – to develop an Eastern view of holistic education (Nakagawa, 2000, 2008). Eastern or Oriental philosophy has concerned itself mostly with such issues as the true nature of reality, liberation, and enlightenment through contemplation, and the meaningfulness of life, and I believed that these themes are fundamental in conceiving a way of holistic education.

My approach to Oriental thought has been strongly informed by Toshihiko Izutsu’s challenges to reconstruct “Oriental philosophy.” Following his way, I have surveyed worldviews of Oriental wisdom to uncover basic structures and remarkable resonances underlying them. One of the important features commonly found in these worldviews is a “multidimensional” view of reality. Each worldview illustrates a different structure of multiple dimensions, but most worldviews are identical in trying to describe a multidimensionality of reality. Here is an example of “commonality in diversity” when considering sacred worldviews. In this chapter I will revisit the multidimensionality in Oriental perspectives by detailing how Izutsu approached Oriental philosophy in order to demonstrate a possible way of interreligious education.

Izutsu's Methodology of Reconstructing Oriental Philosophy

Toshihiko Izutsu (1914–1993), a distinguished Japanese scholar of Islamic philosophy, seriously concerned himself with the future of Oriental philosophy, believing it to become a significant contribution to postmodern philosophy (throughout this chapter I follow Izutsu's preference of the term "Oriental" to "Eastern" philosophy). Izutsu presented his ideas as a main lecturer at the Eranos conferences (2008a, 2008b) and later in his remarkable works written in Japanese (1983, 1985, 1989, 1991, 1993).

Izutsu saw that "Oriental philosophy" encompasses diverse currents of religious and philosophical thought developed in vast areas of the East, ranging from the Near East to the Far East. Oriental philosophy in this sense is so broadly diversified that it is not possible at a glance to find a consistent development or a coherent system. Izutsu (1983) started with this recognition: "There is no unification as a whole or organic structuralization in Oriental philosophy as it is given Philosophy we find primarily in the Orient is, concretely put, multiple traditions of philosophy co-existing but entangled with each other in complicated manners" (p. 428).¹ Faced with the multiplicity of Oriental philosophy, Izutsu (1991) assumed it to be "future-oriented" and imagined it to become a "creative source" to meet challenges of the present time:

For years, I have contended that it is not enough to store the traditions of Oriental thought . . . just as the precious cultural heritage If we really respect the various traditions of thought that we inherited from the past, we should not commit a folly to leave them as *the legacy of the past* and to let them remain dried up. But rather, we have to make every effort to positively revisit them in response to the challenges of contemporary philosophy, and if necessary, we dare to de-and reconstruct them into a new form of Oriental philosophy to engage with the future (p. 467).

Izutsu's call to revive Oriental thought as a postmodern philosophy resonates with what David Ray Griffin (1989) called "constructive" or "revisionary" post-modernism that "seeks to overcome the modern worldview not by eliminating the possibility of worldviews as such, but by constructing a postmodern worldview through a revision of modern premises and traditional concepts" (p. x). To develop a "future-oriented" postmodern Oriental philosophy, Izutsu introduced a methodological operation called "synchronical structuralization" (see also Sawai, 2008, p. 221). This operation has two phases. The first phase is to deconstruct and then reconstruct different trends in Oriental philosophy to identify common strands of thought. According to Izutsu (1983),

Briefly speaking, this operation begins with liberating the main philosophical traditions in the Orient [from their historical backgrounds] and places them, in the present context, on a theoretical plane on which they are going to be rearranged. In other words, it attempts to create artificially a thought space for connecting them all in a structural framework by liberating traditions of Oriental philosophy from the axis of time and by recombining them in a paradigmatic way (p. 429).

¹All quotations of Izutsu's Japanese works have been translated into English by the author, Y. Nakagawa.

This hermeneutical operation is intended to sort out a fundamental structure of Oriental thought. In this process it is crucial to read texts in a new way, from the viewpoint of the present context. Izutsu (1991) calls it a “creative reading,” which “in addition to a philologically precise reading of the text, and on the basis of this reading, *creatively* explores a possible direction of thought it suggests” (p. 468). Having applied this approach to various fields including Vedānta, Taoism, I Ching, Mahayana Buddhism, and Sufism, Izutsu illustrated fundamental structures of thought that had been embedded in Oriental perspectives.

The second phase of the “synchronical structuralization” is the process of “subjectification” or “internalization” of the fundamental structure of Oriental thinking in one’s own consciousness. This phase has to do with establishing one’s own viewpoint of Oriental philosophy. It has a complementary function to the first phase of this operation. While the first phase still remains on an intellectual plane, the second phase requires us to understand the essential aspects of Oriental philosophy from within through cultivating a contemplative consciousness. Here Oriental philosophy comes to terms with the transformation of our own being.

Izutsu’s procedural plan of synchronical structuralization seems to be congruent with what Snauwaert and Kane defined as an education for spirituality; that is, learning about the sacred worldview and engaging in Self-realization. The first phase of synchronical structuralization is to sort out fundamental structures from sacred worldviews and the second phase of “subjectification” would entail the process of Self-realization. Therefore, what we can introduce in the practice of interreligious education is a procedure to sort out fundamental structures across multiple worldviews of the world’s wisdom traditions and, in addition to this, an opening a possibility of Self-realization that can be guided by a perspective enlarged through working on sacred worldviews.

The Multistratified Structure of Reality

What is remarkable in Oriental philosophy is the “multistratified structure” of reality. In his *Sufism and Taoism*, Izutsu (1983/1984) describes the multistratified structure found in the philosophies of the Sufi thinker Ibn ‘Arabī and the Taoist thinker Lao-tzū (p. 481). ‘Arabī’s strata are: (1) the stage of the Essence (the absolute Mystery, abysmal Darkness); (2) the stage of the Divine Attributes and Names (the stage of Divinity); (3) the stage of the Divine Actions (the stage of Lordship); (4) the stage of Images and Similitudes; and (5) the sensible world. Also, Lao-tzū’s strata include: (1) Mystery of Mysteries; (2) Non-Being (Nothing, or Nameless); (3) One; (4) Being (Heaven and Earth); and (5) the ten thousand things. There are differences between them in their conceptualization of each stratum, but they both describe reality starting from the unfathomable depths through intermediate dimensions to the phenomenal sensible things. In this way, these philosophical worldviews provide similar views of multidimensional reality. Izutsu (1983/1984) refers to this point:

Existence or Reality as ‘experienced’ on supra-sensible levels reveals itself as of a multi-stratified structure. The Reality which one observes in this kind of metaphysical intuition is not a unistratum structure. And the vision of Reality thus obtained is totally different from the ordinary view of ‘reality’ which is shared by the common people (p. 479).

As Izutsu emphasizes here, the multistratified structure of reality is revealed to a “metaphysical intuition,” a perception radically transformed in contemplation. This marks another crucial point of Oriental philosophy, which regards the aspect of “subjectification” as discussed above. The Oriental approach has been seriously concerned with directly knowing the profound depths of reality by cultivating depth-consciousness. Modes of reality disclosed to us always correlate with particular states of consciousness. Sawai (2008) summarizes Izutsu’s position on this point by saying that “surface-consciousness can see the superficial dimension of reality alone, while depth-consciousness can view the depth of reality. Izutsu thus developed a structural theory of ‘Oriental philosophy’ characterized by the multi-layered correlations of human consciousness with reality” (p. 223).

What follows will describe a multidimensional structure of reality that includes three major categories illuminated by Izutsu: the surface level of empirical things, intermediate imaginative regions, and the deepest metaphysical ground. Throughout this discussion I will mostly refer to sources from Taoism, Advaita Vedānta, and Mahayana Buddhism.

The World of Empirical Things and the Surface Level of Consciousness

First, the surface level of multidimensional reality is the phenomenal world of empirical things. The world is here perceived as an aggregation or an assembly of separate things. We strongly believe that we are living in the “objective” world where each thing appears to exist by itself and to have its own distinctive substance. In this objectivistic view, we learn to perceive ourselves as if we are also separate egos set apart from other beings and things.

However, on this plane of empirical reality, a thing is given to us not only as an object but also as a meaning unit. When we see something, we always understand it by its particular meaning. A thing always appears only through a meaning given to it by us. The surface world of empirical things is inseparably united with the articulation of meanings by the mind. Izutsu (2008b) called this function of the mind “subjective fabrication” or “semantic articulation” (pp. 123 f.). Since distinctions of meanings are preliminarily articulated through language, this semantic articulation is not an arbitrary activity by each but a collective intersubjective construction through communicative actions by those who live in the same community and use the same language.

Interestingly enough, from ancient times Oriental thinkers took notice of the semantic articulation of the world. They held a notion that the surface reality arises through our perception and therefore things do not exist apart from a subjective

construction. For example, Lao-tzŭ (2001) says, “The Named is the mother of ten thousand things” (p. 28). Furthermore, Oriental thinkers emphasized the aspect that this subjective construction yields a delusive perception of reality. Sankara (1979/1992), the greatest philosopher of Advaita Vedānta, observed that *avidyā* (ignorance or nescience) of the mind produces phenomenal differences of things. *Avidyā* means the function of “superimposition” by the mind, a mind’s function to take partial identities and qualities for the whole of existence. Hence, superimposition is the function that articulates primordial unity into diverse things. Sankara says, “This whole [universe] is qualification, like a beautiful ornament, which is superimposed [upon *Ātman*] through nescience” (p. 116). Because of this superimposition, the phenomenal world of separate things is not a substantial, but an illusionary existence (*māyā*). The great Zen Master Lin-chi (1993) cautioned his disciples about this point:

Followers of the Way, make no mistake! The various phenomena in this world and other worlds are in all cases devoid of intrinsic nature. . . . They are empty names, and the words used to describe them are likewise empty. But you insist on mistaking these idle names for reality. This is a great error (p. 47).

On the surface dimension of consciousness, we find ourselves strongly identified with the semantic articulation of the mind. This identification brings about a “fragmentary” existence, and if we are to escape from fragmentation to realize the wholeness of our being we need to liberate ourselves from the dominance of the mind through exploring the deeper levels of consciousness.

The Middle Regions of the Imaginative World

As the deeper levels of consciousness are cultivated, a vast field of “imagination” is revealed. In the realm of imaginative world there exist several levels of imagination. Izutsu discerns three levels: sensory images of surface reality, symbolic and archetypal images, and the *ālaya-vijñāna* (storehouse consciousness) as the foundation of all images (Izutsu, 1983, pp. 186–279; 2008b, pp. 124–131).

First, sensory images work in our sensory perception of empirical things. They correspond to phenomenal things and are unified with semantic articulation. In this regard, the region of sensory images virtually overlaps with the surface level of separate things. For example, if we perceive a thing called “tree,” this perception arises mediated through the sensory image of a tree that is evoked by the semantic articulation of the word “tree.” Our perception of a thing is always intermediated by a word and a sensory image, but we remain unaware of this subjective projection, believing that we immediately see a thing over there. Izutsu (2008b) explains this:

Even in the case of the perception of a single object like a tree, we perceive it already interpreted through an image which intervenes between us and direct experience Being unaware of this transforming activity of the image, we ordinarily take it for granted that we perceive the things in the external world in their objective reality, as if they were there in exactly the form in which we perceive them (p. 125).

Sensory images still belong to the surface reality of sensible things. Liberated from surface level, different types of images come to appear in the deeper realms of consciousness. In other words, underneath the sensory images is hidden a vast realm of “symbolic images.” Though they have little or no factual references in the empirical world, symbolic images are not mere “illusions” or “delusions,” but actual experiences that form the deeper realms of reality. Symbolic images produce the imaginative pictures of reality, pictures that articulate a deeper reality differently from the semantic articulation of surface reality. Due to the “mythopoeic” nature of symbolic images, they find their expressions in myths, fantasies, symbolic arts, sacred words and sounds, and other symbolic forms. They include images of deities, spirits, celestial beings, and metaphysical lands and realms. Oriental religious worldviews developed their own imaginative worlds of symbolic images as their essential components.

In this regard, Izutsu often highlighted the concept of *mundus imaginalis*, a concept elaborated by Henry Corbin, a French philosopher of Islamic mysticism, to designate an imaginative world of symbolic images. According to “theosophy” in Islamic philosophy, there are three universes corresponding to three different modes of perception: the “physical sensory world,” the “suprasensory world of the Soul,” and the “universe of pure archangelic Intelligences” (Corbin, 1984/1995, p. 8). The middle universe of the suprasensory world of the Soul is *mundus imaginalis*.

The “symbolic articulation” of a deeper reality is radically different from the semantic articulation of empirical things on the surface reality. But, it is of greater importance in understanding reality because symbolic images represent “the primeval configurations of a reality which are psychically far more real and more relevant to the fate and existence of man than the sensory reality established at the surface level of consciousness” (Izutsu, 2008b, p. 131). The symbolic articulation of reality reveals “the primeval structure of Being which remains hidden from the view of the empirical eyes” (p. 131).

Izutsu significantly introduced Carl Jung’s concept of “archetype” in his discussion to illuminate the primeval configurations of symbolic images. Symbolic images involve “archetypal images” as core components in their configurations. Filled with particular contents, archetypal images emerge from archetypes. Archetypes are invisible and indefinite potentials with a strong tendency to evolve into archetypal images. In Jung’s (1971/1976) scheme, archetypes reside in the collective unconscious as pure forms without contents: “It [the collective unconscious] consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents” (p. 60). Of the relation between archetypes and images, Edward Casey (1991/2004) remarks, “Yet the ultimate source of psychical reality is found not in anything the imaginer himself or herself can do but in the primordial images or archetypes which inform and preform his or her imaginative activity” (p. 6).

On the characteristics of archetypes and archetypal images, Izutsu (1983) emphasizes several points (pp. 254–279). First, archetypes are culturally bounded; that is, each culture has a different set of archetypal images and the cultural context somehow deeply affects the forms of archetypal images, and even more, the archetypes as such. Izutsu (1983) writes:

There is no ‘archetype’ that has universality common to all humanity. Each ‘archetype’ and the systems arising between archetypes differ by culture. This is not only concerned with the differences among images. But also ‘archetypes’ arising in a deeper consciousness are themselves diversified by culture. However, ‘archetypes’ are commonly seen throughout all humanity in the sense that in any culture the deep consciousness of humans necessarily articulates Being into ‘archetypes.’ It is only in this sense that we can recognize ‘archetypes’ as the fundamental articulations of Being that are built in the deep mechanism of human consciousness (p. 256).

Second, archetypes are “mythopoeic” and they unfold into stories in their dynamic combination. Archetypal images and other symbolic images tend to yield myths, legends, fairy tales, and sacred stories that convey the essential features of a deeper reality. Third, in contrast to stories that are constantly in the process of transformation, archetypal images reveal themselves through the formation of coherent and well-ordered structures such as the *mandalas* (circular diagrams depicting sacred images and celestial spheres) developed in Tantric Buddhism.

At the bottom of the imaginative world, Izutsu (1983) posits what he calls “the *ālaya-vijñāna* (storehouse consciousness) of language,” drawing on the idea developed in the Yogācāra school of Mahayana Buddhism (pp. 231–254). The Yogācāra school discerns eight consciousnesses; that is, the first five consciousnesses are based on the five senses, the sixth is “mind consciousness,” the seventh is *manas* that organizes the mind consciousness, and the storehouse consciousness is at the basis of consciousness. The five consciousnesses and the mind consciousness form the ordinary state of consciousness, and *manas* is the deeper layer of consciousness hidden under the first six consciousnesses. Izutsu thinks that the storehouse consciousness is the underlying matrix where archetypes reside in and images are conceived, generated, and also stored as “seeds” (*bīja*). It yields all kinds of images including both sensory and symbolic images. Arising in the storehouse consciousness, sensory images go straight up to the surface level of consciousness to assume definite forms combined with empirical things. By contrast, archetypal and symbolic images usually remain in the intermediate regions of the imaginative world.

Even if the middle region of imaginative world looks so fundamental, Oriental philosophy warns us not to attach strongly to this intermediate realm and to pass it through to attain the infinite depths of reality. Joseph Campbell (1949/1968), a great scholar of the mythic (archetypal) images, recognizes this point when saying,

Myth is but the penultimate; the ultimate is openness – that void, or being, beyond the categories – into which the mind must plunge alone and be dissolved. Therefore, God and the gods are only convenient means – themselves of the nature of the world of names and forms, though eloquent of, and ultimately conductive to, the ineffable (p. 258).

The Deepest Reality – Chaos and Non-being

What next appears in cultivating a deeper level of consciousness is the dimension of “the ontological Chaos” or “the ontological fluidity” (Izutsu, 1985, pp. 32–35;

2008a, pp. 24–53). Izutsu refers to the concept of “Chaos” (Hun-tun), drawing on a famous parable created by Chuang Tzu (1968, p. 97). This parable relates that two emperors named Shu (Brief) and Hu (Sudden) sometimes met in the territory of Hun-tun and Hun-tun treated them generously. To repay Hun-tun’s kindness, they bored seven holes in Hun-tun, for humans have seven openings but Hun-tun alone has no opening. And on the seventh day Hun-tun died. In this parable, Hun-tun signifies the primordial oneness of a deeper reality and both Shu and Hu stand for the strong tendency of the human mind to articulate the one into the many (seven holes).

Izutsu regards “Chaos” as a “fluid state” where distinctions of beings dissolve away and each being interconnects with each. This “ontological fluidity” involves an “ontological transparency.” On the surface level of consciousness, “A is A” and “B is B,” and they mutually obstruct through ontological boundary. By contrast, in the state of ontological fluidity boundaries become transparent and all beings mutually immerse. Thus, all beings are interconnected in the ontological Chaos. Izutsu (2008a) says, “Chuang-tzū’s basic thesis [is] that all things are, in the Chaos, one” (p. 39).

However, Oriental philosophy sees the ontological Chaos not as the ultimate depth of reality. The dimension of Chaos eventually turns into the deepest dimension of “Non-Being” or “Nothingness,” the fathomless infinite dimension that is ineffable beyond any qualification. Therefore, Izutsu called this ultimate depth of reality “the absolutely unarticulated” or “the zero point of consciousness and Being.” The recognition of the absolutely unarticulated or the zero point at the bottom of reality marks Oriental worldview.

Taoist philosophy looks upon *Tao* (Way) as the deepest reality. Lao-tzū (2001) says, “The Way in its eternal reality is nameless” (p. 88). Of this nameless Way, it is also remarked, “There is Something imperceivable but real, born before heaven and earth. Silent and void, it stands alone, never changing” (p. 73). Also, Chuang Tzu (1968) remarks: “The understanding of the men of ancient times went a long way. How far did it go? To the point where some of them believed that things have never existed – so far, to the end, where nothing can be added” (p. 41).

Indian religious thought identifies the zero point of consciousness and Being with Atman and Brahman. Atman is revealed as the true self at the primordial depth of self-consciousness. The ancient Upanishad philosophy called this recognition *tat tvam asi*, or “That art thou” (see *Chāndogya Upanisad* in Radhakrishnan, 1953/1994, pp. 458–467). Advaita Vedānta maintains that Atman is one with Brahman. Both Atman and Brahman are unborn, deathless, and all-pervading. Advaita Vedānta also makes it explicit that the nature of Atman and Brahman is “pure consciousness” (*cit*). Sankara (1979/1992) writes: “I am *Ātman*, i.e., the highest *Brahman*; I am Pure Consciousness only and always non-dual” (p. 126). Likewise, the *Astāvakra Gītā* (Mukerjee, 1971/1997), a classic belonging to the lineage of Advaita Vedānta, repeatedly makes this point by noticing that the true nature of reality is “pure consciousness.” The Advaitic tradition takes the path of knowledge that negates “superimposition” or false self-identification with a fragmentary quality. When this process reaches the point where no identification exists,

what remains is pure consciousness. Modern Advaitic mystics such as Sri Ramana Maharshi (2004) and Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj (1973/1982) impressively embodied this process.

The Oriental path of contemplation developed a variety of spiritual practices to attain the zero point of consciousness and Being, and the fullest realization of this is known as *samadhi* (nondual ecstasy) and *moksha* (perfect liberation) in Hinduism, *sambodhi* (authentic awakening) and *satori* (enlightenment) in Buddhism, and so forth. However, it is equally important to note that once one attains the zero point, he or she returns to all the other levels. Izutsu (1985) underlines that the zero point is the turning point in the whole process of contemplation: “The long way of contemplative practice comes to the end by attaining ‘Non-Being’ but, starting with this point, one turns back the same route and returns to the world of ordinary consciousness” (p. 37).

Now the zero point or Non-Being serves as the metaphysical ground from which all forms of being of the other dimensions come out. Izutsu (1985) goes on to say,

The returning way of contemplation surely has its ontological aspect. In this aspect “Non-Being” as the starting point turns out to become the absolutely pre-phenomenal level, *Urgrund* [the primordial ground] for the entire phenomenal world, and the metaphysical unarticulated from which the world of beings emerges in temporal and spatial diversifications (p. 37).

This is what really characterizes the way of Oriental thinking. It is true that Oriental thought recognizes Non-Being at the ultimate depth of reality, but it does not abide there. Izutsu (1989) states: “Thinking of Oriental philosophy thinks here that ‘Non-Being’ at the extreme of the deconstruction of Being is the very foundation of ‘Being’ or a new starting point for ‘Being’” (p. 240). Non-Being turns into a creative source for the resurgence of beings. In this sense, Lao-tzŭ (2001) says: “The Nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth” (p. 28); or, “Being is born out of Non-Being” (p. 104). The following is Izutsu’s (1977/1982) comment on the creative aspect of the “Oriental Nothingness”:

The Oriental Nothingness is not a purely negative ontological state of there being nothing. On the contrary, it is a plenitude of Being. It is so full that it cannot as such be identified as anything determined, anything special. But it is, on the other hand, so full that it can manifest itself as anything in the empirical dimension of our experience, as a crystallization of the whole spiritual energy contained therein (p. 82).

Things and beings on the phenomenal and imaginative levels resurge as the self-manifestation of the absolutely unarticulated. Each thing comes to appear not any more as a separate fragmentary existence but as an integrated whole of multiple dimensions. Here, each finite being of this world appears to be an absolutely infinite being. Even a tiny thing like a flower reveals the infinite as it actually is. This is, truly, ultimate reality viewed from the Oriental perspective.

Recovery of the Wholeness of Reality

It is true that Oriental philosophy strongly concerns itself with exploring the ultimate depth of reality. But it is through this twofold movement of seeking and returning that it eventually reveals the fullness of a multidimensional reality. Lao-tzŭ (2001) remarks, “Verily, in the state of eternal Non-Being one would see the mysterious reality of the Way. In the state of eternal Being one would see the determinations of the Way. These two are in origin one and the same” (p. 28). Advaita Vedānta refers to a paired concept of *nirguna* Brahman and *saguna* Brahman to denote the negative and positive aspects of Brahman. *Nirguna* Brahman means the formless absolute (the zero point) beyond any qualification and *saguna* Brahman is the phenomenal manifestation of *nirguna* Brahman in the multitude of beings. The world of *māyā* has to be negated first in the realization of *nirguna* Brahman, and then it emerges again as a sheer manifestation of Brahman. “This universe is an effect of Brahman. It can never be anything else but Brahman. Apart from Brahman, it does not exist” (Shankara, 1947/1978, p. 70). The world is in the final analysis none other than Brahman. Izutsu (2008b) states,

In the view of Vedānta, Brahman is the ultimate Reality which is eternally one and immutable. Brahman only *appears* to our finite consciousness as diversified into many different things. Under the infinite diversity of appearances Brahman remains changeless, unmoved and unaffected (p. 20).

In the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, the resurgence of reality is grasped in an identification of *nirvana* with *samsara* (cyclic existence). Nāgārjuna (1995), who is the originator of the Mādhyamika philosophy in Mahayana Buddhism, says, “There is not the slightest difference/Between nirvana and cyclic existence” (p. 75). Nāgārjuna introduced the concept of *śūnyatā* (emptiness) for nirvana and he also identified “dependent co-arising” with this “emptiness.” Here the “dependent co-arising” means principal causality that gives rise to the phenomenal world (*samsara*), and it is identified with emptiness. Gadjin Nagao (1989) explains this as follows:

Dependent co-arising does not indicate any essentialistic causal relationship in which some substantial entity with its own being acts upon another equally substantial entity. Rather, the true meaning of dependent co-arising is found in the negation of all substantial reality, of all subjective selfhood (p. 7).

The true nature of dependent co-arising is emptiness. As Nagao formulates, “The identity of non-being with being, the identity of emptiness with dependent co-arising, is the fundamental standpoint of Mādhyamika” (p. 9). Any substantial view of the world has to be completely negated in realizing the true emptiness of reality. It is in this realization of emptiness that everything resurges as it is, fundamentally, permeated by emptiness. This resurgence is called “suchness” (*tathatā*). Nagao (1989) says, “The rejection of dependently co-arisen being is provisional, for in becoming empty and non-existent, dependently co-arisen being returns again to

existence. It is this second dimension of dependently co-arising being that is identified with suchness” (p. 15). In this way, Mahayana Buddhism sees the true ultimate reality in “suchness” or in a nondual identification of emptiness with dependent co-arising.

The Mahayana view of suchness is well-described as “interpenetration” of all things by Hua Yen philosophy. *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the principal scripture of Hua Yen Buddhism, describes “interpenetration” as follows: “One world system enters all,/And all completely enter one;/Their substances and characteristics remain as before, no different:/Incomparable, immeasurable, they all pervade everywhere” (Cleary, 1993, p. 215). Hua Yen philosophy calls this “the interpenetration of *shih* (thing) and *shih*.” This refers to the last phase of the four *Dharmadhatus* (dimensions of reality); that is, the first is the *Dharmadhatu of shih* (the dimension of things standing in opposition to one another); the second is the *Dharmadhatu of li* (the dimension of the absolute reality or emptiness); the third is the *Dharmadhatu of li-shih* (the dimension of unobstructed interpenetration between emptiness and empirical things); and the last is the *Dharmadhatu of shih-shih* (the dimension of unobstructed interpenetration of things). The interpenetration of *shih* and *shih* is mutual penetration of everything into everything else on the empirical dimension. Izutsu (2008b) comments on this interpenetration:

Now their material opacity is gone; luminosity and transparency take its place. And in the universal expanse of the cosmic light, the things begin to be interfused freely and unimpededly with one another, so that the whole world of being appears as an intricate web of lights mutually penetrating into one another (p. 177).

The perception of the interpenetration of things is made possible through embodying the precedent phases of *li* and *li-shih*. Izutsu (2008b) says, “What Hua Yen is interested in is the depth-structure of the empirical things to be disclosed only to the depth-consciousness as it is realized in the state of *samādhi*” (pp. 173 f.). By gaining an insight into unobstructed interpenetration between *li* and *shih*, things on the empirical plane can be seen in unobstructed mutual penetration.

The worldview of Oriental philosophy as described in this chapter involves multiple dimensions of reality; that is, phenomenal things, intermediate imaginative regions, the ontological Chaos, the zero point or the absolutely unarticulated, and the integrated whole of all dimensions. In this regard, Oriental philosophy is not a nihilistic or pessimistic philosophy. Nor is it aimed at a transcendence escaping from an ordinary world, for Oriental thought sees the zero point not as a transcendental realm distanced from the ordinary world but as the ultimate ground for the realization of all beings.

Oriental philosophy is an attempt of a radical affirmation of this world by way of negating it to its bottomless depths. The basic position of Oriental philosophy lies in a radical reconstruction through a radical deconstruction. This operation reveals in its radical deconstruction the boundless depth of reality, and the boundless immensity of reality is being embraced in the reconstruction of finite things of this world. It is in this way that the Oriental approach recovers the wholeness of a multidimen-

sional reality. It is a passionate search for fulfillment in this world by realizing the full dimensionality of reality.

Finally, Izutsu (1983) describes “the Oriental philosopher” as follows:

The so-called Oriental philosophers are those who have cultivated depth-consciousness and become centered in it. They are able to see things and events arising on the dimension of surface-consciousness from the perspective of depth-consciousness. In the metaphysical and physical planes of their consciousness . . . ‘Being’ on the dimension of the absolutely unarticulated and ‘Being’ articulated into pieces [on the dimension of empirical world] simultaneously appear as they are (p. 12).

To offer an example for this statement, I would like to quote a description by Krishnamurti (1976):

We were going up the path of a steep wooded side of a mountain and presently sat on a bench. Suddenly, most unexpectedly that sacred benediction came upon us, the other felt it too, without our saying anything. As it several times filled a room, this time it seemed to cover the mountainside across the wide, extending valley and beyond the mountains. It was everywhere. All space seemed to disappear; what was far, the wide gap, the distant snow-covered peaks and the person sitting on the bench faded away. There was not one or two or many but only this immensity. The brain had lost all its responses; it was only an instrument of observation, it was seeing. . . (p. 25).

Concluding Remarks

As presented in this chapter, Toshihiko Izutsu’s approach to Oriental philosophy offers us a possible way of interreligious learning. One way of interreligious education is to examine the sacred worldview from an ontological perspective. Izutsu applied the methodological operation of “synchronical structuralization” to the traditions of Oriental philosophy and figured out a coherent multi-layered structure. In a similar manner, we can engage with the ontological views of the world’s wisdom traditions for our investigations in interreligious education.

Moreover, interreligious education should contribute to one’s spiritual unfolding or Self-realization. An intellectual investigation of the sacred worldview must relate to the transformation of one’s being by providing a comprehensive perspective on human life. In this regard, the multidimensional view of Oriental philosophy clearly portrays a way of transformation by showing a twofold path of seeking and returning in contemplation. And ultimately, Oriental philosophy has explored Self-realization to its furthest destination in the definitive experiences of Enlightenment.

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Developing Pedagogies for Inter-religious Teaching and Learning

Peta Goldberg

Introduction

For more than 20 years the issue of multiculturalism has been at the core of debates about education and democracy. More recently, the conversation has broadened to include religion, in particular how we communicate, live and interact in multi-religious environments. If one of the goals of society is to develop critical citizenry, then education needs to be engaged with the multi-religious nature of society. Hudson (2001) promotes a form of religious citizenship which is “pluralist and not secretly secularist or denominational; multi-faith and not confessional; reflexive and not Babylonian” (p. 1). He states that while there is a plethora of publications dealing with citizenship, none address the concept of religious citizenship. There are books about being Hindu in India, for example, but there is no clear concept of what it means to be a citizen who has religious citizenship as one of their citizenships. Hudson (2000) began to open up the topic of differential citizenship more than 8 years ago when he proffered that differential citizenship was non-traditional because it included varieties of citizenships for different sites and contexts, different citizenships involving multiple capacities, and the fact that citizenship cannot be limited by reference to citizenships people possess as members of a nation-state (pp. 15–16). He draws distinctions between political citizenship, legal citizenship, social and cultural citizenship and states that religious citizenship must be included in the discussion. If we allow for discursive forms of citizenship, he says, then the range of citizenships extend further because some forms of citizenship are simply hermeneutical: they arise with forms of interpretation. His notion of religious citizenship is based on the human rights doctrine of the person which gives people rights, capacities and obligations wherever they are and whoever they are. In developing this idea further, he believes that people have a moral duty to respect the religious identities and confessionality of others, and that citizens need to behave

P. Goldberg (✉)
Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, QLD, Australia
e-mail: peta.goldburg@acu.edu.au

in a dialogically rational manner. One way people learn to do this is through inter-religious learning and teaching.

According to Boys and Lee (2006), inter-religious learning is a “form of dialogue that emphasises study in the presence of the religious other and an encounter with the tradition that the other embodies” (p. 94). If study in the presence of the other is fundamental to inter-religious learning, then it cannot happen to the same extent in separation and this poses a challenge for schools where students may not be exposed to a variety of religious adherents in the same classroom. Another key element which Boys and Lee (2006) emphasise in inter-religious learning is the inextricable linking of content and process within an environment which enables and supports participants to cross religious boundaries and to “get inside” the religious tradition of the other (p. 95).

For some time now religious educators have been involved in expanding their understanding of religious education by taking an educational approach rather than a confessional or faith-forming approach. In Australia, educational approaches began to emerge in the early 1980 s when Basil Moore and Norman Habel developed the Typological approach followed later by Terence Lovat’s Critical Approach. This chapter examines some pedagogies which could be considered as precursors to inter-religious teaching and learning.

Pedagogies Emerging from Phenomenological Approaches

Moore and Habel (1982) and Lovat (1989, 1995) questioned the traditional acceptance of Christianity as the sole foundation of a religious education programme and argued for a religion programme that would increase students’ understanding of the multicultural and multi-faith nature of Australian society through a study of the world’s religions. They were concerned that a religion programme should not seek to evangelise but should increase students’ religious literacy and ultimately increase tolerance and understanding of a variety of religions including Christianity. By the mid-1980s, religious studies programmes which explored the world’s religions were developed and accepted for use in Australian secondary schools.

One of the most widely used paradigms in the academic study of religion phenomenology purports to be an objective study of religion based on empathetic understanding. Many people have incorrectly interpreted the term “phenomenology” as a tight definable single approach rather than a family of approaches used in different ways by different authors (Jackson, 1997, p. 7). Schools in Australia adopted the form of phenomenology presented in Ninian Smart’s dimensional schema (the grouping together of diverse phenomena which share the same essence) developed for the Lancaster-based Schools Council in the early 1970s. The approach also emphasised “bracketing” a complex process requiring the student to become aware of all the theories, attitudes and presumptions that people usually bring to their interactions, and then to suspend judgement so that such biases did not impinge on their study. The ability to bracket was questioned by feminist scholars and others

interested in dialogical discourse who challenged the idea of value-free descriptions, arguing that no one can be completely neutral: We view the world subjectively through the lens of our experience. According to Smart, bracketing and empathy were essential and necessary elements or characteristics of the inquiry. Smart describes empathy as allowing one to “walk a mile in another’s moccasins”. Flood (1999), however, considers that “moccasin walking or empathy does not provide a sufficiently rigorous theoretical basis on which to build an academic discipline” (p. 4).

While phenomenological approaches may have liberated the study of religions from theological dogmatism, critics of the approaches cite the apparent sole concern with observable phenomena and an over-wide and sometimes superficial coverage of religions as major pitfalls. Religious educators such as Jackson (1997) criticise phenomenological approaches for asking secondary students to analyse and deal with material that is often far removed from their own experience. Concepts used by many phenomenologists have also been criticised as being closed to open-ended dialogical understanding and failing to link religious phenomena to other cultural practices (Flood, 1999).

Despite the criticism levelled at phenomenology, Lovat (2001a) considers that Continental phenomenology influenced by Husserl has something positive to contribute to the teaching of religion in classrooms. Husserl, known as the founder of modern phenomenology, has been a pivotal figure in the development of the phenomenology of religion and his ideas strongly influenced the methodology developed by Smart. According to Lovat (2001a), the intent of Husserl’s scheme was not bracketing as many people understand it but to “retard closure by the quite rigorous discipline of *epoché*, suspension of judgment” (p. 6). Lovat believes that it is not phenomenology itself that creates problems but rather misunderstanding about the concerns of phenomenology often reflected in student texts and their subsequent interpretation by teachers. Many student texts lack theoretical and critical considerations and present material as though there is a common essence of religion which is variously manifested. For Lovat, using phenomenology to teach religion is successful “not so much for its political connections, nor for its conceptual tenability . . . (but) because it is seen to work” (Lovat, 2001b, p. 466). He is convinced that phenomenological approaches provide a “methodology which offers sufficient distance and psychological space from the dogmatics of both prescriptive and heavily inductive approaches to RE” (Lovat, 2001b, p. 466) thereby enhancing literacy through open inquiry.

Not completely satisfied with the appropriateness of phenomenological approaches for the study of religion in schools, Australian religious educators Basil Moore and Norman Habel (1982) developed a religious studies approach called the Typological Model, which is based on the “types” or components that make up any religion. While they acknowledge the similarity between their list of component parts and Smart’s dimensions, they argue that the purpose is different. Moore and Habel believe that teachers and students must be offered practical and workable models for use in the classroom, something that Smart’s phenomenological approach did not offer and so they developed the Typological Approach.

The Typological Approach

Moore and Habel's definition emphasises the generic type of religion and the notion of religious phenomena. Their work, influenced by Kristensen (1960) and van der Leeuw (1963), argues that religion is a concept and that the study of religions from other societies extends the concept of religion we have in our society. In their view, education concerning religion should be a multicultural or cross-cultural study and comparative or typological techniques should be used in a structural rather than an evaluative sense (Moore & Habel, 1982). In other words, education concerning religion should be open-ended and provide for a carefully discriminating observation of religious phenomena.

Moore and Habel's starting point for effective learning in religion, like learning in any other area, is to begin with the known and then move to the unknown. Their approach suggests that students need to be introduced to the fundamental types or building blocks of religion before they can engage in serious study of religious traditions. The main concern of the typological approach is to bring the insights gained from a wider cross-cultural study of religion to bear on any particular religious phenomena. The typological approach involves cognitive skills such as the selection of examples, developing skills in observing and describing religious phenomena, in component analysis, in structural and functional synthesis, and in wider religious and social synthesis. Affective skills such as bracketing, empathy and imaginative identification are also important elements for a typological approach (Moore & Habel, 1982).

Because of its cross-cultural nature, the typological approach has much in common with other inter-faith models, as the study of a number of different traditions and religions is necessary to provide the material for the pattern of elements or types to be noted and understood. The typological approach rejects the idea that studying religion is an identical process for Christians, Jews and Muslims. Moore and Habel believe it to be essential that the religious examples one knows from one's own tradition should make up the primary topics in the course of study. Therefore, before studying other religious traditions, students must be able to recognise "types" in their own religious tradition. Consequently, the typological approach always begins with the home tradition of the student.

The six-stage model put forward by Moore and Habel (1982) is equally adaptable in the confessional or non-confessional school and is able to promote confessional awareness or general religious literacy (Lovat, 1989). Stage 1 of the model involves selection of the phenomena or "types" to be found in Christianity. Stage 2 is an identification of the generic "type" to which the chosen topic belongs. Stage 3 is an application of stage 2 and incorporates a selection of non-Christian examples of the "type". Stage 4 applies the information gathered in stage 3 to the original selected "type". Stage 5 locates the phenomenon in the wider context of the chosen tradition, for example, Christianity, and offers endless opportunities to explore other dimensions of the home tradition. Stage 6 attempts to utilise the insights gained from stages 4 and 5 to interpret the phenomenon (Moore & Habel, 1982). The distinctive contribution that the typological approach makes to religious

education is in its grounding in education, particularly educational psychology and curriculum theory.

The typological approach maintains the rights of student freedom and sets out parameters in which the study of religion can take place without invading the personal space of students in the way that many of the traditional, catechetical methods of religious education have done. Moore and Habel produced a method of teaching religion which works well alongside other subjects in the school. The approach caters well for a broad range of schools and people and, according to Lovat (1989), the greatest strength of the approach is its method: “it has been devised with consciousness of, and constant reference to, the rest of education” (p. 80).

Not entirely satisfied with the typological approach, Terence Lovat developed a religious education pedagogy which combined the structure and methodology of the typological approach with Groome’s Shared Christian Praxis approach.

The Critical Model of Religious Education

In 1989, Terence Lovat designed and developed an approach to religious education that combined the Typological approach of Moore and Habel (1982) with Groome’s Shared Christian Praxis approach which is grounded in critical theory (1980, 1991). He indicated that elements of Groome’s approach, which he categorised under a faith-forming heading, had much to offer Study of Religion programmes and even secular education (Lovat, 1989).

Lovat pointed to significant aspects of the typological approach “its attention to the way education happens in other areas” and to the fact that it was “one of the few religious education models which seriously tried to address the question of general teaching and learning procedure across the curriculum” (Lovat, 1989, p. 86). That it was grounded in education, rather than theology, he said, “offered the vision of a K/12 programme, justified at each level on the grounds of the best developmental and curriculum theory available” (Lovat, 1989, pp. 86–87).

He saw the possibility of Groome’s Shared Praxis approach, with its foundations in modern critical theory, as making a positive contribution to the field of religious education and education in general. Acknowledging the fact that Groome intended his Praxis approach to be used within a Christian community, Lovat (1989) was of the opinion that it could be easily transported to the non-confessional arena. By combining the two approaches, Lovat’s “Critical Model” offered teachers of religious education more room for expanding some of the typological categories to suit their purposes. Lovat, by inserting the element of praxis into stage 1 of the typological model, allowed for a fuller exploration and even partial critique of the topic.

Lovat’s (1989) six-stage “flexible model” has the following pattern. Stage one requires selection of phenomena from the home tradition. It is at this point that he begins the “critical” process by inserting the first two steps of Groome’s Praxis approach: Present Action, and Dialogue which incorporates individual and shared reflection. Stage 2 identifies the “type” to which the phenomenon belongs. Stage

3 explores examples of the “type” from beyond the home tradition with students noting, comparing and contrasting characteristic features. Stage 4 compares the common characteristics of the “type” with the original selected phenomenon. Stage 5 places the selected phenomenon in its context to study its relationship with the rest of the home tradition. Here Lovat suggests the inclusion of Groome’s stages 3 and 4 (The Story and The Vision), because they encourage an historical and scriptural search that may begin to start a dialogue concerning the gap between the theory and the reality of the selected phenomenon. Stage 6 critically appraises the selected phenomenon and is strengthened by Groome’s final Praxis step: deciding on a future action. Lovat believes that the final step encourages students to be “self-reflective, self-motivated and empowered to be agents of change” (Lovat, 1989, p. 95).

There has been a development in Lovat’s approach to the teaching of religion probably resulting from his work on the New South Wales Board of Studies *Society and Culture* syllabus committee and his designing of the “Religion and Belief” depth study. This experience and his subsequent work on the *Studies of Religion* Syllabus have led him to adopt a Social Education Approach (Lovat, 1989) for the teaching of religion. His marriage of Husserl’s style of phenomenology with the thinking of Habermas and its subsequent translation into educational language is crucial to the success of his approach. He suggests that, rather than relying on the passive reception of information, teachers ought to include a critical or emancipatory phase into the learning process, thereby adding a sharper edge to the study of religion (Lovat, 2001b). His stated reasons for adopting such an approach are supported not only by the interest level of students in the subject taught using his approach but also by the overall success of the courses in both church and government schools.

According to Lovat, a social education approach treats the study of religion like any other subject; it encourages students to see religion as part of life rather than an added extra. It encourages participant observation and an awareness of one’s own religious background and tradition as well as an understanding of one’s culture and its relationship with other cultures. All in all, he sees it as promoting understanding, dialogue and collaboration with peoples of all religious faiths and traditions (Lovat, 1989).

While Lovat began teaching religious education using catechetical or faith-forming approaches, his classroom experience and research have led him to be a strong critic of such approaches because “prescriptive and heavily inductive approaches to RE . . . are inadequate if not destructive to the set task to enhance literacy through open inquiry” (Lovat, 2001b, p. 467). He is a strong advocate for teaching religious education from an educational perspective grounded in phenomenological methods maintaining that the “indispensability of a broad, cross-faith and open study of religion as being the best way any school, whatever its essential purpose, can help to smooth the path for both religious literacy and religious faith, if this latter is to occur” (Lovat, 1992, p. 15). Lovat would maintain that his “critical model” (1989) which builds on a broadly social education approach to religious education has the rare capacity to provide an appropriate approach to the subject for both the faith-forming and the public education settings of religious education.

In the United Kingdom, critics of phenomenologically based approaches to the teaching of religions began to develop alternative pedagogies. One approach, which has made significant inroads towards inter-religious learning and teaching, is the Interpretative Approach which is discussed next.

The Interpretive Approach

Developments in the broader scene also influenced Australia. One of the many approaches was the Interpretive Approach which emerged primarily from the work of Robert Jackson and the Warwick RE Project and developed from concerns regarding the ways in which religion had been portrayed and interpreted in the history of religions and in religious education. In particular, researchers here concerned with the way in which religions were presented as being a “coherent whole” rather than acknowledging the inner plurality of religion. The Interpretative Approach not only draws on a range of sources such as philosophy, cultural history, anthropology, and psychology but is also influenced by hermeneutics.

According to Jackson (2000), The Interpretative Approach “deconstructs Western, Post-Enlightenment models of representing ‘world religions’ as schematic belief systems, whose essence can be expressed through a series of propositions or doctrinal statements” (pp. 132–133). It is also critical of simplistic representations of culture and the subsequent relationship between culture and religion. The approach encourages an exploration of the relationship between individuals in their religious and cultural setting and also within the wider religious tradition to which they belong. The approach acknowledges the complexity of religions and the internal diversity within religions as well as competing truth claims. It particularly emphasises the personal elements in religion and highlights the part religion plays in human experience.

The methodology developed as a reaction against the classical phenomenology of religion. The Interpretative Approach invites students to compare and contrast their concepts and understandings with those of the insider. In fact, it requires students to move continually between the “outsider’s” and “insider’s” experiences: sympathy and empathy are core to the approach. The moving between the insider and outsider, and between the group and wider religious tradition is central to this hermeneutical approach. This movement requires the learner not only to re-assess his/her understanding, but also to critique the material studied and the interpretative process itself. It is an approach which encourages both reflection and constructive criticism (Jackson 2000, p. 135). This type of pedagogy also enables the students to gain insights from their peers, to examine different ideas of truth held within the classroom and, therefore, the student is actively involved in the development of knowledge rather than the teacher being the sole source of knowledge. Because self-understanding is broadened by studying the views of others, the Interpretative Approach also enables students to gain new insights about their home religious tradition and thereby see through a new lens. Critique is an essential part of the process particularly within a pluralistic setting.

The Interpretative Approach has made, and is continuing to make, a valuable contribution towards pedagogies for inter-religious learning. Its strength lies in its acknowledgment of religions as dynamic and changing and its inclusiveness of religious and nonreligious participants and its ability to be applied in a variety of settings. Its other strength is the requirement that students use familiar concepts and experiences in the process of comparing and contrasting when engaging with the worldviews of others. In the process, students' own views may be critiqued in the light of their investigations. Critique also extends to the use of materials and the methodology itself, and the process may begin at any point in the hermeneutical circle.

Another approach to the teaching of religion which has progressed the idea of inter-religious education is constructivism.

Constructivism

Constructivism views all of our knowledge as “constructed” and proposes that we create or construct new understanding through interacting with what we already know and believe; and the ideas, events and activities with which we come in contact. Knowledge is acquired through involvement in content rather than through imitation or repetition. Constructivism grew out of the dissatisfaction of educational methods which were transmission-based and focused on rote learning and memorisation, the regurgitation of facts and the division of knowledge into different subjects. These approaches spent a deal of time covering large quantities of facts and very little time was spent on problem solving and thinking beyond the facts, thus limiting independent and autonomous learning.

Basically, there are two broad interpretations of constructivism: psychological constructivism related to the investigations of Piaget and social constructivism associated with Vygotsky. Two major issues shape these interpretations: on the one hand, education for individual cognitive development, and on the other, education for social transformation and acknowledging social contexts. It is the second of these interpretations, social constructivism, which has been influential with regard to teaching religion.

Social constructivism reflects a form of human development and learning which places the individual within a socio-cultural context. We construct knowledge within an environment and, in the process, we and the environment are changed. Learning is a dialectical relationship between individuals and the social and cultural milieu. Social constructivism emerges from the work of Vygotsky (1896–1934), who pointed to the importance of the dialectical relationship between culture, language and context in the process of constructing knowledge. One of his best known concepts is the “zone of proximal development” which argues that students can learn from adults or peers who are more advanced, and when working in pairs or small groups can master concepts and ideas more effectively than when working alone. He emphasises that learners actively construct knowledge and meaning

through participating in activities and challenges as they interact with other learners and facilitators.

Some social constructivists talk about two aspects of the social context that affects the nature and extent of learning. The first is the learning acquired by a person from their particular culture such as language, ways of thinking, and symbol systems all of which dictate how and what is learned. The second is the learner's social interaction with knowledgeable members of the society. Without the social interaction with more knowledgeable others, it is impossible to acquire social meanings of important symbol systems and how to use them. Hence young children develop their thinking abilities by interacting with adults.

In this approach, theory and practice do not develop in a vacuum but are shaped by dominant cultural assumptions. Formal knowledge, the form of instruction and the manner of its presentation, is influenced by the historical and cultural environment that generated it. To achieve the goals of social transformation and reconstruction, the context of education should be deconstructed and the cultural assumptions, power relationships and historical influences that undergird it must be identified, critiqued and altered if necessary. Social constructivists argue that the most optimal learning environment is one where a dynamic interaction between instructors, learners and tasks provides an opportunity for learners to create their own "truth" from interaction with others.

Social constructivist models stress the need for collaboration among learners themselves and interaction with teachers. Most approaches that have grown from constructivism suggest that learning is accomplished best by using a hands-on approach. Learners learn by experimentation and not by being told what will happen. They are encouraged to make their own inferences, and draw their own conclusions. Students learn new information by building upon knowledge that they already possess. According to Burbules (1993), a constructivist approach creates opportunities and occasions for students to develop their own questions, needs and purposes, and thereby gradually construct a more mature understanding of themselves, the world and others.

The British religious educator, Michael Grimmitt (2000), has provided one model for how social constructivism might operate in a religion classroom. He has developed a three step process known as:

1. Preparatory Pedagogical Constructivism (PPC),
2. Direct Pedagogical Constructivism (DPC), and
3. Supplementary Pedagogical Constructivism (SPC) (pp. 216–217).

Preparatory Pedagogical Constructivism (PPC) engages the students in an enquiry into their own experience in order to prepare them for an encounter with an item of religious content. The teacher assists the students' enquiries by asking questions and making interventions which may include practical, group-focused activities (Grimmitt, 2000, p. 216).

The second stage, *Direct Pedagogical Constructivism*(DPC) places before the students an item of religious content without explanation and instruction so it

becomes the stimulus for them to begin to construct their own meaning and understanding of it through looking, and examining, and asking questions, while at the same time drawing on their own experience and the experiences of the group. Both the teacher and students contribute to the process by asking questions and making interventions (Grimmitt, 2000, p. 216).

In stage 3, *Supplementary Pedagogical Constructivism* (SPC), the students are provided with additional information about the religious content which enables their construction and interpretations to deepen and perhaps consider alternative perspectives. The students should not abandon their interpretations in the face of this new knowledge but rather engage in an interpretative process in which the new knowledge is critiqued and is then either accommodated within their own understanding or not (Grimmitt, 2000, p. 217).

Teachers using a constructivist approach encourage students to think about how the activity is helping them to gain understanding. The aim is to develop “expert learners” who will not only question themselves as learners and their strategies but will also encourage them to broaden the tools they use to assist them to learn. Constructivist learning is spiral: it requires students to reflect on their experiences and to continually increase the complexity of ideas which, in turn, enables them to integrate new information. The teacher’s role in this process is to encourage learning and reflecting on learning. Constructivism does not downplay the role of the teacher or dismiss the relevance of expert knowledge. Teachers are required to focus attention on helping students rather than providing the “answer”. The role of the teacher is to assist students to construct knowledge rather than to reproduce facts.

In a constructivist classroom, the learning should be interactive and built on what the students already know. It is the dialogical process between teacher and student that assists the student to construct his/her own knowledge. The role of the teacher should also be interactive and s/he should create situations where the students feel safe and empowered to ask questions. The teacher should also create activities that lead students to reflect on their knowledge and experiences. Students should be encouraged to talk about what was learned and how it was learned. The constructivist classroom is a collaborative classroom and in many instances students work in groups. Collaboration assists students to learn from each other and when they review and reflect on the learning processes together they can pick up strategies from each other.

A constructivist approach encourages students to explore ideas and issues for themselves and arrive at their own conclusions. It also allows students to understand religious ideas in a variety of ways. Merely providing students with pre-packaged meanings does little to engage them. The importance of establishing “zones of proximal development” (novice and master) where students learn from more advanced peers enables religious knowledge and understanding to be problematised and its language and meaning to be deconstructed. Learning develops from students’ own experiences, interests and questions; and by interacting with others their own views are challenged by other pupils and the teacher. Constructivism is another step forward in developing a pedagogy for inter-religious learning and in many ways constructivism is grounded within an inquiry-based approach to learning.

Inquiry-Based Approaches

Inquiry-based learning is not new, in fact it was promoted by the American educator John Dewey (1859–1952) who revolutionised education in the early twentieth century. Inquiry learning is focused on the learner rather than the teacher and describes a process where students formulate investigative questions, obtain information which builds knowledge and then critiques that knowledge in the light of the information gathered.

An example of inquiry-based learning has been put into place in the *Study of Religion* (SOR) syllabus developed by the Queensland Studies Authority in Australia (QSA). Since 2001, the *Study of Religion* syllabus has moved away from a mono-model approach (Smart's dimensions) to a dialogical approach which requires the use of multiple approaches. The shift in the 2008 syllabus is to an inquiry-based model which encourages students to move beyond the acquisition of facts to metacognition, development of investigative and thinking skills, formulation of ideas, judgements, conclusions and taking responsibility for their own learning (Goldburg, 2008). It also provides a way forward in developing critical religious literacy.

Although Australian religion teachers have used the term religious literacy for some time, scant attention has been given to both the critical and transformative elements. Religious literacy needs to be expanded to address questions of social usage including the functional, the cultural and the critical dimensions. For multi-cultural, multi-religious societies to thrive, our conversations about literacy need to acknowledge the multiplicity of literacies that surround us, and we need to address the functional, cultural and critical dimensions of usage. Beyond functional literacy people need forms of literacy that provide multiple languages that allow communication across lines of religious difference. They also need modes of critical literacy that challenge the ideal of identity as singular, autonomous and uniform.

Functional literacy provides multiple languages that enable communication across lines of cultural difference. Critical literacy can provide the pedagogical conditions for understanding how identities are constructed through different subject positions. Literacy as a critical and cultural discourse functions as a form of address which provides the opportunities for understanding how subjectivities, experience and power come to bear on educational discourse and practice. In addition, critical and cultural literacy needs to be viewed within an ethical and emancipatory discourse that provides a language of hope and transformation that is able to analyse, challenge and transform. In other words, it offers an alternative form of literacy to the dominant discourse and gives a critical reading of how power, ideology and culture work to disempower groups of people while privileging others. A pedagogy of critical religious literacy develops a culture and language of critique. The choice of the term pedagogy is deliberate for it means much more than simply "teaching": it includes aspects of educational practices, strategies and techniques used by teachers, and how the curriculum is taken up by both the teacher and the students.

Critical literacy is not new and is grounded in the work of Paulo Freire (1970, 1978). A critical literacy approach challenges us to examine how we read the world,

to examine what we take for granted and to critique the particular culture in which texts are constructed. It enables us to look at written, visual, spoken, multimodal and performance texts to question and challenge attitudes, values and beliefs that lie beneath the surface. It is, according to Wooldridge, “an orientation to literacy, not a separate technique or strategy but part of a pedagogy underpinning a whole approach to classroom practice” (Wooldridge, 2001, p. 259). It emerges from critical pedagogy, which Freire says we need to evaluate and critique received ideas, particularly those presented in student texts. Most often we provide students with texts that present a mainstream view and omit contestable texts so that students are rarely invited to engage in critical analysis. While many use a hermeneutic of suspicion when reading biblical texts, few apply the same hermeneutic of suspicion to text books particularly those giving information about world religions. A critical literacy approach assists students to question the text (without destroying it) and reinforces the idea that there are multiple readings and realities. Through such an approach students are encouraged and enabled to identify, examine and critique problematic, contradictory and multiple ways of viewing the world.

To be critical, according to Boys, is to employ self-critical scholarship. It does not refer “to one’s attitude toward the content. . . , but to ways of thinking that enable us to recognise the assumptions and bias that we . . . might impose” (Boys, 2004, p. 150). Unsworth (2002) describes the steps in the process towards critical literacy as moving through three phases: recognition, reproduction and reflection. Recognition literacy involves learning to recognise and produce the codes that are used to construct and communicate meaning as well as cultural practices common to experience of everyday life. Reproduction literacy involves understanding and producing the conventional visual and verbal text forms that construct and communicate the established systematic knowledge of cultural institutions. Reflection literacy involves learning how to read inclusion and exclusion, analysing and interrogating verbal and visual codes to expose how choice of language and image privilege certain viewpoints and how other choices of visual and verbal resources could construct alternative views.

It is important for religious educators to keep in mind the power they possess as teachers, selectors and framers of knowledge. A critical literacy approach challenges teachers to consider how they have constructed their knowledge of the subject and how their selection of teaching resources reflects their perceptions and biases. It can be helpful to ask: What view of knowledge am I presenting? What or whose knowledge is seen as valuable? A critical literacy approach recognises teachers as curriculum decision makers while at the same time inviting them to be self-critical and encouraging critiquing the interests of curriculum decisions.

Freire argues that fundamental to an emancipatory education process is the close association of the nature of learning with the dreams, experience, histories, and stories that students bring to their classroom. By linking critical knowledge with cultural action, people become active participants in society. Freire’s approach to learning offers both teachers and students the opportunity for empowerment by requiring four considerations. First, that the teacher–student relationship be dialectical. Second, that students have agency, not only through access to different forms

of knowledge but also through the opportunity to interrogate all propositions. Third, by developing pedagogical processes committed to inserting students in forms of learning in which they become the subject rather than the object of knowledge. Finally, the dialogic methodology engages learners to see themselves as subjects in history and for teachers to create new spaces in their classrooms that allow different voices to be heard and legitimated in order to appreciate the nature of difference and develop tolerance for each other.

A theory of critical religious literacy understands how identities are constructed within multiple and often contradictory subject positions and how identities shift. When we add to this a feminist perspective, we begin to analyse knowledge for exclusions, repressions and privileges that often go unacknowledged in the classroom. We begin to ask, What knowledge is revered? Whose histories are legitimated? Whose voices are silenced? What religions are marginalised or excluded within dominant discourses?

It is also important to locate critical religious literacy in a discourse that stresses multiplicity and views difference as a springboard for creative, political and pedagogical change. The concept of multiplicity provides a theoretical basis for viewing voices differently and reading religious difference in a non-binary manner.

One way, critical religious literacy pedagogy can be embedded in teaching and learning processes is through an inquiry-based approach. The Inquiry Process developed for *Study of Religion* (Queensland) (2008) is not just for students but is designed to assist teachers in unit planning, in developing learning activities and in designing assessment instruments. The *Study of Religion* inquiry process is shaped by five aspects of inquiry: framing, investigating, reasoning, judging and reflecting. *Framing* involves becoming aware of matters and issues relating to the topic, outlining and defining the topic or issue, identifying a range of sources, exploring knowledge, viewpoints, questions and approaches and identifying, focusing and recording key points of investigation. *Investigating* is concerned with identifying appropriate resources and methods, establishing validity of sources, formulating research questions, developing ideas for a hypothesis, gathering, collecting, organising, selecting, sorting, presenting data and evidence and investigating and researching issues related to the hypothesis. *Reasoning* requires students to speculate about sources including identifying bias, to propose/deduce interrelationships from data, to present findings and evidence using various genres, to move towards providing explanations and interpretations of religious beliefs, values, practices, events and to shape and reshape the hypothesis. *Judging* includes synthesising, making decisions, drawing conclusions and advocating a position. It requires students to draw conclusions based on evidence, justify conclusions about the hypothesis using evidence, and to decide whether further investigation, reasoning, evidence or action is required such as determining possibilities for informing, educating, mobilising, mediating or resisting. These first four elements in the inquiry process are related to the syllabus' general objectives of Knowledge and Understanding, Evaluative Processes and Research and Communication. The final element in the inquiry process, *Reflecting*, is linked to the affective objectives. It invites students to consider thinking about their learning and acting as a result of their learning. Students might

ask themselves questions such as: How effective has my learning been? What problems did I encounter in the research and how did I respond to them? How could the investigation have been improved? How has this study helped my understanding of religion? What have I learnt about and from religion? How can I apply my personal learning to current religious issues? What action can I take?

The *Study of Religion* inquiry model is not a lock-step process, but is fluid, enabling students to move freely between framing, investigating and reasoning before judging. The fluidity between elements will depend on the unit and topic being studied and the particular emphasis taken with the area under investigation.

The Inquiry Process recommended in the 2008 *Study of Religion* syllabus is inspired by social constructivist pedagogy which offers opportunities and occasions for students to develop their own questions, needs and purposes, and thereby gradually construct a more mature understanding of themselves, the world and others. The challenge for the teacher is to provide inquiry-based learning activities for students so that they can test their ideas, draw conclusions based on evidence and share their knowledge in a collaborative learning environment. “Constructivist pedagogy and inquiry based learning are ways of involving the learner in a more dynamic way in the religion classroom” (Goldberg, 2007, p. 11).

When using inquiry-based learning, teachers have to adopt the role of facilitator and help the learner to acquire his or her own understanding of content. Facilitators ask questions rather than tell, and provide guidelines rather than instructions. Vygotsky (1978) believes that the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development occurs when speech and practical activity, two completely independent lines of development, converge. Through practical activity a student constructs meaning on an intrapersonal level, while speech connects this meaning with the interpersonal world shared by the learner and his/her culture. The teacher’s role in this process is to encourage learning and reflecting on learning. The inquiry process does not downplay the role of the teacher or dismiss the relevance of expert knowledge. If used effectively, inquiry learning assists the student to move from being a passive recipient of information to an active participant in the learning process under the guidance of the teacher. It does not require students to “reinvent the wheel” but should engage the students in ways which stimulate curiosity. In turn, students become engaged through applying existing knowledge and real-world experiences, by testing theories, learning to hypothesise and drawing conclusions based on their findings. When using inquiry models we need to include contestable materials, primary and secondary source materials that offer differing views on the topic which enable students to enter a dialogical process of knowledge and investigation leading to critique and analysis.

One of the challenges in using an inquiry approach is asking appropriate and challenging questions which enable students to investigate a topic and use a variety of resources to find solutions and answers. It is also important for students to develop their own questioning skill so that they are able to participate successfully in an inquiry process. From Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy, we know that information can be handled in more and less demanding ways depending on whether students are asked to recall facts, to analyse those facts, to synthesise or discover

new information based on the facts, or to evaluate knowledge. An inquiry approach requires that students develop a range of challenging questions which should include some of the following: *Inference* questions which require students to go beyond the immediately available information to find clues, examine them, discuss what inferences are justified and to fill in missing information. *Interpretative* questions which empower students to understand the consequences of information and ideas, and *transfer* questions which encourage a breadth of thinking, ask students to take their knowledge and apply it in new situations.

There are many inquiry processes but most inquiry models involve commitment of the learner to continuous reflection and re-evaluation of the direction and purposes of their inquiry. The inquiry model developed for *Study of Religion* is specifically designed so that students become well informed and are able to critique and talk about religion in an intelligent and sensitive manner.

There have been four revisions of the Queensland *Study of Religion* syllabus (1989, 1995, 2001 and 2008). Each revised syllabus has reflected, in some way, the shifts that have taken place in Religion Studies and Religious Education pedagogy. The syllabus has moved from a focus on the acquisition of knowledge to educating students for religious citizenship. “Disciplines constantly grow and change in their contents, interests and organisational and institutional functions” (Freebody, 2006, p. 11). This is evidenced in the disciplinary and trans-disciplinary nature of the latest syllabus which is viewed as one way of accessing and simulating real-world application. Each iteration of the *Study of Religion* syllabus has moved the teaching of religion closer to a form of inter-religious education. By including dialogical pedagogies, a platform has been established which enables and encourages cultural critique to take place and issues have been introduced which traditionally may have been regarded as existing outside the academic study of religion.

While all of the above pedagogies have made significant advances towards inter-religious education, Hermans (2003) and Boys and Lee (2006) have begun to map the pedagogical territory in the inter-religious education domain.

Inter-religious Education

Hermans (2003) identifies three types of religious education currently in operation in educational settings. He names these as Mono-religious education, Multi-religious education and Inter-religious education. Mono-religious education focuses on one religion and aims to transmit a particular tradition to pupils. He describes it as having a “soft” and “hard” approach. The “hard” version is confined exclusively to a Christian view and is based on the premise that there is no salvation outside of the church (exclusivist position). The “soft” version emerges more from an inclusivist position and, while it teaches about other religions, it does so from the point of view of Christian truth. He describes it as a type of “religious ventriloquism: (where) one hears the other via one’s own voice” (p. 341).

Multi-religious education recognises the pluralistic context of today and acknowledges the diversity of religions in society. In this approach, religions are presented in terms of their own self-understanding with an emphasis on the visible manifestation of religion in people's lives and in society. The aim of multi-religious education, according to Hermans, is to introduce pupils to the plurality of religions with the goal of developing respect and fostering co-existence. To a certain extent, it avoids religious imperialism but if all religions are recognised as ways to salvation then it implies that all religions are directed to the same end.

Inter-religious education, Herman's third type, not only recognises religious pluralism in society and schools but also actively encourages dialogue between adherents of different religions. Inter-religious education is grounded in a dialogical model which requires knowledge and involvement in home tradition, knowledge of, and insight into other traditions. More importantly, it requires critical dialogue within the home tradition in terms of other religion's self-understanding.

In order to enable us to engage in inter-religious education, we need, as Mary Boys says, to be attentive to particularism and pluralism. She describes particularism as "textured particularism" which "involves a commitment to one's religious tradition rooted in its complex images, practices, symbols and stories" (Boys, 2002, p. 13). Such a textured particularism acknowledges the finitude of the tradition and encourages critical examination (Boys & Lee, 2006). Textured particularism is not insular particularism which can be parochial and superficial, and it is not adversarial particularism which diminishes, caricatures or even demonises the other. A textured particularism develops a "religious identity that is simultaneously rooted and adaptive, grounded and ambiguous – that is one that allows for engagement with the religious other" (Boys & Lee, 2006, pp. 9–10). Those involved in this type of religious education learn to define themselves in the context of other traditions rather than over and against them. In understanding ourselves we learn to understand others.

The flip side of textured particularism involves receptivity of religious pluralism. Our self-understanding hinges on our understanding of others. If we educate in ways conducive to religious pluralism, we must, says Boys (2002), pay particular attention to difference. We should value difference rather than merely see it as a curiosity. Pluralism is more than toleration; pluralism requires deepening our knowledge and learning from difference. According to Eck (1993),

pluralism can only generate a strong social fabric through the interweaving of commitments. If people perceive pluralism as entailing the relinquishing of their particular religious commitments they are not interested. . . The pluralist . . . stands in a particular community and is willing to be committed to the struggles of that community even as restless critic. (p. 195)

In respecting difference, religious pluralism challenges us to find ways to be distinctively ourselves in relationship to others, to be clear about differences and to affirm our similarities. It does not mean neutralising all commitments (Eck, 1993). Religious education which respects and values difference opens up vast new horizons of understanding and includes learning about the religious other. Balancing

textured particularism with pluralism is in the words of Rabbi Sacks “a test of faith” because we have to make space for difference (Boys & Lee, 2006, p. 10).

Boys and Lee (2006) encourage studying in the presence of the other so that participants are able to construct a common body of knowledge while simultaneously hearing diverse interpretations. This inter-religious learning fosters relationships among participants and engagement with key texts, practices and beliefs of the other’s tradition. To be knowledgeable requires more than grasping a large amount of information: it requires being “caught up in the transforming possibilities of this knowledge” (p. 99). Inter-religious learning affects many aspects of an individual’s religious self-understanding and identity and involves unanticipated changes in understanding and feeling among participants (p. 97). Moreover, according to Boys and Lee (2006), it “brings out the complexity of issues in encountering another tradition and the obligation to respond thoughtfully and reverently” (p. 95).

In developing their pedagogy for inter-religious learning, Boys and Lee have been influenced by the educational theorist Lee Schulman. They have drawn on and adapted Schulman’s (1987) model to assist them in developing their inter-religious teaching and learning approach which they have trialled with Christian and Jewish adults. The first step in Boys’ and Lee’s model is preparation which has four movements: Preparation involving study of the logic and insights of the content; Representation, thinking about how to make the subject matter accessible in vivid ways; Selection presuming that the educational leader has a repertoire of teaching strategies; and Adaptation which demands consideration of the subject matter and strategies in light of what the participants are likely to bring in terms of prior knowledge, cultural background, special interests and the like (p. 99). One component of the inter-religious learning project, which they see as being foundational to its success, is the session devoted to scriptural interpretation. Participants studied and explored a scriptural text common to the two traditions. This session was important because it enable participants to see that “Jewish and Christian communities read the same text in distinctive ways, because biblical texts have multiple meanings that are shaped, in large part, by historical experience and theological traditions” (p. 102). In inter-religious encounters such as the one developed by Boys and Lee, the leaders must provide “the environment, conditions, experience and resources to enable participants to take up the challenges and risks of crossing religious borders and integrating their learning into their religious self-identity” (p. 110). The teachers/facilitators have to enable participants to “get inside” the religious tradition of the other so that they see the other tradition as offering a valuable way of life (Boys & Lee, 2006).

Conclusion

In Australia, the journey towards inter-religious education began with the foundations laid by Moore and Habel (1982) and Lovat (1989, 2001) when they developed pedagogies for religious education grounded in educational theory. Educational approaches to religious education moved the teaching of religious education from

enfaithing models to education models, and gradually the teaching of religion broadened to include more than one religious tradition. As people's religious literacy increased a more dialogical approach to religious education and indeed religious citizenship emerged. The availability of *Study of Religion* courses for senior secondary students in all states in Australia attests to the fact that an educational, dialogical and multi-religious approach is now widely available.

The subsequent sharpening of religious literacy so that it encompasses critical religious literacy, in partnership with interpretative, constructivist and inquiry-based models, has paved the way for inter-religious learning and teaching. The 2008 Queensland *Study of Religion* in Australia is one example of how alternative approaches for teaching and learning in religion are shaping pedagogies in which inter-religious learning and teaching will become the norm.

Hermans' (2003) research has provided a theoretical analysis which lends itself to inter-religious education. Boys' and Lee's (2006) practical application of inter-religious learning has moved education in religion a stage further not only by providing a theoretical discussion but also developing a model for inter-religious learning, albeit with adults. Furthermore, they have provided an analysis of the procedure and application of the model and reported on its success. The work of Hermans (2003), Boys (2002), and Boys and Lee (2006) allowed pedagogies to emerge which can be adapted for school situations that promote active citizenship, religious citizenship and inter-religious teaching and learning.

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Dialogical Education for Interreligious Engagement in a Plural Society

Charlene Tan

Introduction

Religious diversity is a double-edged sword – it can offer enriching spiritual and multicultural perspectives but can also cause interreligious tensions and social disharmony. Education for interreligious engagement is often, therefore, a priority for governments of plural societies. This task is especially urgent in a globalised world of religious resurgence where people are increasingly asserting their own spiritual identities and using religion for political and terrorist agendas. Interreligious engagement contributes towards social cohesion as it emphasises ‘issues of tolerance, interreligious communication, perceptions of difference without discrimination, alleviation of injustice and commitment to a peaceful life’ (Weisse, 2003, p. 202; also see Doedens & Weisse, 1997; Alexander & McLaughlin, 2003). A culture of tolerance which emphasises comparative experiences and inter-faith dialogues is needed to develop each person’s identity in a wider and richer context, characterised by different religious backgrounds and worldviews (United Nations, 2001; Tan, 2008a). This chapter proposes the introduction of three levels of dialogues for interreligious engagement: preliminary dialogue, practical dialogue and critical dialogue. A dialogical education aims to balance openness and rootedness with perspectives from inside and outside the religious traditions. Using Singapore – a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country with a Muslim minority population – as an illustrative case study, this chapter discusses the attempts by the Singapore government, community and religious groups to promote religious harmony and interreligious engagement in the country.

C. Tan (✉)

National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
e-mail: charlene.tan@nie.edu.sg

Dialogical Education for Interreligious Engagement

Dialogical education aims to balance openness and rootedness. An ethos of openness is needed for participants to explore critically the domains of religion. Alexander and McLaughlin (2003) explain that ‘open’ refers to ‘the range of traditions and perspectives considered, the attitude that is invited toward them, and the forms of autonomous judgement and response sought on the part of students’ (p. 365). This ‘openness’ is accompanied by ‘rootedness’ where students should be given the opportunity to acquire an insider perspective through an empathetic awareness of and critical approach towards religious traditions. Alexander and McLaughlin (2003) maintain that participants should be ‘exposed to, and involved in, a form of education articulated by a particular conception of the good, but they are encouraged to put their formation into critical perspectives and to make any acceptance of it on their part authentic’ (p. 369; also see McLaughlin, 1992; Thiessen, 1993; Tan, 2008a).

Three levels of dialogues are recommended in a dialogical education: preliminary dialogue, practical dialogue, and critical dialogue. *Preliminary dialogue* refers to any initiative which promotes and facilitates interreligious engagement but does not necessarily involve any verbal dialogue or face-to-face encounter among people of different faiths. It involves, rather, symbolic acts of interest and support towards another religion based on a shared ideology such as mutual respect for the freedom of worship and belief in religious harmony. For example, it may involve an art exhibition by a religious group showcasing art works of different religions. Such an exhibition is likely to attract visitors of different religious backgrounds to view the exhibition and appreciate the shared religious themes such as love, compassion, peace and transcendence. Another example is for the different religious groups to issue a joint statement to condemn media productions perceived as religiously offensive such as the anti-Islamic film ‘Fitna’ by Geert Wilders. Such an act is likely to get people of different religions to move a step closer towards interreligious support and harmony.

Preliminary dialogue sets the stage for the next two levels of dialogues where interreligious engagement can take place at a deeper level. *Practical dialogue* is similar to ‘diapractice’ which was first used by Lissi Rasmussen in her thesis about dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Africa (Leganger-Krogstad, 2003). The focus is on people of different faiths co-operating at a practical level. The process of co-operation involves ‘necessary dialogue’ (Leirvik, 2001) which is everyday and informal conversations among people of different religious persuasions. The dialogue is spontaneous and unites people of different faiths to work together without the need to address their religious or theological differences. It makes ‘common celebrations and ethical practice possible, understandable and transparent’ and helps participants to discover common values and essential differences which makes harmonious living possible (Leganger-Krogstad, 2003, p. 174; also see Rasmussen, 1998). Practical co-operation has been shown to be more effective in building interreligious understanding and tolerance than formal discussions on interreligious matters (van Doorn-Harder, 2007; Lindholm, 2004).

The final level is *critical dialogue* which involves dialogues planned deliberately for participants to discuss religious issues based on theological similarities and differences. It is premised on a critically informed yet empathetic perspective on various religions worldviews. Usually a facilitator will set the rules and help the participants to move between the perspectives of the insider and outsider (Leganger-Krogstad, 2003). Leirvik (1999) posits that ‘religions need to be approached both from the “insider” as living sources for faith, morals and life orientation – and from the “outsider”, as objects for critical investigation’ (Leirvik, 1999, p. 83, cited in Leganger-Krogstad, 2003, p. 179). The emphasis on similarities calls for a search for shared values in religions such as love, truth, respect for human dignity and good works. It recognises that there is a close link between religion and morality. A number of writers have pointed out how religions can help a person to think and act morally. Haydon (1997) avers that religion beliefs provide the wider framework of meaning for moral demands to be experienced. By stressing on things that are metaphysical and transcendent, most religions also promote ‘less pragmatic and utilitarian attitudes and dispositions [such] as faith, hope, charity, forgiveness, chastity and so forth’ (Carr, 1995, p. 95). Some parents also share the belief that religious knowledge is salubrious for their children’s moral development. It is reported that non-religious Chinese parents in Hong Kong are keen to send their children to religious schools because they perceive that these schools have more effective moral education (Cheng, 2004). Taris and Semin (1997) also conclude that the religious faith of mothers helps in the transmission of moral values such as caring, honesty and fairness to their children.

But critical dialogue should go beyond highlighting the commonality in religions. It should also draw the participants’ attention to the differences and disagreements among the religious traditions. Such a dialogue is based on the common understanding that there exists a variety of moral traditions and legitimate moral differences (Runnymede, 2000; Igrave, 2003). Clarifying the notion of ‘harmony’, the president of the National Council of Churches of Singapore said that religious harmony is not a harmony of religions as ‘that route is very theoretical and doctrinal and has a lot of problems anyway’ (Li & Lin, 2006). Dialogues underscoring the ambiguous, controversial and dangerous are necessary to develop in students ‘religious literacy’ which is crucial for the development of active citizenship (Igrave, 2003). By understanding and reflecting on the conceptual differences in religious worldviews and their influences on the motivations and behaviour of believers, students can develop their own beliefs and values critically (Erricker, 2006). Without such dialogues aimed at interreligious polemics, the interfaith dialogue exercises remain superficial as universal agreement is reached, but is devoid of meaningful ethical, metaphysical, anthropological or theological content (Lindholm, 2004, cited in van Doorn-Harder, 2007).

All the three levels of dialogues may be initiated by both religious and non-religious agents such as the government, community leaders, religious and social organisations, and individuals. The three levels of dialogues can be approached sequentially and progressively – people of different religious traditions can be encouraged to engage in preliminary dialogue first, followed by practical dialogue

and finally critical dialogue. However, the dialogues can take place concurrently too as long as they are planned and conducted in an integrated manner to encourage and fortify interreligious engagement. What is important is that dialogues should take place in all arenas where education occurs, from the schools to religious institutions and centres for social activities. In other words, it should take place in formal education, non-formal education and informal education, drawing upon the three aspects of education identified by Combs, Prosser, and Ahmed (1973). According to them, formal education refers to the learning provided in the hierarchically structured and chronologically graded education system, from the primary school through the university level. Non-formal education takes place in any educational activity organised by community groups outside the established formal system to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives. Informal education refers to the life-long process of learning from one's environment and daily experiences whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge. Through a combination of formal, non-formal and informal education, dialogical education adopts a multi-level approach where the government, middle-level leaders and grassroots movements are integral in interreligious engagement (van Doorn-Harder, 2007).

An Illustrative Example: Dialogues for Interreligious Engagement in Singapore

Background of Singapore

The example of Singapore illustrates the attempts by the government, community and religious groups and leaders to promote interreligious engagement in a plural society. As a city-state with over 4.9 million people, Singapore is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual country with 74.2% Chinese, 13.4% Malay, 9.2% Indian and 3.2% Others. Founded as a British trading post and colony in 1819 and granted self-government in 1959, it became part of the Malaysian Federation in 1963 and gained independence in 1965. Singapore has been described as a 'nation of believers' as 85% of the population profess to belong to a religion (Lim & Low, 2005). A majority of the population are Buddhists (42.5%), followed by Muslims (14.9%), Christians (14.6%), Taoists (8.5%) and Hindus (4.0%) (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2000). There are also adherents of other religions (0.6%) as well as those who profess to have no religion (14.8%). Religious identity in Singapore is closely linked to ethnic and cultural identities; 64.4% of Chinese are either Buddhists or Taoists, 99.6% of Malays are Muslims, 55.4% of Indians are Hindus, and about half of 'Others' are Christians. This religious diversity is complicated by a renewed interest in religion both internationally and locally. Singapore is located in Southeast Asia where 90% of over 250 million of its population are Muslims who speak the Malay language and its various dialects (Shamsul, 2005). Naturally, Singapore is affected by Islamic revivalism in Southeast Asia and

the Re-Islamisation in Singapore, as evident in the Muslims' attire, diet, religious observances and social interactions.

The Singapore government's approach towards religion is described as 'religious pragmatism' (Tan, 2007) where religious values are seen mainly as of instrumental worth to promote national unity and maintain national identity. The government intervenes to preserve religious harmony by passing various laws to enforce social cohesion. The Penal Code considers the following as offences: injuring or defiling a place of worship, disturbing a religious assembly and uttering words or sounds to deliberately wound religious feelings. The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act, passed in 1989, stipulates that no religious groups should be involved in politics and that religious organisations are not to stray beyond the bounds of educational, social and charitable work. The Sedition Act states that words to promote feelings of ill will and hostility between different races and classes of the population would be considered seditious. The Declaration of Religious Harmony introduced in 2003 serves to remind all people of Singapore that religious harmony is vital for peace, progress and prosperity in their multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation and that they should ensure that religions will not be abused to create conflict and disharmony in Singapore.

In recent years, the Singapore government has been actively encouraging inter-religious engagement, motivated primarily by terrorist threats from some Islamist groups from within and without. Since 2001, at least 30 members of Jemaah Islamiyah have been arrested for attempting to commit violent attacks against western embassies and Singapore key points. The existence of a transregional terrorist brotherhood is demonstrated in the Jemaah Islamiyah networks in Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Australia. The aim of Jemaah Islamiyah is to create an Islamic Caliphate or Daulah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia through violent means. The rise of religious fundamentalism and the terrorist attacks by some Islamist groups worldwide have contributed to interreligious tensions between the Muslims and others in Singapore (Tan, 2007, 2008b). Community leaders also reported that the Jemaah Islamiyah arrest has led to distrust towards Muslim Singaporeans (Zakir & Kwek, 2006). Islamic religious teachers in Singapore also noted that some Muslims in Singapore are sympathetic to pro-terrorism arguments from the Jemaah Islamiyah's (Zakir, 2005). This group of people believes that the Singapore government is opposed to Islam, that Muslims in Singapore are oppressed, and that Muslims should not mix with non-Muslims. The danger is that they risk becoming militant and are likely to support and be involved in terrorism. The ubiquity of the internet also means that the possibility of Muslims in Singapore accessing and being influenced by pro-violence Islamist websites is high; a Singaporean Muslim has already been arrested for his pro-terrorism plan after he was self-radicalised and indoctrinated by Islamist websites. While interventionist measures such as passing laws, arresting terrorists and regulating madrasahs (Muslim schools) are still needed, the government is aware that education for inter-religious engagement is a key to deeper and sustained harmony among citizens of different faiths.

Dialogues in Non-formal and Informal Education

Interreligious engagement is a national agenda as the Singapore government, together with the community and religious groups, consciously adopts a multi-level approach where various stakeholders are involved. First, preliminary dialogue is evident in the emphasis on and practice of religious harmony by the government and religious groups. Underpinning the preliminary dialogues in Singapore is the principle of harmony which is prominently featured in Asia and reflected in the citizenship education in Asia (Tan, 2008b). A salient feature of harmony is the preference of collectivism to individualism. Asians tend to emphasise the value of harmonious social relationships, while their counterparts in the West tend to seek truth through the conflictual progress of interests, identities and ideas. The government has set up an interreligious portal known as up 'Singapore United' as a platform for preliminary dialogues via the internet (see www.singaporeunited.sg). The portal includes a calendar which lists upcoming, present and past events and activities on interreligious engagement, an on-line repository of events and resources, and even a multi-media gallery for visitors to view videos. The repository includes, for example, articles on the moral teachings of the Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Taoists, Zoroastrians and others. It provides stories published by the Interreligious Harmony Circle on messages from major religions such as generosity and kindness for all mankind. It also features real-life stories of young Singaporeans who build friendships with members of other religions, as well as academic papers such as the White Paper on the Jemaah Islamiyah arrests and the threat of terrorism.

Another example of preliminary dialogue involving public statements from the government and religious groups in support of the Muslims was the recent case of the publication of Prophet Mohammad cartoons in Denmark in 2006. The publication has led to worldwide protests and violence from Muslims who consider such an act sacrilegious. The Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was quick to speak out against the publication of the cartoon where he stated that 'we are a multi-racial society, we must respect one another's religions, we must not deliberately insult or desecrate what others hold sacred because if we want to live peacefully together, then we must live and let live, there must be tolerance, there must be mutual respect' (Lee, 2006). Religious groups such as the Buddhist Lodge, Hindu Endowment Board and the National Council of Churches of Singapore also publicly supported the Muslims by denouncing the publication of the cartoons. Such an act is likely to get people of different religions to move a step closer towards interreligious harmony and support.

There are also efforts to promote practical dialogues among people of various religious traditions in Singapore. For instance, a Muslim group Ain Society and Christian group Hope Worldwide worked on joint projects to help the needy in the community (Zakir, 2007a). The Buddhist Lodge, the Hindu Endowment Board and Muslim group Jamiyah co-operated to provide 1,000 education bursaries to poor students (Kesavapany, 2007). A Taoist temple sponsored functions for orphans and wayward boys at a Hindu welfare home (Zakir, 2007b). The Ba'alwie Mosque and

Interreligious Organisation gathered religious leaders together to pray for peace following the Israel–Lebanon conflict (Zakir, 2007a). Through such dialogues, people of different religious traditions signify tolerance and appreciation for each other, and interact with one another through informal settings. The dialogues bring together people of various religious convictions to work on a non-controversial project and is, therefore, effective in building interreligious relationships.

Critical dialogues are provided through talks and workshops for participants to develop interest, empathy, reflection and critical perspectives towards various religions. The dialogues include acknowledging both the similarities and differences of various religious worldviews. A platform introduced by the government is the Inter-Racial Confidence Circles established in 2001, later renamed as Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCCs). IRCCs were formed after the discovery of a Jemaah Islamiah cell in Singapore in 2001. A primary motivation for the government to promote interreligious engagement is to prepare the nation in the event of a terrorist attack by some Islamist groups. IRCCs are local-level, informal and inter-faith groups under the Community Engagement Programme to respond quickly to incidents with racial and religious dimensions. IRCCs aim to strengthen the engagement among religious and community leaders by promoting interreligious understanding and harmony. To achieve this, IRCCs hope to involve leaders from religious institutions such as churches, mosques and temples in their activities so as to foster confidence, friendship and trust among different religious groups. There is an IRCC in every constituency in Singapore (total of 84 IRCCs) with 1021 members in 2006 comprising 58% Chinese, 21% Malays, 20% Indians and 1% Others (Government of Singapore, 2004). Between 2006 and 2007, the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports has succeeded in roping in 80% of all religious organisations (more than 1000) into IRCCs. A number of critical dialogues were initiated by IRCCs. For example, an IRCC organised talks for Muslim residents to share their religious customs and practices with non-Muslims, and held dialogues to encourage better understanding of the different religions. Workshops were also organised for about 200 people to introduce residents to the various religions, for them to ask the religious leaders any questions they wanted, and allay their concerns (Zakir, 2007c). A taskforce has been set up in March 2006 to implement home-stay programmes where families take in students of a different religion for a weekend stay. The mayor of Northeast District said, ‘Through a greater level of comfort, we will be able to go deeper and understand our beliefs, aspirations, concerns and even frustrations – and hence bring about better harmony and cohesiveness’ (Lin, 2007). Such activities help people of different faiths emphasise the shared values in all religions such as love, truth, peace, respect for humanity and good works. At the same time, the participants learn about and respect the differences and disagreements among the religious traditions.

Other talks to promote critical dialogues are organised by religious and non-religious groups. An example is a forum in 2007 organised by the University Scholars Programme, Ba’alwie Mosque and the Interreligious Organisation (IRO). The forum speakers on religions and peaceful co-existence comprised a Buddhist leader, a Jesuit priest and a Muslim academic who spoke to 450 participants about

common values that faiths share and the role religious teachers can play. Pointing out that the aim is not on agreement on all points, the forum convenor said, 'The whole task of dialogue is to go beyond tolerance and develop a sense of compassion, even when we do not totally understand or agree on theological matters' (Zakir, 2007d). Singapore was also the host country for the sixth Building Bridges seminar organised annually by the Archbishop of Canterbury. About 35 scholars and believers of various faiths from around the world discussed specific passages of the Bible and Qur'an from their insider perspectives. A Muslim academic noted: 'Dialogue does not merely clarify issues and iron out differences. It enables people to deeply respect and even care for each other where differences are irreconcilable' (Alatas, 2007). Dialogues were also conducted between Catholic and Muslim leaders to clarify positions in the wake of protests internationally after the pope purportedly quoted a Byzantine emperor who linked Islam with violence (Zakir, 2007e).

There are also critical dialogues targeted at students. For instance, a group of non-Muslim students learnt firsthand about the Muslim way of life by visiting mosques during Hari Raya Haji, learning the meaning of 'halal', and witnessing how sheep were humanely sacrificed during the ritual called the 'Korban' (*The Straits Times*, 24 February 2002). Being in an authentic setting rather than learning from the textbook helped them to appreciate why that religious festival is important to Muslims. In another event, 216 youths attended a 3-day Ramadan camp organised by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore and the Southeast Community Development Council (*The Straits Times*, 30 November 2000). The camp allowed the participants to interact informally with Muslim leaders and provided the opportunity for them to ask questions and clarify any misconceptions they may have about Islam. A talk was organised by Malay-Muslim voluntary organisation Taman Bacaan and the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore for 250 students in 2007. Its goal was to help young Muslims guard against being radicalised and help non-Muslims better understand how Muslims oppose radicalism. A Muslim scholar at the talk explained that 'jihad' meant striving for good aims like peace and social harmony, and pointed out that radicals are politically motivated people who make use of Islam (Zakir, 2007e). Another talk was organised for 200 students and 40 trainee teachers by Malay-Muslim group Taman Bacaan where a terrorism expert clarified that terrorism was not committed by Muslims alone and was also perpetuated by Christian militias in Indonesia, for example (Zakir, 2008).

There are also other initiatives launched which combine preliminary, practical and critical dialogues in Singapore. A noteworthy example was the setting up of a 'Harmony Centre' by the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore to introduce the major religions in Singapore such as Islam, Christianity and Sikhism. What is special about the centre is that it is located in An-Nahdhah Mosque to foster better understanding of Islam and interreligious understanding. The deliberate choice of a mosque is a symbolic act to convey the message that Muslims in Singapore are not religiously intolerant and are in fact promoters of religious pluralism. It was reported that over 5000 people of different faiths have entered the mosque to learn about different religions (*The Straits Times*, August 25, 2007). Its activities include good-will meetings with the Sikh and Catholic communities, inter-faith dialogues and

home-stay programmes for young people, and ventures with the Hartford Seminary in the United States on inter-faith work. This is an example of preliminary dialogue (through the information provided at the centre), practical dialogue (through home-stay programmes) and critical dialogue (through inter-faith dialogues).

Efforts in enhancing dialogical education in Singapore appeared to have reaped fruits of success. A 2002 survey conducted by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports' (MCYS) shows that the vast majority (9 out of 10) of Chinese, Malay and Indian Singaporeans are satisfied with race and religious group relations (MCDS, 2003). The survey reports that the 'conscious efforts taken by Singaporeans in response to the heightened racial and religious sensitivities in 2001 and 2002 have likely helped enhance harmonious relations among the different races and religions' (MCDS, 2003, p. 30). This is confirmed in another survey conducted in 2007 on 1824 Singaporeans which informs us that interreligious relations in Singapore have been good and that the prospects of being discriminated against or favoured based on one's religious identity were very low (Chin & Vasu, 2007).

Dialogue in Formal Education

But, the 2002 survey also reveals that younger Singaporeans (those below 30 years old) are less satisfied with religious group relations than older Singaporeans (MCDS, 2003). Noting that younger Singaporeans and university graduates may be less satisfied due to their higher expectations of what constitutes positive religious group relations, the survey suggests more scope for more segmented approaches in developing initiatives, including a stronger focus on building interreligious interaction and understanding among younger Singaporeans as well as higher-educated Singaporeans. The survey findings are not surprising when we take cognisance of existing efforts to promote interreligious engagement by the government, community and religious leaders and groups. The array of initiatives, programmes and activities has succeeded in propagating and sustaining interreligious engagement in non-formal and informal education. But, the same cannot be said for interreligious engagement in formal education.

Religious education is currently not taught as a subject in Singapore schools. The Singapore government introduced a subject known as Religious Knowledge to all Upper Secondary students (15–17 years old) between 1984 and 1989. But it did not involve a study of different religious traditions and instead was an in-depth study of a religion chosen by the students. The descriptivist phenomenological approach was adopted by the government where the aim was for students to receive religious knowledge and not religious instruction (Tan, 2008c, d). Characterised as informational, descriptive and neutral, this approach concentrates on the different social and cultural expressions of spirituality (Grimmitt, 2001; Carr, 1996). The prescribed textbooks discussed the various religions in a historical, objective and detached manner. However the subject was withdrawn after a few years as the government

felt that it had not contributed towards religious harmony and had in fact accentuated religious differences, and led to proselytisation by one religious group and interreligious tensions. The failed attempt by the government in teaching religious knowledge to schools made it wary of introducing religious content to students and prompted it to downplay religious education in subsequent years.

Religious Knowledge was subsequently replaced by Civics and Moral Education in 1992. Some religious beliefs and practices are also included in National Education which is Singapore's citizenship education launched in 1997. While some basic form of multi-faith knowledge is included in the school syllabus, it is insufficient to expose students to an adequate understanding of religions and bring about authentic interreligious engagement (Tan, 2008c). One of the modules for Civics and Moral Education is Community Spirit where the aim is to foster a greater sense of belonging to and care for the community, as well as cultural and religious appreciation (CPDD, 2001). Factual knowledge of the religions previously covered in Religious Knowledge is incorporated into the Civics and Moral Education syllabus, but they continue to be presented in a historical, objective and detached manner. Exclusive and controversial claims are omitted, and potentially offensive words and issues like hell, condemnation and the fate of those who subscribe to other religions are left out. The notes also do not discuss, clarify or dispel any misconceptions the public may have of certain religions. Special days to remind students of religious harmony such as Racial Harmony Day (21 July) and International Friendship Day (3rd working Friday of Term 2) are also celebrated in schools. The National Education website includes write-ups of different religious festivals but they are briefly and descriptively presented in the form of 'what', 'who', 'where', 'why' and 'how'. It is, therefore, difficult to see how the study of various religions in schools is effective in helping students to have a sufficiently accurate understanding of any particular religion.

What is lacking in Singapore is an integrated and comprehensive programme to promote interreligious engagement in schools. Although students could take part in interreligious dialogues outside their schools such as attending talks organised by Interreligious Organisation and visiting the Harmony Centre at the mosque, these are left much to the initiative and discretion of the students, and are also piecemeal in nature. In the context of the school, there is little provision of an ethos of openness and rootedness for students to consider the range of religious traditions and perspectives, develop an empathetic awareness of the various religions, and form autonomous judgement and response. Limited attempts have been given to help students in schools acquire an insider perspective through meaningful participation in a particular religious tradition and formation of their own spiritual worldviews. Neither is there evidence of a culture of openness where students, with the help of their teachers, critically understand the conceptual differences among the religions and their implications. Tellingly, a survey by Chew (2005) on 2779 students aged 12–18 shows that the average adolescent in Singapore knows very little about religions in Singapore. For example, when asked how many religions there were in Singapore, 91% of them said there were only four (Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam) although five more are listed in the Civics and

Moral Education textbook (Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Taoism) and other religions such as Baha'i Faith and Zoroastrianism exist in Singapore. The study also found that 76% said that they do not ever talk about religion so as to avoid possible cause of conflict. To the students, tolerance does not mean sincere respect and understanding of each other's religion so that common grounds can be found. Their religious tolerance is based on ignorance and fear rather than an appreciation of the different faiths in Singapore. By not talking about religion, especially the religious beliefs of others, they evince a keen sense that religion is a sensitive topic and religious ignorance is preferred to engagement.

Spiritual Education: Towards Interreligious Engagement in Formal Education

Singapore is not the only country where education in interreligious engagement is unsatisfactory. While religious education is common in European countries, it has been noted that different religions are taught separately in separate schools or classrooms (Leganger-Krogstad, 2003). Even when some form of multi-faith subject is taught, the dominant approach used is the descriptivist phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach is especially popular in societies where neutrality, openness and pluralism are valued. For example, it is adopted in England, Wales and Scotland, as well as in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Religious education that is primarily regarded as part of multicultural diversity and a means to attain moral homogeneity are ineffective in representing the religious phenomenon (Erricker, 2006). Such an approach overlooks the need for a critical scrutiny of religion and deprives students of the opportunity to explore the distinctiveness and lived experiences of religious traditions (Tan, 2008a, c). What is needed is an understanding of the complexities within each religious system and the possible consequences arising from their ideological claims (van Doorn-Harder, 2007).

Interreligious engagement that aims at openness and rootedness which includes the insider and outsider perspectives can be introduced to schools through Spiritual Education. It might be helpful, at the outset, to distinguish spirituality from religion. Religion refers to an organised and shared system of beliefs and practices related to a transcendent entity such as God, higher power or ultimate truth or reality, and is closely linked to a particular faith institution. On the other hand, spirituality is not necessarily associated with any supernatural power, institutionalised doctrines or religious affiliations. It is the search for personal meaning, purpose and identity in life, connectedness with others (whether divine or human), and a commitment to contribute to others. It is also important to distinguish between religiously 'tethered' and 'untethered' conceptions of spirituality. The former, which is the focus of this chapter, is linked to or housed within the tradition of a religious faith (Alexander & McLaughlin, 2003; also see Nash, 1999; Alexander, 2001). It 'takes its shape and structure from various aspects of religion with which it is associated and that make it possible for us

to identify criteria for “spiritual development” (Alexander & McLaughlin, 2003, p. 359). Schools can include religious understanding and appreciation, albeit in a less formal and structured way in its curriculum to develop openness and rootedness. Preliminary, practical and critical dialogues can be encouraged when teachers refer to universal themes and values from religious sources to get students to reflect on, discuss and apply the values learnt. For example, teachers could introduce moral teachings from different religions (see below) and ask students to reflect on their significance for each religion and draw comparative perspectives

Islam: “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.” – Prophet Mohammed.

Buddhism: “What is not pleasant or delightful to me must be so for him also; and what is not pleasant or delightful for me, how could I inflict that on others?” – Samyutta Nikaya

Baha’i Faith: “Choose for your neighbour that which you would choose for yourself.” – Baha’u’llal

Sikhism: “Do as you desire goodness for yourself, as you cannot expect tasty fruits if you sow thorny trees.” – Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Practical dialogues can also be introduced when students of various faiths participate in school or community projects. Through working on environmental or service learning endeavours, students interact informally and build friendships with those of different religious worldviews. This helps them to go beyond their preconceptions of people of other faiths, and dispels certain prejudices and stereotypes they may have about others.

Critical dialogues can take place when the teachers refer to religious perspectives on social issues such as natural or man-made disasters and tragedies (Tan, 2008c; Robson & Lonsdale, 1987). By discussing cases such as the Ethiopian famine, the Asia tsunami tragedy or the Bali bombings, students can debate on the different theological concepts and interpretations of suffering, evil, justice and compassion from various religious worldviews. Teachers can also get students to be involved in projects where they choose a religion of their choice, research an aspect of that religion and present their findings. The focus is not just information gathering, but a sincere exploration of the religion in its teachings and everyday experiences. Schools can also introduce specific curriculum aimed at interreligious education through preliminary and critical dialogues. An example of interreligious engagement is special curriculum known as ‘(Re)embracing Diversity in New York City Public Schools: Educational Outreach for Muslim Sensitivity’ to foster dialogue and process for public schools in New York (Tan, 2009). The curriculum aims to address and prevent intolerance towards Arab American and Muslim American students in the wake of the tragic events of 9/11; and promote interpersonal and intercultural dialogue based on tolerance and respect for ethnic and religious diversity by raising students’ critical understanding of and sensitivity towards Muslims in America (Kenan, 2005). Through activities such as problem solving, critical reflection and collaborative learning, the students learn about topics such as ‘Towards Understanding Islam and Muslims’; ‘A Common Language for Discussing Bias and Hatred’; ‘Reflections on Prejudice’ and ‘Field Trip to an Islamic Institution’. Kenan

(2005) points out that research has shown that the curriculum has succeeded in promoting the value of tolerance, peace and diversity in public school communities.

It is also essential to draw the students' attention to the diversity within a religion so as to avoid stereotyping a particular religion as intolerant, radical or militant (Tan, 2009). For example, in the case of Islam, Muslim and non-Muslim students could engage in critical dialogue by learning about the teaching of pluralism and respect for all religions in some Islamic traditions. One Islamic scholar explains:

Islam is categorical: "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2:256) and "To you be your Way and to me mine" (*Surat al-Kafirun*, 109:6). The Qur'an also reminds humankind that society, by divine design, is plural that is, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multi-religious (Moten, 2005, p. 233).

Students need to appreciate the rich variety of Islamic orientations, tendencies, discourses, and schools of thought (e.g. see Ramadan, 2004; Azhar, 2008). Such diversity is the result of the interplay of complex historical, geographical, religious, political, social and cultural factors. Rather than a simplistic bifurcation of Muslims into 'extremist' and 'moderate', the students should be encouraged to acknowledge the plurality of representations found in the Islamic landscape. A significant aspect of Islam instrumental for interreligious engagement is the critical humanist tradition in Islam. This is a branch of Islamic thought that is often overlooked today due to the limelight given to rigid and traditional interpretations of Islam by Islamist groups. The critical humanist tradition seeks to be open to new knowledge through the exercise of human reasoning while remaining rooted in Islam. It regards human beings as God's steward on earth who have been given the task to attain perfection in this life. This is achieved by exercising one's rational faculties given by God to integrate various branches of knowledge to become a virtuous person who is integrated into society. An Islamic scholar argues that 'It is only with the recognition of the efficacy of human reasoning, an intellectual openness to enrich Muslim intellectual culture, and the consciousness to fulfil the task for humanity, that Muslims would be able to appreciate the tradition of critical humanism which was once explored and developed in the classical period' (Azhar, 2008, p. 130).

Conclusion

The Singapore case study shows how dialogues in non-formal and informal education are important and effective in promoting interreligious engagement. Explaining the Singapore government's stand on inter-faith dialogues, the Prime Minister said, 'Such dialogue is not aimed at achieving agreement, but at building relationships' (Peh, 2007). Regular dialogues and engagement, he added, are especially pertinent between Muslims and non-Muslims. Religious leaders should appreciate the need for preliminary, practical and critical dialogues to preserve religious harmony and remove any misunderstandings of various religions. Looking ahead, the Singapore government is keen to make Singapore a hub for Inter-Faith Dialogue. Plans include hosting a world summit of religious leaders, and offering to be the Asian secretariat

for the World Conference of Religion for Peace (Kesavapany, 2007). However, this chapter also highlighted the neglect of interreligious engagement in formal education in Singapore which explains the religious ignorance of and dissatisfaction in young people. It recommended the introduction of Spiritual Education where the schools could work in partnership with the state, family, community and religious groups. Through dialogues underpinned by an ethos of openness and rootedness, people of different faiths could participate in interreligious engagement for sustainable development. Going back to the analogy of religious diversity as a double-edged sword, dialogical education for interreligious engagement is crucial if we want religious diversity to unite rather than divide in a plural society.

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Promoting Interfaith Education Through ICT – A Case Study

Zehavit Gross

Interfaith Education – Challenges and Ramifications

In a multicultural globalized world, interfaith education has become a fundamental need, as people have more opportunities to be exposed to different religions and to diverse religious points of view. Moore (2007) posits that the purpose of education in our era of multi-religious democracy is “to foster the skills, values interest and confidence in students to be able to participate as active moral agents in the conscious social reproduction of society in its most inclusive form” (Moore, 2007, p. 24).

New technologies allow people to broaden their horizons and embrace members of other religions; however, they can also be considered threatening and cause people to become more isolated in an attempt to preserve their uniqueness. Narrowing distances through ICT can cause misunderstandings and feelings of hostility, yet it can also provide an outstanding opportunity to not only react but also interact.

During one of my university lessons on conflict resolution between Jewish and Arab students, one of my students said that Judaism was an antisocial religion. In order to explain to him that Judaism has a social welfare point of view, I decided to teach them about what I view as one of the most socially inclined concepts in Judaism, *prozbul*. To this end, I went to a Rabbi and asked him how best to explain *prozbul* and teach a Muslim student about it. The Rabbi was shocked. He said that one is not allowed to explain Jewish terminology to a non-Jew. “Why did he ask? What will he do with this information? Will he sign a *prozbul*? Do you want to convert him? A non-Jewish person is not allowed to sign a *prozbul*.”

I explained that it came up during my lesson at the university that deals with peace education and I thought it was very important. The Rabbi explained that this kind of discourse might end in conversion. “We don’t need people converting to our religion.” I then tried to explain to him why it is so important in a globalized world

Z. Gross (✉)
Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel
e-mail: grossz@mail.biu.ac.il

to cultivate interfaith dialogues and asked if he had any suggestions as to how to do that. His answer mainly emphasized his conviction that it was not allowed and dangerous.

Then the Rabbi explained that *prozbul* is a complicated issue and as a woman, he was not sure I had enough background to understand it. In his opinion, the question was mainly a religious one; hence, he should mainly use religious knowledge, books and terminology to explain it to me. I told him that I would like to highlight the issue from an interdisciplinary point of view. I thought that focusing on the religious aspect alone would narrow the scope of the discourse. Hence, I felt it was important to draw the contours of the field of interfaith education and explain the concept using religious, sociological, anthropological, and psychological knowledge. The engagement with interdisciplinary aspects can enrich the scope of interfaith argumentation (Foster, 2004), but at the same time borders need to be defined so that the discussion does not become too broad and diffuse, thus losing its capacity to transform a concrete body of knowledge.

The Rabbi was unable to differentiate between assimilation or conversion and transformation (Charaniya & Walsh, 2004, p. 74), which were the basis of my teaching in my conflict resolution course. Literature dealing with interfaith education sometimes does not distinguish between these two notions. I repeatedly explained to my students that I would like them to transform their knowledge of my religion and I would like to transform my knowledge of their religion. An assimilative stance is exclusionary. It has a coercive nature that commands people to do things, whereas a transformative mode has an inclusive orientation, which analyzes it on an abstract level. Transformative experiences are those that cause “emerging” moments of revelation and change one’s perceptions and frame of reference (Charaniya & Walsh, 2004). Daloz (2000) analyzes this process, claiming that “what shifts in the transformative process is our very epistemology – the way in which we know and make meaning” (p. 104). Charaniya and Walsh (2004) posit that the transformation that results from an interfaith dialogue can be manifested in three different facets: “transformed worldviews, new behaviours and or fresh visions of how interreligious dialogue can change society” (p. 34).

The Rabbi I consulted mainly concentrated on the question of why is it allowed or not allowed to deal with interfaith education. Most literature indeed concentrates on the “why”; very few studies deal with the “how,” which is a fundamental question. The question of how is also connected to the question of how people acquire knowledge and learn new concepts, which will be further elaborated. Most articles concentrate on the etiological level – why is it important to develop this field (Narsee, 2005); very few concentrate on the methodological pedagogical level of how, in practice, to teach interfaith education (Shadid & van Koningsveld, 2006) and what kind of learning is actually involved.

My conversation with the Rabbi actually highlighted three fundamental questions in interfaith education. (1) What is the intention of the interaction? (assimilation or transformation – is its function to convert and assimilate or to enable understanding?) This question deals with the issue of hegemony and possible patronization of one religion over the other. (2) What kind of pedagogy should be employed to emphasize the etiological aspects (the why) versus methodological aspects (the

how – namely, face-to-face versus ICT)? And (3) What are the borders of the discussion; namely, a disciplinary versus an interdisciplinary approach to teaching in interfaith education. To begin to attempt to answer these questions, let us first visit a face-to-face interfaith lesson.

Introducing the Concept of *Prozbul*

My challenge as a facilitator who wants to enhance interfaith dialogue was to try to explain the concept of *prozbul*. None of my Muslim students were acquainted with the term. First, I gave them a general introduction:

This year was what we call in Hebrew the *shmitta* year. The meaning of the word *shmitta* is to leave or abandon (from the Hebrew root Sh-m-t). *Shmitta* is the Jewish sabbatical year. According to the Bible, once every 7 years, the Jews have to let the land rest. During that year, agricultural produce may not be sold. What grows on the land is *hefker*: it can be taken by everyone, subject to some religious restrictions. This is a great opportunity to support the poor who can get grain and fruit for free. It is an opportunity to cultivate modesty, as the land returns to God and man loses his ownership of the land. Rejecting the feeling of ownership of the land and reverence for property has an important educational message. The idea of abandoning property applies not only to the land but also to debts. According to the Bible, in the seventh year all debts between individuals are erased. The *shmitta* has religious aspects as it deals with the belief and ultimate trust in God. It also has social-humanistic aspects, environmental aspects, and philosophical aspects. Within the framework of interfaith education, I would like to concentrate on the term *prozbul*.

The *prozbul* was established by Hillel the Elder, a distinguished sage in the period of the Second Temple. According to the Bible (Deuteronomy 15, 1–2) “At the end of every 7 years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbour; he shall not exact it of his neighbour and his brother; because the LORD’S release hath been proclaimed.” This was intended to give the poor a chance to begin a new life without debt.

Verse 9 predicts the response: “Beware that there be not a base thought in thy heart, saying: ‘The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand’; and thine eye be evil against thy needy brother, and thou give him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin in thee.” And indeed, many people refrained from lending money in the fifth and sixth year, as they were afraid that if the debt were not returned before the end of the *shmitta* year, it would automatically be cancelled. Thus, Hillel instituted the *prozbul*. This was a document that, in essence, turned over supervision of the loan to the *bet din* (Jewish court), thus allowing the creditor to collect his debt even after the sabbatical year because the Bible refers only to individuals and not to public institutions. This was considered very courageous, as there was a feeling that Hillel had changed a law of the *Torah* to allow the poor to continue benefiting from loans while the creditor will still be paid back for the loan. The act was considered controversial and revolutionary.

I asked my Muslim students what they thought about this. Mohammed said it sounded very odd. The whole issue seemed to him a story of innocence with a negative flavor:

“If you lend money you have to get it back. A law is a law. If you took money, you have to give it back – there is no question – as is written in the Quran, ‘*Al’ ain bil’ain wal sin bil sin*’; an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. This is the essence of justice. This is a bit – how can I say it? I don’t want to say ‘foolish’, but it doesn’t sound good. Do you want to convert us to Judaism?” he asked.

“No, of course not,” I answered. Mohammed continued, “You can’t evaluate a religion on one aspect or one rule.”

“I didn’t ask you to evaluate Judaism – why do you think about it in this way?” I asked.

“You see,” answered Mohammed, “Judaism is an exclusive religion and this law of *prozbul* is proof that a Muslim can never convert to this religion or feel comfortable within it. If you want to convert to Islam, there is one sentence you have to say and that’s it. You have to say there is no one like God and there is no one like Mohammed his prophet, that’s all. But Judaism constructs walls, so that other people will not be able to assimilate or convert. The *prozbul* is a wall. It is intended to prevent assimilation. There is such childish innocence in the idea behind *prozbul*. I tell you, all religions are more or less equal and want more or less the same thing, but express it differently. We have also social laws in Islam but this law seems to me an exaggeration. Yes, I assume it has a lot of social aspects, not just religious ones. I have to study this.”

I was quite astonished that Mohammed emphasized the issue of assimilation in his answer. I had intended to deal with transformation of knowledge but he repeatedly raised the issue of assimilation. When I asked him about it later, he admitted that he was not used to this kind of interfaith conversation and he felt that he had to react rather than interact. He said he would be happy to learn more about it because he did not understand the whole issue of *prozbul* or the logic behind it at all.

In an interfaith encounter process, each participant has to “externalize his or her own being into the other faith world and internalize it as an objective reality” (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 129). The internalization of an objective reality helps the individual to reflect and analyze the interfaith encounter; when one internalizes it subjectively, there may be a threat of assimilation. Both the Rabbi and Mohammed found it difficult to view the *prozbul* as an objective intellectual journey. They immediately wanted to interpret its meaning and its practical implications from their subjective religious points of view. The subjective stance interfered with their ability to transform knowledge. The unsuccessful experience of the face-to-face lesson led me to examine models of interfaith education and underlying learning theories that could prove helpful in finding another way to present the material.

Models of Religious Education and Their Implications for Interfaith Education

Ziebertz (2005) suggests three models of religious education that are relevant to the discussion of interfaith education: the mono-religious model that claims that there is one true religion on earth whose basic truths were adopted and internalized by

other religions without their being aware of it. It recognizes the existence of other monistic religions, asserting that each must maintain constant interaction with the others for a specific purpose. Unlike mono-religiosity, whose key objective is attainment of the authentic “religious truth” of the “one true faith,” the multi-religious approach aims at obtaining cultural information about believers’ religious experiences, emotions and behavior for the purposes of comparison or contrast, seeking a better understanding of the factors motivating those who either attract or repel others. Multi-religiosity does not classify religions hierarchically but rather relates to them “objectively,” assessing each on its own merits. The interreligious model advocates a change in perspective wherein religious education recognizes the existence of other, distinct religions that differ from one another. Believers are enjoined to understand their own respective religions according to their own perspective, as well as that of the other religions (Ziebertz, 2006). Proponents of this approach not only seek to improve understanding, tolerance and respect for other religions but also aspire toward reflection and self-criticism of their own faith.

Relating these models to our discussion, the Rabbi actually took a mono-religious approach, believing that he holds the ultimate truth, which may not be shared with an out-group. However, interfaith education can adopt a multi-religious approach, an interreligious approach or a combination of both.

Theories of Learning

After the face-to-face lesson, I tried to determine what was wrong with my explanation, and I understood that part of the problem has to do with how people learn. There are two leading theories of learning: the behaviorist theory that asserts that there are objective goals and contents that should be taught to students irrespective of the specific learners or the learning context. This approach views the role of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge. In contrast, the constructivist theory holds that information is subjective and knowledge is acquired and discovered individually by each human being and depends on the individual’s background and experience. Here the teacher is viewed as a facilitator. The teacher-centered learning approach that concentrates on contents and educational products stems from the first theory, and the student-centered approach, which emphasizes the learning process stems from the second (Brown & Campione, 1998; Hart, 2003).

In religious education, the behavioral approach holds that there is a single body of knowledge to which the students need to be exposed so as to be knowledgeable about their religiosity and religiousness. This approach maintains that there is one ultimate religious reality to be achieved that is controlled by society or its agents (teachers). Religious understanding is therefore a direct consequence and result of the nature of teaching. The constructivist approach maintains that to enable each student to create his or her own religious world and function within it, students need to be exposed to information and to different spiritual experiences from various sources and to reflect on these with their peers or teachers. This approach argues

that there are various optional realities that depend on the religious disposition and experience of the individual. Religious understanding is therefore a product of the nature of the students' engagement and experience with the learning material to which they are exposed, and to the social context (Bekerman, 2001).

Information, Knowledge, and Identity

Dewey (1929, p. 98) views knowledge as “a mode of experiencing things which facilitates control of objects for the purpose of non-cognitive experiences.” Spiritual (religious/secular) experience can be developed through three perspectives – social, emotional, and cognitive – all of which can be achieved through ICT:

1. Social negotiation: Vygotsky (1962, 1978) claims that knowledge is socially constructed. Via email, interactive video conferencing and chat rooms, students can exchange and share information, and together with their peers, can construct knowledge, negotiate meaning, and reflect on it.
2. Emotional excitement: This can be achieved through films that arouse emotional reactions, lectures via distance learning, virtual reality systems that illustrate situations and arouse emotions, and via internet-based forums and chat rooms.
3. Cognitive enlightenment: While browsing and navigating endless sources of information available to the student through advanced ICT, and by being exposed to and absorbing new information, intellectual links are established resulting in broader understanding of a given issue (Moulton, Huyler, Hertz, & Levenson, 2002, p. 17).

All three perspectives – social, emotional and cognitive – are integral parts of the meaning-making process of each individual and an essential stage in identity-construction. Identity-construction has a cyclic nature and works two ways: either from the standpoint of identity where one starts one's journey for information, or from the standpoint of information, which becomes part of the meaning-making process and constructs the individual identity (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990). The journey of knowledge construction is a gradual process of adaptation of an external entity into the internal “self.” Each individual takes a path that will vary in terms of structure and content according to his or her spiritual style and personal background.

The transformation of information into knowledge can be explained by the remember-to-know shift (Herbert & Burt, 2003, p. 17). This paradigm asserts that there are two distinct stages in memory awareness during learning: remembering and knowing. At the beginning, in the early stage of learning, students primarily have memory representations that are episodic in nature. They encounter specific information and they remember it. Then when learning continues, schematization occurs. Learning then becomes conceptual knowledge rather than isolated memory episodes. This kind of knowledge is dominated by semantic memory representations and becomes generalized knowledge (Herbert & Burt, 2003, p. 74).

Taking into account the emotional excitement that knowledge arouses can broaden the scope of the schematization. In fact, modern theories of social psychology can help to understand the social contribution to the cognitive dimension. Following Erikson (1968), Marcia (1980, 1986) claimed that among adolescents, knowledge becomes meaningful when it is part of the meaning-making process, which leads, at a later stage, to the consolidation of ego identity. Marcia asserts that doubts and deliberation are essential states of minds for ego consolidation. He argued that in the process of shaping the self while completing a given life task, the individual is in a state of conflict between the “crisis” (essentially, a rethinking or a choice between several roles) and a functional or ideological commitment that one takes upon oneself (i.e., the willingness to invest in one’s choice and fulfill the selected task). In later years, because of the negative connotation of the term “crisis,” Marcia renamed it “exploration.” Exploration has cognitive and emotional modes but at its core, it is the search for information and knowledge. The process of exploration involves the process of deliberation and doubt-casting and both are connected to information processing (Marcia, 1994). In terms of religious education, this process relates to various contents, like the examination of faith, beliefs, behavior, values, etc. Beit-Hallahmi (1991) views the stages of identity-consolidation as identical to the stages of religious development. Thus, the meaning-making-identity-consolidation shift also incorporates the religious development of the individual.

Religious Education and ICT

If there are different types of students with different religious tendencies and capacities who are ready to be exposed and want to interact with other religions, clearly they need different teaching and instructional strategies and methodologies to meet their individual needs (Gross, 2006). This implies that teachers need to employ varied educational resources and techniques for different students. In addition, because religious growth is an individual process, students need to be equipped to construct their unique spiritual identities so that they will be ready to interact with other religions. This does not mean that students will navigate the horizons of knowledge on their own; they still need a facilitator to help them to answer their needs. However, it is practically impossible to provide all students with a single teacher who can meet their needs (Maor, 2003; Mayer, 2003; Tsai, 2000).

It seems that only through the implementation of ICT, which provides varied and diverse activities, can this complex challenge be met (Ellis, 2003). The goal of teaching and instruction via ICT is to develop an autonomous learner who can acquire skills and knowledge independently (Mayer & Moreno, 2002). Interactive video-conferencing and email enable participants to communicate online and discuss key spiritual issues in real time. Moreover, ICT makes the instructional process more flexible and encourages free choice and freedom of thought and speech (Katz, 2002). The possibility of sharing online information and spiritual ideas among peers creates a unique kind of collaborative spiritual construction that can involve different

participants throughout the world and create communities of learners with the same type of spiritual identity who collect relevant information in accordance with their unique identity profiles. The advantage of using ICT is that one can communicate anonymously or using a pseudonym and expose one's inner feelings without the threat of repudiation. The option of anonymity expands the scope of exploration especially among adolescents, and enables them to ask almost any question. This does not exist in traditional classrooms where students often tend to say what they think their teachers would like to hear and do not really confront their confusing inner conceptual world. Thus, using advanced ICT within the syllabus can broaden the horizons of the classroom.

Teaching About *Prozbul* Through ICT

I told Mohammed I would like to try to explain the issue through some websites in the internet. A simple search returned thousands of sites dealing with this concept. Mohammed was astonished. We went into websites that use pictorial information to illustrate some basic issues. I showed him what the document looks like and what a rabbinical court looks like. Then we entered websites on which there were video conferences on *prozbul* with illustrations, and the "Shut" project, which is a special service of questions and answers on the issue. Then I showed him a video on how the procedure takes place today in practice. We visited some philosophical online discussions and debates analyzing controversial aspects of the issue. Mohammed was fascinated. He said that the most important thing he learned from this was the place of hermeneutics and the need to interpret the word of God. "To this end," he said, "we need strong and wise people with the courage to interpret things, so that people can get along with it – very few people can do it."

This was a new phase in which our encounter moved from a diffuse conversation to a concrete dialogue. The rich and diverse options of knowledge and information that we were exposed to through the internet allowed a gradual process of transformation of knowledge and the creation of this dialogue. Mohammed tried to see the differences and similarities between our religions and spoke critically about religious Muslims who misinterpret Islam, using it for fundamentalist ends. He also spoke about secular adolescents in Arab society and said that ICT is an educational option for fostering religious education and constructing knowledge.

The main difference between the face-to-face lesson about *prozbul* and the ICT lesson was that the ICT lesson was not a linear process but rather an incremental process of transformative learning whereby we reflected on knowledge, criticized it, questioned it, and juxtaposed it with other knowledge.

While there is research concerning identity and the media (e.g., Stout, 2002), there is very little research on the construction of religious identity via the media and interfaith education. One of the main perspectives lacking in the literature is a basic schematization and mapping of the needs of the target population in interfaith education, as in both research and practice the voice of the target population (the

students) is often not heard (Dahl, 1995; Johnston & Nicholls, 1995; Lincoln, 1995; Ross, 2004).

Fostering religious or secular spirituality involves not only the cognitive aspect but also the affective domain. How can values be imparted? The most important component of value education is identification with role models with specific identity traits. Hence the question is: can utilization of ICT foster identification? In my opinion, modern synchronous and interactive ICT and internet that enable distance learning and one-to-one or one-to-many instruction through video-conferencing, digital video and email, can serve as a means of direct communication with role models like rabbis, priests, imams, etc. Films about their private lives and interviews with them can help the student to see different aspects of the tradition that they represent.

A Model of Knowledge Processing and Identity Formation (KPIF)

According to Taylor (1989), identity is a person’s understanding of who he is and what his basic human characteristics are. Knowledge processing is an integral part of this understanding. Identity formation in relation to information processing is described schematically in Fig. 1.

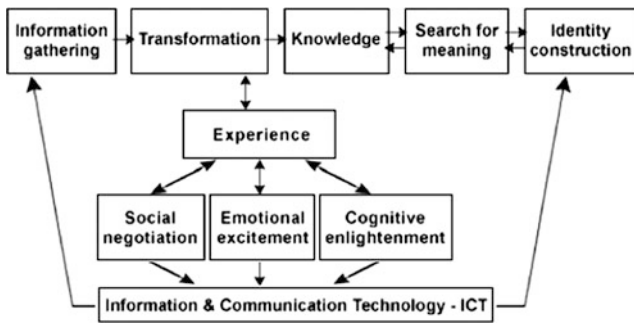


Fig. 1 Knowledge processing and identity formation (KPIF)

The model (see also Gross, 2006) has four components: information, knowledge, the search for meaning or exploration, and identity consolidation. The use of advanced ICT simplifies the first stage – the gathering of information – through the use of digital libraries and internet databases. Next, information is transformed into knowledge. It should be noted that information and knowledge are two distinct entities and two different stages of cognitive development. The transformation stage in religious education is the stage when the religious experience is developed in practice. ICT is the medium that enables the transformation processes from the information-knowledge stage to the meaning-making-identity consolidation stage.

The innovation in the KPIF model is the combination of theories and terminology stemming from both cognitive and social psychology. The cognitive tradition investigates the information-knowledge shift and social psychology strives to explain the meaning-making-identity-construction shift. The combination of both theories within a new conceptual model that functions through the implementation of ICT can serve as a challenge and a direction for future research.

Creating Communities of Knowledge Exchange Through ICT

Interfaith education research should develop a theoretical conceptual framework of transformation, which will help to create communities of interfaith knowledge exchange, similar to other learning communities. Indeed, Moore sees great importance in constructing a strong learning community as a foundation for a more literate and tolerant society (Moore, 2007, p. 139). My discussion with Mohammed concerning *prozbul* opened, for him and for myself, a new channel of communication with different people in different locations throughout the world. It actually enabled us to create a community of knowledge exchange where people from different religions communicate in a multidimensional manner, not merely basing communication on rhetoric but also on text and hypertext, using sound, sight, and imagination. This community of exchange is rooted in three tenets according to Walker (1996): (1) study and reflection with and in the presence of the other; (2) an ongoing reevaluation of self-understanding in light of new information; and (3) formal and informal sharing of truths. In interfaith encounters, it is important to find out what we share and what keeps us apart. Interfaith exchange is mainly a discourse on borders and, therefore, the exposure of the historical background of the cultural tradition seems a prerequisite for this endeavor. ICT enables accessibility to rich information (Burbules & Callister, 2000) concerning the historical roots and background of each tradition while reflecting on it and debating challenging situations online. ICT narrows and expands the dimension of time and place (Davidson, 2003). The combination between the interplay of flexible time – being simultaneously in the past and in the present – and in different places through ICT makes the transformative process possible and creates flexible “mental environments” that prepare the ground for more openness. This dynamic in practice deconstructs suspicions, prejudice, and stereotypes, and constructs bridges of interaction for communities of knowledge exchange. In this kind of education, through ICT we do not study about “abstract others” but rather face and confront the other through exposure and penetration into an unknown corpus of information, thus increasing multicultural sensibility rooted in knowledge while challenging our truths and convictions.

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Learning and Life-Modelling in the Critical Community: Educating University Students for Inter-religious Engagement

Toni Tidswell and Majella Franzmann

Introduction

Inter-religious engagement prepared for through a sound education process is imperative for any multicultural/multi-faith society. There are many ways of educating within universities about religion and religions that can lead to quality inter-religious engagement. Obviously or more particularly this will be in disciplines within the Humanities, where religions comprise one aspect of particular worldviews/ideologies studied by areas such as sociology, philosophy, anthropology, literature, languages, cultural studies, history, and gender studies. Most people, however, would more clearly recognize the subject areas of Theology, Religious Education, and Religious Studies as the primary contexts for such learning. Despite having different ideas about how to teach about religion/s with different learning goals for students, these three subject areas potentially prepare students implicitly or explicitly for inter-religious engagement.

In the broader campus experience of university students, religious professionals in chaplaincy roles may also provide learning experiences for students towards inter-religious engagement. Where the university has a multi-faith centre rather than separate premises for gathering and worship by major religious groupings, there is a strong impetus for inter-religious engagement. A variety of student religious organizations may also potentially facilitate inter-religious engagement through discussion groups and guest speakers, although they are generally also strongly focused on social and spiritual support towards invigorating students within a particular faith. University Christian student organizations such as EU (Evangelical Union) and SCM (Student Christian Movement) provide a strong faith support for Christian students, and Christine Asmar (2001, 2005) outlines a similar approach by the Muslim Student Associations (MSAs) on Australian campuses.

M. Franzmann (✉)
University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand
e-mail: Majella.franzmann@otago.ac.nz

Learning for Inter-religious Engagement: Religious Education, Religious Studies, and Theology

All three areas of Religious Education, Religious Studies, and Theology within the university sector teach students in some way about religion, whether that be confined to a focus on one religion or whether all religions are studied. Religious Education tends to be housed within Faculties of Education and its focus is vocational, teaching students how to teach either primary or secondary school students about religion, with emphases in the curriculum ranging from concern with the student's understanding of their own belief system within the broad range of belief systems available ("to understand better other people's belief systems and clarify their own beliefs" [Cox, 1989, p. 130]), through to a strongly confessional or evangelizing approach to learning and growing in a particular faith, as John Bailey (2002) outlines with reference to Roman Catholic schools in the UK. Religious Studies draws on a variety of disciplines and methodologies to teach about religion and religions in the broadest sense, with no one religion privileged as starting point. While it seeks to have students understand their own position vis-à-vis religion/s and to understand the positions of others, it does not pursue the goal of building faith in its students nor a personal commitment to any religion. Theology draws on similar disciplines and methodologies to Religious Studies to teach about the history of theological reflection within a particular faith and the way in which it influences ritual, soteriological ideas, community structures, and so on, and to reflect on and propose new theological interpretations for that faith. While the staff of university Theology departments may come from a variety of groups or denominations within a particular faith, nevertheless the curriculum is generally broad in its range of subject matter.

Interest and focus within these disciplines ranges from one religion through to all religions, while the contemporary global context of learning in each discipline is inevitably multicultural and multi-faith, even where in extreme cases that context is kept as much as possible outside of the close environment of the classroom. The inevitability of the multicultural/multi-faith context for university study at least is described by Sophie Gilliat-Ray (2000) who makes the point that on any university campus there may indeed be more diversity of religious belief than in the general population, given the number of overseas students of different faiths who are enrolled. Nevertheless, even in the situation in which students learn only of their own faith from a sharply focused evangelizing programme, they are in some way, albeit limited, prepared for inter-religious engagement. Obviously, Religious Education programmes and Theology departments that concentrate on catechesis or evangelization as the principal teaching model are those least able to provide a quality learning experience for inter-religious engagement. Within the university context they provide learning about faith in much the same way as strongly evangelical or missionary student religious organizations, but each of them also tends to teach or reinforce, even implicitly, negative attitudes about other religions that generally prove problematical for learning about religions, as we discuss below in section "Key Factors in the Learning Environment".

Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy (2007) suggests programmes built on exclusivist claims and evangelization are no longer viable, nor in the national interest for the contemporary multicultural and multi-faith world. He calls for a reform of Religious Education in his own country of Indonesia towards a programme based in the “paradigm of multiculturalism” so that people learn how to live together with others “in the collective consciousness of religious diversity” (pp. 15–16). For Baidhawiy, curriculum reform is not enough, “[i]t also needs the transformation of religious perspectives from exclusivist to multiculturalist” (p. 19). With this in mind, he proposes teaching Religious Education in Indonesia under key concepts within Islamic theology: the unity of Godhead that leads to the unity of all humanity (*tawhid*); living together (*ummah*); love for one another that makes manifest God the Merciful and the Benevolent (*rahmah*); and the equality of all (*al-musawah, taqwa*). When these are implemented in the educational process through processes that incorporate ideas such as co-existence, mutual understanding and respect, trust, equality in diversity, tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation, then the goals of peace (*silah, salam*), non-violence (*lyn*), and justice (*‘adl*) are achieved. While these ideas stem from core Islamic concepts and thus in their implementation have the potential to increase an exclusive religious perspective at worst, and paternalism over against other religions at best, nevertheless they are neither exclusivist nor paternalistic in their intent and interpretation by Baidhawiy. Within Indonesia, where Islam is the dominant religion, Baidhawiy’s work represents a first step in developing a Religious Education curriculum and model for teaching towards multicultural and multi-faith engagement.

Lynne Broadbent (2002) writes of a similar development in Religious Education curricula in the United Kingdom towards a paradigm of multiculturalism, at least within those schools following the Agreed Syllabus of a local education authority, after several reports and government papers emphasized the role of Religious Education as part of the way of addressing issues of diversity and race in multicultural/multi-faith Great Britain. Like Baidhawiy, Broadbent suggests that simply teaching within the multicultural paradigm is no guarantee of a change in attitude towards multicultural outlook in those being educated. The simple fact of a context of multiculturalism is not enough.

Provision for learning about the six principal faith traditions represented in Great Britain is identified as an aim in each and every local agreed syllabus for Religious Education, and implementation of the syllabus should inevitably bring encounters with members of faith communities. The assumption that this in itself would bring about change in community relations is questionable. Nevertheless, the power of knowledge and personal encounters to influence attitudes should not be underestimated, while we continue to consider what would be sufficient and necessary to bring about that change in community relations and just how far programmes of Religious Education might contribute to it. (Broadbent, 2002, p. 20)

Broadbent proposes that what needs to be contributed should include teaching skills of “discernment and discrimination”, as well as taking cognizance of students’ “psychological development and interests” (p. 26). Such a proposal recognizes motivation and personal interest as key aspects of learning, together with the critical skills of discernment in analyzing the subject matter. It is a further addition to

Baidhawý's list of attitudinal aspects necessary in the learning environment such as respect and mutual trust. All of these are essential if students are to go beyond merely "learning the facts".

In university courses too the mere fact of learning about world religions whether in Religious Education, Theology, or in Religious Studies is not sufficient to produce learning that will lead to quality inter-religious engagement. In what follows, we will outline a programme for learning within the context of a hermeneutical process by which university students may learn the skills for quality inter-religious engagement. The programme incorporates features of Baidhawý's transformative educational process and Broadbent's concern for students' psychological development and interests.

Learning for Understanding and Application: Deep Learning

The term "deep learning" derives from research by Marton and Säljö (1976) and by John Biggs (1979) that the latter developed further within a SOLO ("structure of the observed learning outcome") taxonomy of learning in Biggs and Collis (1982). Ground-breaking earlier work by Bloom, Engelhart, Furt, Hill, and Krathwohl (1956) focused on the assessment of student knowledge, whereas later engagement with Bloom's taxonomy by those such as Biggs, Anderson, and Krathwohl (2001), evidences a more particular interest in the learning process itself, and hence a focus on deep and surface learning by which knowledge is acquired, as well as the outcome in knowledge that can be assessed.

Susan Toohey defines "deep learning" as follows:

When students adopt a deep approach to learning their motive is to gain understanding; they adopt strategies such as reading widely and discussing the concept or topic with others; they seek to make sense of new knowledge in terms of what they already know about this topic and related topics. (Toohey, 1999, p. 9)

By comparison she characterizes the learning process and outcome for surface learning:

Students adopting a surface approach to learning are primarily interested in meeting the demands which the system places upon them. Their usual strategy is to reproduce enough of the information they have been given to satisfy the assessment requirements of the unit. (p. 10)

Biggs is interested in investigating students' approaches to learning, categorizing mental activity, not just by the observable products of student work, but by quantity and quality attributes of the activities required by students in gaining knowledge and applying it, ranging from those who know nothing about a particular area under study through to those who gradually move to a knowledge of the area that can be generalized into a new domain.

Toohey's definitions of the terms "deep" and "surface" set up a polarity between two different motivations for learning in students, implying the motivation for surface learning is simply one of compliance with "the system". In monitoring and

evaluating the quality of learning by students, it will be clear that students may evidence motivation for, and aspects of, both surface and deeper learning as appropriate, in different circumstances and at different times. As Bolton-Lewis (1998) writes, “[I]n discipline areas that are new to them some students may only be performing in the concrete-symbolic mode and hence only acquire declarative and procedural knowledge in that mode” (p. 206). The lecturer must expect to evaluate both ways of learning, even though the aim might be to teach towards deeper learning outcomes.

The lecturer must be aware of several levels of learning operating in the class at any one time – learning approaches from undergraduates just beyond introductory units, from undergraduates within the middle range of studies, and from the undergraduate about to complete the programme and enter the workforce or perhaps go on to further study. Thus the curriculum needs to be differentiated with regard to the expected outcomes. Bolton-Lewis (1998) recognizes the need to teach towards a final “product” with deep learning as the outcome:

[T]he preferred learning outcomes for students completing university education should be understanding, integration and potential application of the crucial aspects of their discipline. It follows that lecturers should teach to facilitate such outcomes. . . . The outcomes of such teaching should be students who have deeper knowledge and more sophisticated levels of reasoning than those with which they began university study, and who are beginning to think in a manner similar to an expert in the area. (p. 202)

Biggs’ initial concern for promoting critical or higher forms of thinking was developed further (Biggs, 1989) to include ideas of motivation and interaction with peers and teachers as important along with learning activity and a well-structured knowledge base. However, while his five SOLO levels are helpful to plot a student’s growth in knowledge towards a critical ability to relate what has been learned to new situations, the categories fail to acknowledge to any extent the differences in student experience, personality, background, and their current situation while attempting to learn. Biggs (1999) at least approached the question of student learning and multiculturalism, but the notions of deep and surface learning must surely be further nuanced by a greater interest in the context of learning according to factors such as gender, age, mental development, prior experience, and so on. Interestingly, Biggs has failed to take into account earlier work from scholars like Hogsett (1993) who brought the issue of gender to bear in her analysis of Bloom’s theory, using work like Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986).

The issue of gender and the different styles of learning or knowing which stem from gender difference is an important or even central aspect in understanding student learning. Added to this consideration are other factors such as age or continuity of learning, or opportunity for learning prior to enrolling at university. Many university students have had interrupted learning opportunities, and there are those who have completed little more than the first years of secondary schooling, with long years between that experience and returning to study. The issue is not just the interruption to learning. In the intervening years, others have had the benefit of learning from a generation of school teachers who have been part of an education system

that has consistently aimed for higher quality outcomes in teaching and learning in recent years in its focus on curriculum development.

Many other factors must be taken into account apart from gender, age, and educational opportunity, although these are fundamental factors. The list of factors should include differences between gifted or weaker learners, or those who might be highly intelligent but have no social skills (e.g. students with Aspergers Syndrome), and so on. Even when the majority of those in a group of students find common ground because of personality, prior learning, personal history, and social experience, there will inevitably be individuals who do not find that common ground. The concern is how to be inclusive of these students while not ignoring the majority, and at the same time, present a balanced curriculum.

Assessment and learning outcomes and the learning process itself are connected of course. In designing the curriculum that provides the basis for student learning, one first needs to define what outcomes are desired. If assessment is to demonstrate a student's deep learning – evidencing knowledge of a theory, a critical approach to that theory, and a personal position on it that may apply it to real-world situations – how does one teach towards that learning outcome? Moreover, how does one take account of personal difference in the learning experience, including different learning styles and difference in personal circumstances?

Unfortunately, there is nothing in Bolton-Lewis' (1998) study that addresses the gradation of teaching techniques necessary to bring students through the various levels of learning outcomes towards the final units of study in a undergraduate degree. Clearly, teaching at the level of the university is very different from a secondary school context where one can expect students of around the same age, the majority of whom have been through the same curriculum in earlier classes and now have reached a particular level all together at the same time. Although there are clear levels and pathways for degree courses at university, and the work on curriculum by writers such as Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) is helpful for its focus on planning courses based on the process of learning; nevertheless, more needs to be made of the typical situation in tertiary classrooms where the students in individual classes exhibit considerable variety both in levels of earlier achievement and in their experience of previous learning and training. A carefully structured increase in the difficulty of critical analysis exercises, peer presentations and evaluations, and formal assessment items, will bring younger and less experienced students gradually into situations that require deeper learning while more experienced students have the opportunity to further hone their already advanced skills while acting as experienced dialogue partners for those less experienced in the learning process.

While Biggs is concerned for a student's personal engagement with material, her/his motivation to learn and the process of dialogue within the learning process, it is within the broader context of the hermeneutical process that individual difference can be explicitly accommodated and given importance within the learning process.

The Hermeneutical Process as the Context for Deeper Learning

“Hermeneutics”, from the Greek word *hermēneuō* meaning “to interpret, to explain, make clear”, is concerned for the ways in which human beings come to understand something, including the conditions under which that happens. Used in the broadest sense, it covers the processes and conditions under which people understand and learn about anything that might be material for study. Franzmann (2000) outlined a hermeneutical process for students learning about women’s experience of and in religion/s, but the process can be readily adapted to any learning situation. The process takes account of cognitive and psychological experiences in learning, but it is above all “intensely interested in the place where a person stands – the place from which that person attempts to see the phenomenon to be understood – as well as the place where that phenomenon is situated” (p. 18).

Franzmann posits four key steps in the process of coming to understanding: describing the phenomenon in its context; describing one’s own standpoint; understanding the phenomenon; taking a position (academic and personal judgement and accountability), not as a linear process but one that moves constantly backward and forward among the steps. The actual activity of analysis and interpretation, where progress towards deeper learning occurs, is contained within the third step where the student chooses a model or lens (sociological, philosophical, linguistic, etc.) through which to view the material for study, asking questions of the material and allowing the material as it is studied to pose questions back, sometimes even changing the shape of the lens or model or requiring new models to be learnt and applied. In turn, the student’s standpoint may be expected to change, requiring a return to step 2 to consider the new standpoint prior to once again moving to analyse and interpret the material. The process of coming to understanding is very fluid:

The person who is studying uses certain questions to begin to listen to the phenomenon, but even those questions will change as the phenomenon speaks. The student, too, will be constantly changing in position as the process of attempting to understand continues. The method used will change as the student changes position in relation to the phenomenon. Thus, the whole process is really like a very lively, open-ended dialogue in which the positions of the dialogue partners constantly change and new and interesting ideas come to light. (Franzmann, 2000, p. 19)

The hermeneutical process thus aims for comprehension or apprehension of material for study, for engagement with a phenomenon, rather than arriving at some definitive and absolute answer as to its meaning. Such engagement includes listening, analysing, and making a judgement about the phenomenon one is learning about, but also reflection upon oneself as the person learning, posing questions both to the phenomenon and to oneself, allowing the process of learning to include questions in reciprocal directions towards the phenomenon and towards oneself. The aspect of self-reflection within the process finds parallels in Mezirow’s (1981) work on critical reflectivity in adult learning:

Awareness of why we attach the meanings we do to reality, especially to our roles and relationships – meanings often misconstrued out of the uncritically assimilated half-truths of conventional wisdom and power relationships assumed as fixed – may be the most significant distinguishing characteristic of adult learning. (p. 11)

Franzmann's hermeneutical process makes much more of the individual differences and personal stances of the students beyond what has been considered for the process of deep learning. An integral part of the process involves the student reflecting on her/his personal stance at every stage of questioning, analysis, and critical judgement. In this way, a student's judgements about what s/he is trying to understand will never be just rational, academic judgements but will be integrated as completely as possible with all the other aspects, including the psychological, of her/his life in general.

Key Factors in the Learning Environment

Grundy (1987) writes of the value of the "critical community" for both teachers and students (pp. 124–125). From the point of view of the hermeneutical process, the critical community comprises both those engaged in the classroom as students or teachers and also those beyond the classroom who influence the learning that takes place there, whether because of the role they have played in the previous experience of students and teachers, or as contemporary conversation and learning partners outside of the classroom.

The work of the critical learning community includes basic knowledge transfer; building motivation; setting clear goals for learning; the application of new knowledge to new situations; flexibility in the curriculum and critical methods; dialogue, interaction and peer evaluation; and personal positioning, judgement, and accountability. These elements all work best when linked and integrated into the activity of the community rather than approached as discrete aspects of the learning process.

University students who are taking courses in Theology, Religious Education, or Religious Studies often appear to be already highly motivated about their learning and thus already committed to a deep approach to learning. Perhaps it is a contemporary phenomenon as religions figure more frequently in news stories, or global events are linked with religious activity whether interpreted positively or negatively. Perhaps it is the subject matter that attracts a strong personal engagement, although the frequent presence of atheists or those with no religious background in classes suggests that the motivation may be supported by more than or other than religious notions. Perhaps it is simply because of the position of any of these programmes within faculties of the Humanities or Education, where the issues for discussion and interpretation are often those that naturally attract a personal opinion or interest.

At the beginning of each semester, a focus on the hermeneutical process will build on the interest and motivation for learning that is signalled by enrolment in a particular course of study. The process helps students situate themselves both in relation to the material to be studied and in relation to their own background and

the various communities that have informed their worldview to that time. Use of the process and some initial “success” in negotiating its steps can bring an early reinforcement to the student’s motivation. The teacher should be clear that the successful navigation by students of the process is itself an outcome, even prior to and necessary for later outcomes in formal assessment exercises.

Personal positioning requires some degree of maturity and self-knowledge already on the part of the students and teacher. Even more is demanded of students as they learn to position themselves in discussion and debate on various issues in their study, coming to view their own judgements and their arguments for them as a necessary and respectful step in dialogue with others on these issues. The process of positioning oneself in relation to material for study, analysing the material with a critical method, and then making a judgement about the material, understanding that both intellect and emotion (“head and heart”) are involved in judgement, is very close to what may be termed critical discernment, akin to what Broadbent proposes as a necessary accompaniment to learning about religion/s. Pierre Wolff’s (1993) simple schema of the major steps in discernment is helpful in clarifying the process: The framework is time; the tools are the head and the heart (“we screen with our heart in order to make a decision that is *ours* and one we can confirm subjectively” [p. 5]); the cornerstone is values (I “weigh my options with respect to what is important to me” [p. 6]). The hermeneutical and discernment processes together comprise a process of insight that relates to the whole experience of a person, the latter process intentionally applying the knowledge gained by the hermeneutical process to ordinary life experience. Both of these processes enable the constant evaluation of oneself and one’s position as student or teacher within the critical community.

Beyond a facility with hermeneutical or discernment models and processes, students and teachers need to understand what will support a critical community *as community*. Here Baidhaw’s (2007) proposal of the elements by which one can implement learning through the multicultural paradigm are significant. For Baidhaw, students and teachers must embrace a programme that includes co-existence, mutual understanding and respect, trust, equality in diversity, tolerance, forgiveness, and reconciliation to enable the transformation of their religious perspective from exclusivist to multiculturalist. These elements are particularly important in the community of the university classroom that is often inclusive of more individual “types” than any student may have experienced previously at close quarters. There will be, potentially, considerable diversity in age, ideological stance (including religious, atheist, and agnostic stances), personality type, sexual preference, and so on.

The requirement for teachers and students to exhibit the elements outlined by Baidhaw is very demanding, but it is clear that the quality of peer discussion and evaluation and deep learning within the classroom is dependent on the extent to which these elements are really embraced and practised. One can begin simply by techniques aimed at building trust and a safe environment for dialogue within the classroom. An easy catchphrase to structure peer evaluation of ideas brought forward in discussions or student presentations is “commend, recommend, commend” (borrowed from Toastmasters International). In other words, evaluations should

begin with something positive about the content of the idea or presentation, followed by a recommendation or constructive idea about how to improve or take an idea further, and rounded out by a final positive but different comment.

Of course, most students are appropriately socialized so that one can expect politeness and consideration within the classroom, but the respect needed in the critical community goes well beyond those social niceties. Such an attitude may come in its own time as students practise the hermeneutical model and relate to others who are attempting the same process. As we wrote in an earlier discussion on teaching for tolerance in world religions, attitudinal change within the learning process necessitates “dialogue with others, as a committed, judging, and discriminating partner in the dialogue, but still open to changing one’s stance, one’s questions, one’s opinions” (Franzmann & Tidswell, 2006, p. 41). Respect is key to a meaningful dialogue no matter what the personal stances of the partners:

The key here is to demand respect from students for their classmates, not because of what they believe, but as people who stand with them in the hermeneutical process, informed perhaps by very different communities, but who are struggling like them to understand and learn. (Franzmann & Tidswell, 2006, p. 41)

Standing with dialogue partners is an important image. Within the dialogue there will be a variety of positions, including positions of power and powerlessness, those with high or low self-esteem, those for whom the language of the classroom is not their first language, those who do not belong to the dominant religious group within the school or classroom, those with much life experience and those who are very young, students new to university and those who are about to complete their degree, and so on. Teachers need to monitor the progress of dialogue and take care to introduce activities that take account of potential situations in which some partners in the dialogue may be disadvantaged. Students too should be encouraged to monitor their own behaviours and to observe the behaviours of others with respect, especially taking into account disadvantage or disability.

However, even demanding an attitude of simple respect may mean potentially a great struggle for some students of religion/s, especially those who adhere to religions which hold exclusive soteriological claims that ensure the ability of one religion rather than another to assure followers of eternal salvation or enlightenment. There are clearly inherent difficulties for the critical community where a student’s starting point is to claim particular soteriological privilege that makes it impossible to dialogue with respect with adherents of other religions or adherents of no particular religion. While respect is demanded of these students in the classroom, it may take some time within the critical community before it becomes second nature to them in practice. Robert McKim (2001) outlines the problem that may eventually dawn on such students:

It is not just the fact that there are diverse beliefs that is striking; it is the fact that wise people who think carefully and judiciously, who are intelligent, clever, honest, reflective, and serious, who avoid distortion, exaggeration, and confabulation, who admit ignorance when appropriate, and who have relied on what has seemed to them to be the relevant considerations in the course of acquiring their beliefs, hold these diverse beliefs. (p. 129)

Some students will find it quite easy to respect or be open to religions or religious ideas from which they do not expect much challenge to their own worldview, or whose worldview partly informs their own. Thus, students who have a background in Christianity will often choose to do an assessment task on Judaism rather than another religion. Other students with a background in Buddhism may choose to write on Hinduism since they find similarities in key religious terms for both traditions.

Open-mindedness and respect are often learned with difficulty, even by those who believe they are exhibiting and living these values. Students sometimes very subtly, and even unconsciously, favour their own religious tradition by an exclusive use of historical examples, or technical, doctrinal, or other terms from their own tradition in class discussion. Teachers too can be guilty of this subtle imbalance in presentation unless constantly vigilant and self-critical.

Students are often willing enough to apply the methods of critical analysis to other religions. However, learning to apply critical methods to their own traditions can be very challenging, and they may also become very defensive when other students bring critical methods to bear on these same traditions. Burke (1996) advocates that students should begin to learn to apply their critical skills to other traditions than those they are familiar with:

In general I have found it a good rule to begin students with the religions most different from the one they are chiefly familiar with, and to leave that one till last. In this way they acquire a broader perspective, a larger framework, within which to view their own religion. (p. xxi)

While this is a good principle, in practice it may be somewhat problematic when almost all world religions are represented in the class. In such a case, the principle can be applied to assignment work rather than to the teaching schedule – Christian students encouraged to write on Buddhism, Muslim students on Hinduism, and so on.

Critical work within the learning community also requires constant evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning as a symbiotic process. Quality teaching and quality learning go together, and a review and revision of techniques for one will produce greater quality potentially for both areas. Teachers who invite their own peers to critically evaluate the quality of their teaching for deeper learning introduce a wider dialogue partnership for themselves which has its own impact on the critical community of the classroom.

Part of the emphasis on quality learning demands that at the beginning of the course, the objectives for the study and the expected learning outcomes must be clear and unambiguous. Students should be introduced to learning for the course by a set of assessment items differentiated by the outcomes they demand, from basic knowledge of content and method through to the application of knowledge to new situations. While such surety and clarity enables students to prepare for assessment tasks, they must also be quickly introduced to the idea that much of what they will encounter in the course will lack definitive clarity, whether that be in the enormous

variety of definition or explanation for key points or issues, or even the lack of agreement among scholars over which models of analysis are appropriate for working on materials or phenomena within the subject area. While there is basic knowledge that must be acquired, flexibility and open-ended questions remain the order of the day. As students mature in their critical abilities, they will see clearly the positive and negative aspects of even the best methods and models for analysis. Not so obvious, but equally as important, is the necessity for students to learn respect for the material under study so that they learn gradually to choose the most appropriate critical model to enhance the study of that material, and to allow the material to pose its own questions to them in return.

The teacher has a duty of care to monitor student progress, even for those with healthy self-esteem, especially while challenging their ideas and assumptions about religion/s. For subjects in the Humanities that raise questions that confront deeply-held personal beliefs, adequate “health warnings” for students of the risks involved are absolutely necessary. Discussion of a variety of religious themes can create an enormous impact in a student. A teacher who sets out to teach academic skills that will inevitably put into question personal beliefs must accept responsibility for the process that has been initiated and must carefully monitor what happens to students as the process continues, as well as being aware of counselling, chaplaincy, and student support services that are available on campus that can further support the student if necessary.

Conclusion

A strong emphasis on the hermeneutical approach attempts explicitly to bring the students’ life experience of learning and problem solving outside of the university into the classroom, so that students may learn how interrelated the different contexts of their approaches to learning are. The context for using the hermeneutical model is the classroom in the first instance, while all aspects of the process are learned and practised explicitly. Students learn basic information about religion/s, understanding and practising a hermeneutical process that combines personal response and reflection with academic critical analysis and interpretation, and engage in a dialogue of respect and critical openness with fellow students. While a variety of religious backgrounds and stances may be more in evidence in Religious Studies classes than Religious Education or Theology, nevertheless the potential is there for nascent inter-religious engagement within the very classroom. By practising the hermeneutical model over and over in the classroom, it becomes second-nature to students, deeply inculcated, deeply learned by head and heart, and thus the ground is solidly set for the student to engage in any kind of self-reflective learning and dialogue. In actually learning to use the hermeneutical model with skill within inter-religious engagement within the classroom, the student thereafter has a thoroughly familiar model that can be applied to every academic and life situation, including inter-religious engagement outside of the classroom.

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Envisioning the Possibilities for Inter-religious Dialogue in Christian Colleges in Asia: The Case of Chung Chi College in Hong Kong

Peter Tze Ming Ng

Introduction

The twenty-first century is indeed a great century, not only for the advancement of bio-technology and information technology, but also for the advancement of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogues. We are indeed living in a fragile world today. Having been awakened by the September 11 incident in New York in 2001 and the subsequent US wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, we now realize that our world peace would easily collapse if we are not cautious in our ways of engaging with people of different ideologies and beliefs. The Asia/Oceania region is endowed with a rich variety of cultural and religious heritages. Whether these cultural and religious differences are roots for “the clash of civilizations” or whether they can be “vital resources for our humanity” is up to humans to decide.¹ This also prompts the following questions: Will our Christian colleges have any role to play in this Asian/Oceanic context? Can Christian colleges in this region serve as possible venues for the cultivation of communication and understandings among people of different cultures? Further, can we work to promote the harmonious living of people of various religious faiths and beliefs?² A case in point is the Christian college, Chung Chi, which has found itself serving as a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures, in particular, between Christianity and other religious traditions. The results have been both fruitful and stimulating.

In this chapter, I shall attempt to use Chung Chi College as a case and envision its contribution to inter-religious dialogues and others as a distinctive Christian

P.T.M. Ng (✉)
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: peterng.cuhk@gmail.com

¹The author has in mind Samuel P. Huntington’s (1997) and Brian Hebblethwaite’s (1997).

²See, e.g. Ng, Peter Tze Ming (1989, 1999).

college in China.³ I shall describe briefly the historical and social contexts of Chung Chi College in Hong Kong, and identify the challenges and opportunities Christian colleges are facing in Hong Kong. Then I shall report on some of the activities that have been attempted at Chung Chi College, in response to the challenges that have arisen in this distinctive context.⁴

Historical and Social Contexts

There were altogether 13 Protestant and 3 Roman Catholic universities in China when the Communists took over the country in 1949.⁵ It was the outburst of the Korean War in 1950 and the subsequent breakdown of Sino-American relationship that finally led to the closing down of all Christian colleges in China.⁶ The remnants were later settled down in Taiwan and Hong Kong to continue their educational activities among the Chinese people. Now, there are five Christian colleges in Taiwan and three in Hong Kong.⁷ With the return of the sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 1997, the three institutions became the only Christian colleges/universities in the People's Republic of China. These three colleges are now witness not only to the possibility of Christian higher education in China, but they also exemplify the significance of Christian colleges in Asia today.

³The author has presented a regional paper at the Leadership Conference of IAPCHE for the Asia/Oceania Region in the University of the Philippines at Los Banos in October 22–26, 2002. Scholars may consult “Regional Paper: China-Hong Kong” in *Contact – Newsletter of the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education*, vol. 15, no. 1, insert pp. 1–6, November 2003.

⁴There are three Christian colleges in Hong Kong. Besides Chung Chi College which was founded in 1951 by the representatives of Protestant churches in Hong Kong and the Western missionaries who had retreated from China because of the closure of the 13 Protestant universities in China, there are also the Hong Kong Baptist University (founded in 1956 as Hong Kong Baptist College and was upgraded in 1995) and Lingnan University (founded in 1967 as Lingnan College and was upgraded as university in 1999). Altogether they represent the Christian presence in the higher education of Hong Kong. But for the length of this chapter, I shall give a fuller report on Chung Chi College as an illustration.

⁵The three Roman Catholic universities are: Fu Jen Catholic University, Aurora (Chen Tan) University and the Tientsin University of Industry and Commerce. The Protestant universities include Yenching University, Shantung (Cheeloo) Christian University, University of Nanking, Ginling Women's College, University of Shanghai, St. John's University, Hangchoe University, Soochow University, Central China (Huachung) University, West China Union (Huaxi) University, Fukien Christian University, South China (Huanan) Women's University and Lingnan University. The author has attempted a comprehensive research on the 13 Protestant universities. See Peter Tze Ming Ng, Philip Yuen Sang Leung et al. (2002).

⁶See the discussion in He Di (1989).

⁷The five Christian Colleges in Taiwan include Soochow (Tung Wu) University, Tung Hai University, Chung Yuan Christian University, Providence University and Fu Jen Catholic University; and the three in Hong Kong are Chung Chi College, Hong Kong Baptist University and Lingnan University.

Though Hong Kong has been a British colony for 155 years from 1842 to 1997, the Christian community remains a small section, estimated to be 8–9% of the whole population. Being incorporated into the system of higher education in Hong Kong, the Christian colleges are now situated in the flux of the secular context in Hong Kong. When Chung Chi College became one of the constituent colleges of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1963,⁸ it had already learnt to be accountable not only to the various sponsoring churches but also to the secular university authorities and to the government of Hong Kong. As a Christian college which is situated within a public, secular, government subvented University, Chung Chi College needs to strive hard to compete with other constituent colleges within CUHK and the other universities in Hong Kong in the quality of academic teaching and research which have become so demanding in the secular context. Further, the college has to aim for excellence in one way or another in order to be a distinctive academic institution in Hong Kong.

As a society, Hong Kong is a secularized, multi-cultural and multi-religious society. There are various religious traditions, including many different Protestant denominations with a plurality of theologies; the Roman Catholic Diocese formed by the various religious orders and missionary societies; Buddhism and Daoism whose adherents worship a huge number of deities in very mixed ways; and finally, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and other popular religions are also evident. Hence, any form of religious education conducted in a public university is bound to be inclusive and educational for all. Even in the teaching of Christianity, it cannot be taught as the only or dominant world religion, but rather as one among many religions in the modern world. Moreover, another great challenge today, in Hong Kong as also in Asia, poses the question: Should Christian colleges be open to non-Christian religious perspectives? Does “teaching Christianly” imply also the willingness and possibility to provide open platforms for genuine, educational inter-religious dialogues? These are some of the issues that confront our Christian colleges in Hong Kong today.

As a Christian college, Chung Chi aims to continue the Christian, cultural and academic activities on the peripheral of China which the Christian colleges in the Mainland have been pursuing since before 1949.⁹ Her school badge is engraved with a Nestorian Cross and the Lotus, symbolizing the attempt to integrate Christianity and Chinese culture which is the Christian vision of the college. The building of a college chapel also symbolizes another Christian presence within the university campus. Christian universities are seeking different ways to “glorify God”, in

⁸Chung Chi College was the first among the three Christian colleges of Hong Kong. It was founded in October 1951 by the representatives of Protestant churches in Hong Kong together with the missionaries who retreated from China. In 1956, Chung Chi College was moved to its permanent site at Ma Liu Shui, the New Territories of Hong Kong, which is just 30 miles from the border of the China Mainland, and the Chinese University was formed by its merging with two other non-religious higher institutions in 1963.

⁹See *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Establishment of Chung Chi College*, kept at Yale Divinity School Library, Record Group No. 11A, Box 110A, File 1518.

response to their specific contexts. The constitution of Chung Chi College, when it was incorporated as one of the three foundational colleges of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1963,¹⁰ stated explicitly that it sought “to promote Christian faith, learning and research.” Hence, it is the college’s Christian mission to strive for Christian scholarship in academia, not only serving the Christian community but also the wider community, locally and regionally.

Being situated among the various Asian countries which are endowed with a rich variety of cultural and religious heritages, Chung Chi College has another distinctively Christian mission, namely to cultivate new possibilities for communication among people of different faiths and beliefs. The mission became more apparent when Hong Kong was handed over to China and became the Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China in 1997. Having been suppressed by the communist government in any study about religion, there is now an outburst of interest among Chinese professors and scholars in Mainland China in religious studies, including the study of Christianity. As a result, Chung Chi College has found itself serving as a centre for the active research and academic study of religions including Christianity. Part of the college’s vision is that it would serve as a place that would attract famous scholars from Mainland China, Taiwan and other Asian countries as well as scholars from the West to meet and work on serious research in religious studies, including the study of Christianity.

In the following paragraphs, I shall use the case of Chung Chi College to illustrate how a Christian college can serve as mediator for the development of inter-religious dialogue in the Hong Kong-Asian contexts.

Attempts on Christian Higher Education at Chung Chi

To begin with, Chung Chi seeks to affirm its distinctiveness and unique position as a Christian college in the midst of the contemporary Asian world. Certainly, there are some unique features found in Chung Chi College because of its distinctive contexts in Asia. These are discussed below:

- a. First, it is the vision of Chung Chi College “to promote Christian faith, learning and research”. Hence, though Chung Chi is situated within the context of a public, government-subsidized, secular university, it still maintains a unique contribution to academia in the offering of theological education and training of the students and for the integration of Christian faith and universal knowledge in higher education.¹¹ Since Chung Chi College is located within

¹⁰See *Chung Chi College Handbook 1993–1994*, Shatin, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Chung Chi College, 1994, p. 11. Since the Chinese University of Hong Kong is a government-subsidized secular university, Chung Chi College becomes a uniquely Christian college within the secular university setting.

¹¹One is reminded of John H. Newman’s “the idea of a university” in which he stressed on the place of theology in university education. See also Jaroslav Pelikan (1992).

a secular university system, it cannot offer any theological training which is distinctive of a particular theological or denominational stance, however, it can offer a wide range of courses for inter-denominational theological education. Accordingly, Chung Chi College offers an undergraduate programme for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (in Theology), and various graduate programmes leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.), Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Divinity (M.Div.), Master of Theology (M.Th.), Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).¹² By 2004, the name “Chung Chi College Divinity School” was formally approved by the university authority. This signified an upgrading of the college’s status in the Chinese University of Hong Kong.¹³ Chung Chi theological students have to take courses together with other non-theological students, hence they are open to challenges directly from their non-Christian classmates who demand rational justification of the Christian faith. As Christian theology has to be studied as an academic discipline within the secular university setting, the students at CUHK are trained to study Christian religion from inter-disciplinary approaches. They can apply methodologies from different disciplines and from various perspectives: historical, social, cultural, philosophical, psychological as well as other aspects of Christianity. This has resulted in courses such as “Philosophy of Religion”, “Phenomenology of Religion”, “Sociology of Religion” and “Psychology of Religion”, alongside with other Christian Theology courses. On the other hand, theologians at Chung Chi Colleges are more concerned with the development of indigenous Chinese and Asian theologies, to integrate Christianity, not only with the Chinese culture, but also with the multi-religious Asian cultures. Chung Chi professors have been taking a leading role in the Program for Theology and Culture in Asia (PTCA) since 1983 and collaborating with theologians from other Asian countries in “Doing Theology with Asian Resources”.¹⁴

- b. Second, as a Christian college, Chung Chi ensures the provision of Christian worship and nurture in college life. This is achieved by a chaplaincy office which conducts Christian services on Sundays; running Campus Christian Fellowships; and co-ordinating various Christian and religious groups for professors, staff and students, not only at Chung Chi College as one constituent college, but also

¹²See *The Handbook of the Department of Religion, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1999–2000*. pp. 7–16. & *The Theology Division Handbook, 1999–2000*. pp. 13–14. Some of these degrees are granted directly by the Chinese government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Indeed, Chung Chi is the only Christian College which offers theological degree programs for which the degrees are awarded by the Chinese government.

¹³The title was to replace the former one, “theology division” which was seen just as a division with the department of religion in CUHK. See “Handbook of Divinity School of Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2004–2005”, Hong Kong: Chung Chi College Divinity School, CUHK, 2004.

¹⁴See e.g. its ten year’s report: John England and Archie C. C. Lee (1993) and also articles by Simon Shui-man Kwan and Kwok-keung Yeung (February, 2002).

within the whole Chinese University of Hong Kong. As well, the Chaplain organizes activities during Christmas and Easter festivals and runs Christian Culture Weeks for the whole university.

It is important to note that Asian people often find themselves living with people of other faiths. On many occasions, they have to cross their own boundaries, not only to meet people of other Christian denominations, but also, people of other religious faiths or beliefs. For instance, there are other religious groups such as the Buddhist Student Society on the campus and the Chaplaincy of Chung Chi College extends care and concern to these other non-Christian religious groups. Once or twice a year, the Chaplain organizes an Agape feast to welcome the leaders of all religious groups on the campus and this is a valuable sharing time. Since Hong Kong is a multi-cultural and multi-religious society and Christianity is respected in the university, it is considered just one among the many religious traditions in the world, alongside of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism. This is, indeed, what Christians have experienced in China today. Hence, while “religion as a way of life” has never enjoyed any privileged status in the Chinese University of Hong Kong nor in Chung Chi College, it is duly respected as a perspective of life-experiences worthy of the scholars’ attention, and the study of religion has been an active element within academia. Indeed, all religions are respected equally in “the context of religious pluralism”.¹⁵ Within this context, Chung Chi College provides a platform for academic and educational dialogue among the various religious traditions which serves, perhaps, as one other kind of Christian service that Chung Chi can offer to the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

- c. A third feature is the programme of “Harmony in Diversity” which was started in the Department of Religion at Chung Chi College, to illustrate how Christians could serve the community and other religious schools in Hong Kong. In the year of 1998, the department received a grant from the University Grants Committee to start a pilot project called: “The Project for Strengthening the Teaching of Ethical, Civic and Religious Education in Schools (ECRE)” (August 1998–January 2000). Two of the most important tasks were: first, to build up working relationship with teachers of Religious Education and also ethical and civic education; and secondly, to establish a web site of ECRE.¹⁶ In 1999, another block grant was received from the Quality Education Fund of the Hong Kong Government, which led to another project: “Religious Education: in Search of Education for Quality Life”, which affirmed the belief that Life should be the key concern for education and the ultimate aim of Quality Education must be for Quality Life.

Two of the main features of this project were the School Partnership Scheme and the ECRE web site. In our School Partnership Scheme, Religious

¹⁵See also discussions in Ng, Peter Tze Ming (1999).

¹⁶“ECRE” is an abbreviation form for “Ethical, Civic and Religious Education”. See <http://home.school.net.hk/~ecre>.

Studies teachers were invited from 20 secondary schools in Hong Kong. They were schools from the different religious traditions, namely Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, Confucianism, Islam, Protestantism, Sek Sek Yuen and Daoism. As well, school principals, religious education teachers and student representatives from the various schools were invited to attend a launching ceremony at the beginning of each school year as a way to kick off the inter-religious engagement programmes. Further, the leaders of the six participating religions joined the ceremony as guests of honour. One remarkable event in this programme was the running of a series of “Genuine Dialogues with Top Religious Leaders”. These were a series of open interviews with each of the six top religious leaders in the university studio at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. It was a live programme and was simultaneously shown to 800 students in 20 different schools in Hong Kong who watched the interview through their computer networks in their schools. While listening to the interviews, the students could send their questions and hear responses from the religious leaders directly through their computers.

Another significant event was the collection of essays from students who had interviewed some religious elites in Hong Kong society and reported on their visions of how people of different faiths could live in harmony in Hong Kong.¹⁷ Moreover, with the support from the religious leaders of these six religions in Hong Kong, their representative schools were contacted to plan for and engage in genuine inter-religious dialogue in the school settings. The teachers from those schools came together to work out lesson plans and to draw as much as they could from the vast resources and great wisdom from their respective religious traditions. The themes of their lesson plans were grouped under three specific areas:

- “Facing Life and Death: A Consideration of Various Religious Viewpoints”
- “Seeking Values for Quality Life: Insights and Wisdom from Various Religious Traditions”
- “A Global Village: Getting along with Peoples of Different Religious Beliefs”

The conviction that was fundamental to the programme was that teachers from the various religious traditions can be engaged not only in inter-religious dialogues, but also in “sharings” from one another and in developing lesson plans. Indeed, this was a successful attempt to achieve genuine “harmony in diversity” and to find that there are vast resources and great wisdom from the various religious traditions which can bring insights to the development of value and life education in Hong Kong.

Second, the ECRE web site was further developed to provide an online meeting place for teachers and educators concerned with the Education for Quality

¹⁷There were 17 essays awarded and published in a volume, see *2005–2006 Programme of Harmony in Diversity: Students Competition Essays Collection* (Hong Kong: Department of Cultural and Religious Studies, CUHK, 2006).

Life as well as a resource centre for them.¹⁸ Now there are more than 40 lesson plans under the three key areas, with a catalogue of collections of more than 600 items related to Life Education and Religious Education. In addition, there is a forum called: “Teachers’ Meeting Place” where, currently, more than 250 teachers and educators are registered. They can download full contents of the lesson plans, communicate by email with other members, and join in discussion forums to share their visions and ideas, smile and tears. Since 2003, another series of Secondary School Interface Programme was launched. Several themes were used such as “Harmony in Diversity – Co-existence amongst Religious and Ethnic Communities in Hong Kong”, “Developing a New Generation of Global, Cultural and Religious Perspectives” and “Interactive Plurality – Exploring Hong Kong Culture and Religions”. The aim of these series of programmes was to provide Hong Kong secondary school teachers and students with better knowledge and skills to live in harmony with people of different races, religions and faiths, despite whatever cultural and religious background they came from.¹⁹

- d. Fourth, the excellent situation that Chung Chi is in to become “a light to the world”²⁰ has been recognized and is something which the Chinese University of Hong Kong can value within the academia. As one of the four constituent colleges of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Chung Chi can distinguish its Christian identity in many ways without imposing on the other students. While Christian witness is distinctive at Chung Chi, it also serves as an asset or an added value to the university, offering an optional lifestyle for the students and faculties to choose from. Since the establishment of the “Center for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society” in 1996,²¹ Chung Chi has broadened its vision to

¹⁸A print out of the homepage of the ECRE website is attached with the presentation handout. With our homepage, you can see all our major tasks, including the School Partnership Scheme, the Teacher’s Meeting Place, the Lesson Plan Warehouse, conducting Workshops, having a column of Education for Quality Life in Young Post of South China Morning Post, monitoring the Question Pages of subjects including Bible, Civics, Ethics and Religion in Hong Kong CyberCampus.

¹⁹For details, see *Special Issue for the 10th Anniversary of Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, 1996–2006*. Hong Kong, Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2006.

²⁰The imagery “a light to the world” is derived from the parable of Jesus where he says: “You are the light for the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden . . . (so) let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16). This is precisely what a Christian college can do for the society where it is located.

²¹The Centre was set up with three distinctive objectives, namely: (1) To facilitate a high level of academic study of religion in Chinese society, with a focus on the contribution of religion to Chinese culture, traditions and society; (2) To enrich the present scope and activities of the general education and life of the College by providing interdisciplinary study and research programmes, seminars and conferences; (3) To encourage faculty and college members and students to actively participate in the international academic community to improve the quality of study and research by adopting a rigorous scientific and interdisciplinary approach in the investigation of religion and its interaction with Chinese traditions and modern Chinese society. See *Special Issue for the 10th Anniversary of Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, 1996–2006*. Hong Kong, Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2006, p. 21. The present author has been fortunate to serve as the Director of the Centre for 8 years since 2000.

provide greater opportunities for open dialogue and discussions on religious matters and promote more scholarly studies in areas of religion and theology. The college is envisioned to a new mission to promote the study of religions including Christianity by organizing regular activities such as monthly lectures, open seminars, academic conferences, publication of books and occasional papers.²² In this way, it has secured a legitimate place for, not only the Christian perspectives, but also the religious perspectives in academia. It has also opened up more spheres and facilitated a higher level of educational discourse on religion, hence leading to inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogues within the university setting. Indeed, Chung Chi College has already established a good tradition in cultivating the study of religion as a legitimate place in the academy and, while upholding its particular Christian identity, it has remained open to the study of other religions.²³

- e. Since the return of Hong Kong's sovereignty to the People's Republic of China in 1997, there have been greater opportunities to link up with universities in the Mainland, hence there are new challenges to be faced including taking up new missions in serving the universities in Mainland China.²⁴ For instance, Chinese scholars are more eager to come to Hong Kong to upgrade their western knowledge and research methodologies, especially in the field of Christian and religious studies. They are concerned not only with the study of Christianity as a western culture, but also with the comparison of Christianity with other Chinese religions, and with the practical issues of religion in general.²⁵ Many questions have been raised such as, What then can Christian colleges offer to these Chinese scholars? Can we offer ourselves to help train Chinese professors for universities in Mainland China, especially in the areas of religious studies and Christian studies? Can we set up a centre and provide a platform for them in their search for the academic study of Christianity and other Chinese religions and for the more scholarly, inter-religious, educational dialogues?

Since the establishment of a new Department of Religion at Peking University in 1996, the Religion Department of Chung Chi College agreed to collaborating

²²In the past years, the Centre has organized over 80 academic seminars, 18 regional and international conferences and published more than 30 occasional papers, monographs and translation series. See, e.g. the report in *ibid.*, and *Newsletter of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society*. No. 12. Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, September 2004.

²³See also the report in Ng, Peter Tze-Ming (2001).

²⁴Within the past decade, there were more than ten universities in China which had opened a department of religion or offered religious studies programs, such as Peking University, Qinghua University, the People's University of China, Fudan University, University of Nanjing, Szechuan University, Zhejiang University and Zhongshan University.

²⁵For instance, there were "The Centre for the Study of Morality and Religion" and "Research Institute for the Study of Religion and Peace" established in Tsinghua University and Shanghai University respectively in 2001.

on joint activities such as holding an academic conference each alternate years.²⁶ As well there are many doctoral students from Mainland China. Indeed, after the return of Hong Kong to China, there have been greater opportunities to develop academic links with universities in the Mainland and host these Chinese scholars, hence our new challenges and our new missions in serving the universities in Mainland China.

- f. In response to the greater demand from Chinese scholars, our Center for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society at Chung Chi College has ventured a new mission to co-organize with the Ricci Institute for Chinese–Western Cultural History at the University of San Francisco, an International Young Scholars’ Symposium in December 2002. The Symposium was specifically designed to provide a platform for the training of young scholars from Mainland China, especially for the Ph.D. candidates who are working on Christianity and Chinese Culture and Society to exchange their views and findings with other young scholars in Hong Kong and the world. These young scholars are expected to present papers on their existing research and interact with other participants. Well-established and distinguished scholars specialized in the area will be invited as consultants and to give comments on the presentations.²⁷ The Symposium has become well-known throughout China.
- g. A further feature of our inter-religious programmes are conferences that have been organized around topics in inter-religious education and the Christian Chinese University. As well, Chung Chi has been organizing several faculty-students study/“roots-seeking” tours in China. These trips aimed to bring together students from “the three places across the Strait” (namely, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong) and to facilitate better understanding among the participants, while helping them to seek their Christian colleges roots in China. Another two tours were “study tours” organized by the Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society. About 20 students were taken each tour to Xian, Dunhuang in Northwest China and Quizhou in Southwest China. The students were introduced to the rich religious resources in the region. Both trips were found very enlightening and educational and as a result, our students’ lives were very much enriched.
- h. Last but not the least, there is also an important vision of Chung Chi College to serve as “a bridge between cultures”, a bridge between East and West, a bridge between Asian cultures, a bridge between Hong Kong and China Mainland, and also a bridge between People’s Republic of China and Taiwan. To cite an

²⁶For information, see *The Manual of the Development Project of the Department of Religion at Peking University (1996–2001)*, Beijing: Peking University, August 1996. Other universities in Mainland China are also following this trend, either in setting up new departments or in offering courses or programs in religious studies at undergraduate or graduate levels.

²⁷Three distinguished scholars are invited including Prof. Daniel Bays from Calvin College, Grand Rapids, USA, Prof. Nicolas Standaert from Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium and Prof. Zhuo Xinping from Centre for the Study of Christianity, Institute of World Religions, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing.

example, the Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society has jointly organized an international conference with the Holy Spirit Study Centre of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese and the Research Centre of Catholic History, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan. The theme of the conference was on the “Boxer Movement and Christianity in China”. What was significant about the conference was that discussions on the Boxer Movement have been going on for the last 100 years, both within the Catholic/Protestant circles and among the Mainland Chinese scholars who looked at the event from a purely non-religious perspective. There had never been any “crossing over” or any educational dialogues between the two camps. It was, therefore, for the first time that “scholars from within the Church” and “scholars from outside the Church”, “scholars from Taiwan” and “scholars from Mainland China” were drawn together in open dialogues on this crucial issue on Boxer Movement in an academic conference.²⁸ Indeed, Chung Chi College is envisioned to serve as a “crossing-bridge” between “scholars from within the Church” and “scholars from outside the Church”, and the aim is to make the utmost effort to provide an arena for Mainland Chinese scholars, Taiwan and overseas, whether they are Catholic/Protestant or secular scholars, to communicate and interact with each others on educational platforms.²⁹ This is precisely what a Christian college can do to support inter-religious dialogue and education in the Hong Kong-Asian context.

Concluding Remarks

In summary, there are many significant challenges for Christian colleges in the twenty-first Century in Asian countries. There may be different ways to respond to the challenges in different countries, yet we all shared our common mission – to glorify God and train good leaders for Christian higher education in Asia. Chung Chi College is just one example in China-Hong Kong which is attempting to explore distinctive ways to extend the Christian service by providing an educational platform for inter-religious engagements in the modern world.

Chung Chi College has indeed envisioned its mission and role as that of “a light” and “a bridge”. First, it is “a light to the world”. By creating a platform for inter-religious dialogues and engagements in the campus, it has, indeed, provided a unique Christian service to the faculty and students, not only at Chung Chi College, but also in the whole Chinese University of Hong Kong. Second, the college serves as “a bridge between cultures”, a bridge between the East and the West, a bridge between Hong Kong and China Mainland, and also a bridge between People’s

²⁸In fact, the conference was designed in such a way that the first part of the conference was held in Taiwan and the second part was subsequently held in Hong Kong, simply for the reason that some Mainland Chinese scholars might not be allowed to enter Taiwan.

²⁹For more details, see Ng, Peter Tze Ming (2004).

Republic of China and Taiwan. Moreover, the college serves as a bridge between different cultures, to bridge between Christianity and the Chinese and Asian religions. It is indeed the vision of Chung Chi College that Christian colleges in Asia will fully utilize Asian resources and best serve the society by becoming great centres for inter-cultural exchanges and inter-religious dialogues.

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Self-Understandings of RE Teachers in Structural Identity Consultation,¹ Contributing to School Identity in a Multifaith Context

Cok Bakker and K.H. Ina ter Avest

Introduction

Holland is a small country and known for ages for its warm and respectful welcome to migrants coming from far and wide, changing the country into a multicultural and multireligious society. In the Netherlands a typical Dutch way of coping with diversity has developed, the so-called pillarisation process. As a result of this process the Dutch educational system is known as a “pillarised” system. Characteristic for this system is that, as a consequence of the societal organisation, educational institutions are organised along the lines of denominations of religions. Due to this in the Netherlands we have denominational Christian schools of a variety of Christian denominations, for instance, like Protestant and Roman Catholic schools, next to public schools dominated by a humanistic worldview. The impact of this “societal map” is quite huge if one realises that the roots of this system were already evident at the end of the nineteenth century and that nowadays (in a secularised country as the Netherlands is) approximately 65% of the Dutch schools are, formally speaking, Christian schools. At the end of the last century, as a consequence of a process of emancipation of newly arrived workers, formerly known as “guestworkers”, the foundation of Islamic schools became the new offshoots in the pillarised educational system.² Until then, Muslim parents found their way to state schools for the education of their children and, even more so, to Christian schools. For teachers in these Christian schools, as well as for the principals, the arrival of Islamic children raised questions like, “Can we tell the stories of the Bible to Muslim children?”, “Can we say our morning prayers with Christian and Muslim pupils altogether, in the same classroom?”, and “What kind of responsibility do we, teachers of a Christian school, have for the religious development of Muslim children?”

C. Bakker (✉)
Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands
e-mail: c.bakker@uu.nl

¹SIC, not sic as pitting people against one another, but as a metaphor of enriching contrasts.

²For a more detailed description, see Ter Avest, Bakker, Bertram-Troost and Miedema (2007).

By the end of the last century, these questions turned into peremptory demands when the first student-teacher from a Christian Teacher Training Centre, who had an Islamic background, knocked on the door of a christian school and asked for permission to do her practical period in this school. Instead of confining this discussion to this particular student-teacher and this particular team, the Foundation of Christian schools, of which this particular school was part of, decided to make it a central theme for all the Foundations's Christian primary schools as well as schools for children with special needs.

Principals and teams of teachers of all the schools that are part of the Foundation were invited to participate in a 2-year *pilot* project to discuss in depth the encounter of Islam and Christianity in the context of the daily practice of their classes. This was the start of what we coin as the Structural Identity Consultation (Terdu & Bakker, 2000; Bakker, 2006). During the pilot project, four participating schools spent 3 days during the academic year in deliberations on the school's identity. After those 2 years, more variety was created in the time spent in deliberations (3×a day; 1×a 2 days' meeting; one whole day followed by two afternoons) as well as on the place to meet for the SIC process (in the schools' staff room, or in an hotel).

In this chapter we explore and present the established connection of the SIC process and the self-understanding of the teacher as a normative professional, in close relation to the leadership style of the principal of the school. In the SIC process not only do teachers get to know each other in a more profound way, also their (religious) self-understanding deepens. We will argue that the strengthening of the normative professionalism of the teacher and the identity development of the school reinforce one another. The results of our longitudinal research project also underline the team-building effect of the SIC process.

To start this chapter, we describe a "critical incident"³ of a teacher of a Christian primary school in the city of Rotterdam, the largest harbour of the Netherlands. In this harbour city many more nationalities live together (e.g. children of more than 30 nationalities attend one school), representing a variety of religious denominations (e.g. – secularised Protestant or Catholic – Christianity, Islam, Hinduism). This "critical incident" is the point of departure for the second paragraph in which we elaborate on the teacher as a normative and reflective professional, and the necessity of collegial consultation on "critical incidents". Next, in the third paragraph, we describe the characteristic start of SIC, and the interrelatedness of the teacher's self-awareness and school identity. In the fourth paragraph we summarise the characteristics of SIC, that is, so to speak, the identity of SIC itself. In the fifth paragraph we focus on the impact of the leadership style of the principal on the process and progress of SIC, one of the main findings of our 5 years' qualitative research project on SIC. At the end of our contribution, in the sixth paragraph, we point at some threats and benefits for SIC. We recommend a coaching process for the principal to enlarge his/her flexibility in answering the needs of the teachers in SIC.

³In his biographical research on teachers' professional development, Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe (1990) and Kelchtermans (1994) points to the pivotal importance of 'critical incidents', situations in their personal life and situations of their professional training that continue to have a decisive influence on a teacher's behaviour in the classroom.

Classroom Discussion on the Manifold Name(s) of God

Let's take a look in a Christian school, populated with Christian, secular, Hindu and Muslim children.⁴ Like she does every day, Miss Janet, the 48-year-old teacher of group four of this primary school,⁵ starts the day with her 7- and 8-year-old pupils, singing religious songs and reading the Bible. After reading the Bible, Miss Janet is going to start the morning prayer, when Yunus raises his finger and asks: "Miss, Allah and God, are they the same?". Miss Janet, taken by surprise, looks at her pupils and asks them: "What do you think, God and Allah, are they the same?" For the pupils this question seems not embarrassing at all. They respond without any hesitation. "Yes, I think it's all the same", is the reaction of Samir. "No, 'God' is the god of the Christians, and 'Allah' is the Muslim's god", answers Claudia. "Miss, I think God and Allah are just two of the many names God has. It just depends on what you are used to say in your prayer", Ricardo states. The others nod emphatically. Miss Janet then passes to the order of the day, asks the children to either fold or raise their hands, whereafter she starts her morning prayer.

Consultation on Miss Janet's "Critical Incident"

Earlier we noted that Miss Janet was taken by surprise by the question on God and Allah. In the family Miss Janet was born into, and the Teacher Training College she was trained at, Islam apparently was not a topic of discussion. In the years Miss Janet was trained, the Muslim guest workers had just arrived and were supposed to go back to their country after a couple of years. Nobody felt any urge to gain more in-depth knowledge about Islam.

In our biographical research we found that a teacher's classroom practice is rooted in her life-span narrative, and her valued "critical incidents" (Ter Avest & Bakker 2007; Bakker, Van der Want, Ter Avest 2009). As a consequence, her actions in the classroom could be interpreted as "value loaded" or "infused with value(s)" (see also Bakker & Rigg, 2004). In the above given example of Miss Janet's "critical incident", we see her giving room to different interpretations of the uniqueness of God and Allah, as well as to differences between the two names, and at the same time we see her creating space for a variety of names of God. Professional collegial consultation and coaching on this "critical incident" might have raised Miss Janet's awareness of many other possible answers on the pupil's question about the god's name. From the data of our extensive research we know that diversity between teachers at the same school with different (religious, secularised-religious

⁴This 'critical incident' was written down on the base of researcher's notes of classroom observation on 25 April 2008. For the reading of this incident we find our inspiration in a Faircloughian (2003) text analysis

⁵In the Netherlands children go to primary school and start in group 1 at the age of 4. Children go to primary school till the age of 12, group 8.

or non-religious) worldviews equals the diversity within a group of teachers adhering to the same worldview. One of Miss Janet's colleagues for example, socialised and educated as an orthodox Christian, might have been more strict in her answer, stating that although Muslims use different names of Allah in their prayer, "we as Christians pray to God". Thereafter, this colleague might have urged her pupils to fold their hands and join in the morning prayer. Yet another colleague might have reflected upon this situation in still another way, stressing that we do not know what is the "right" name, so we better not talk about it at all. Instead, we should get things back to normal after this embarrassing question, and reading a poem at the start of the day. For each of these teachers the diversity in points of view, not only on God, but also in a pedagogical frame of reference, might open the way to transform the causal reflection into a reflection-in-depth on their subjective theories (on religious development) as well as on the (lack of) communality in their points of view on the Christian identity of the school. Thereby, they would continue their professional fraternal consultation in the Structural Identity Consultation.⁶ In SIC, dialogues shed a new light on class room interaction at the start of the day in its narrow interpretation of school identity. Team deliberations on different interpretations of identity⁷ result in "situated knowledge" about the school's identity-in-context. The interaction in the team of teachers plays an important role in raising awareness of each person's individual "subjective educational theory" and (religious) self-understanding, as well as on the collective and communal "educational theory", in particular its religious and philosophical component (see also Bakker & Heimbrock, 2006).

Now that we have shown the close relationship between professional fraternal consultation and SIC, we will describe the characteristics of the SIC process in more detail in the next paragraph.

SIC: Teacher's Self-Awareness as a "Gift"

In some of the schools SIC starts with a "critical incident" with regard to one of the characteristic Christian elements of the school: singing Christian songs, reading or telling Bible stories, or saying a prayer. These are aspects of identity, following a restricted interpretation of identity, what we would call a *narrow or limited, restricted* interpretation of the school's identity. However, other schools take their starting point for SIC in the lessons on social-emotional development of the pupils, classroom interaction, playground behaviour or citizenship education. These are aspects of identity according to a much more extended interpretation of identity, what we could call a *broad or deep, extended* interpretation of the school's identity. Whatever may be the starting point of the discussion, in the SIC process we

⁶For a discussion on reflection with teachers, see Avest ter and Bakker (2006).

⁷See below for a clarification about the different interpretations of the school's identity (broad and narrow identity, deductive and inductive identity construction) (*cf.* Avest ter, Bakker & Bakker 2005).

favour an inductive approach in the construction of the school's identity. Everyday classroom practice and teachers' classroom behaviour are the starting point ("living identity", inductive approach), instead of formal documents describing the official and formal identity of the school ("written identity", deductive approach).

During each first SIC meeting of the team of teachers aiming at clarifying the school's identity, every teacher is asked to write down in detail a situation considered to be typical for the Christian identity of the school, as it is meaningful in the eyes of each individual teacher. This could be a characteristic situation that a particular teacher would like to be an everyday reality, an *example of good practice* with regard to the school's identity as this is perceived by that particular teacher. The descriptions of those characteristic situations implicitly or explicitly include the teacher's core values and core qualities. The reflection on her *example of good practice* raises the teacher's self-awareness. The examples represent the ideal, the highest standard, the teachers wish to equal in their classroom practice. Implicitly, these written *examples of good practice* designate the ideal, teachers aim at in their daily practice (see Bakker 2006; Van der Sijde 2007; Bakker, Ter Avest & Bakker, in press). The written *examples of good practice* are a "gift", each teacher brings into the discussion on the school's identity. In a process of co-construction these gifts create the school identity. Teachers' self-awareness and school identity get intertwined (cf. Avest ter & Bakker, 2009).

The Identity of SIC

In current literature the concept of identity is becoming a collective term, bringing under one roof a variety of processes and products. In many theories on identity development, identity is understood as the identity of an individual and is seen as an entity that is produced by the end of puberty, or a stage that is finally attained. Following the line of thought of Heinz Werner (1948), we think identity is not a final stage of development to aim at, but the process itself constitutes identity, and the narrations are milestones in that process, characterising identity. In SIC teachers' narratives, their self-chosen "examples of good practice" are characteristic elements constituting the narrative identity of the school (cf. Avest ter, Bakker & Miedema, 2008).

Differentiation and integration are the key concepts in Werner's theory, a theory that is very useful for the study of the identity of persons as well as of groups and teams; for individual teachers as well as for teams of schools. In SIC, the concepts of differentiation and integration are understood as individual articulation, and collective co-construction of the school's identity. Following Werner's line of thought, the interaction between person and context, and between teacher and school, is seen as the motor of the development of teachers' self-awareness as well as of the school's identity. In particular, the contrast between different perceptions of classroom reality and the variety in classroom practices forces teachers to decide upon necessary adjustments or the co-construction of a new narrative on (the school's) identity. In Werner's view, identity is a continuing and never-ending story, to be told and re-told

by individuals as far as their personal identity is concerned, and by groups (e.g. a team of teachers) as far as the collective identity is concerned.

The process of narrative identity development, as it is shaped by SIC, is characterised by the following five aspects. In the first place, according to SIC, identity is not an end product to aim at, but a continuing process, a *never-ending story* of communal reflective deliberations about representation and interpretation in individual teacher's classroom practices. In the second place, school identity is interpreted in an extended way. This is a *broad* interpretation of identity that means that any aspect according to a restricted conception of identity (the *narrow* interpretation of identity) is always to be interpreted as being embedded in an extended interpretation of identity. The frame of reference of the (religious) worldview to which the school adheres, is one of the elements of the extended interpretation of the school's identity; the pedagogical point of view, the pedagogical strategies, the life view perspectives as well as the organisational and architectural aspects of the school. Together these complete the multi-dimensional approach of SIC (Ter Avest & Bakker, 2003). In the third place, SIC gives a pivotal place to the individual teacher and her subjective (RE) theory. Everyday classroom practices show the teacher's "practical wisdom" resulting from her subjective theory. Following this line of thought, SIC – and that is our fourth characteristic – is a bottom-up process. In this inductive process characteristic elements of everyday classroom practice constitute the school's identity. In the fifth place, a characteristic for SIC is the focus on reflection, not only the causal reflection, but even more so the reflection-in-depth. Last but not least, it is important to state that each SIC process is a unique process. There is no standardised program in SIC, although a few protocols exist. Some aspects of the process have a rather fixed place in SIC, like the aforementioned assignment on the "critical incidents", emphasising the close relation to the context and the population of the school as well as the unique "critical events" and "heroes" active in (the memory of) each school. SIC results in "situated knowledge" about the school's identity, in a process of narrative identity construction.

SIC and Leadership Style

As we have shown in the previous paragraph, SIC is a rather complex activity in the whole range of activities related to the improvement and renewal of education. Next to the variety of SIC aspects as mentioned above, also processes of implementation of, for example, new methods on language acquisition are at stake, as well as the implementation of new subjects like "social-emotional development" and "citizenship education". The role of the principal has been shown to be pivotal in the process of SIC as well as the attunement of SIC to the other processes.

As early as in the 2 years' *pilot* project of SIC, we became aware of the influential role of the principal in team meetings. For example, in order to allow various dimensions of identity to become part of the discussions in team deliberations, the attitude of the headmaster may influence to what extent teachers are willing to take part in

the discussion. It is the principal who encourages (or not!) the teachers to tell about their actions, and to re-tell them in team meetings, in a process of retrospective and anticipating reflection. The alertness and sensitivity of the principal may (or may not!) open up, until then, hidden (religious) aspects of everyday practice, changing them into overt signs and symbols of the essential aspects of the personal as well as the communal identity. It is in the biography of the principal that this sensitivity is anchored; it is the team interaction that flourishes on it.

After the 2 years’ *pilot* project, we decided to research the role of the principal, by using biographic dialogical interviews as well as participative observations. In this research 24 principals participated. Qualitative methods were used, like dialogical interviews⁸ and observations. Data from this research revealed different styles of leadership, some of them facilitating and others hindering the creation of a safe space for SIC, and/or the progress in the process of SIC.

The first leadership style that emerged from our analyses is the principal as a *group worker* (see Fig.1).⁹ S/he considers her/himself as a member of the team of teachers, just like any other teacher. This principal feels a strong personal commitment to every member of the team. Just like any other team member, s/he participates in any workshop, group or individual activities that are part of the SIC process. In the evaluations of past SIC meetings as well as in the preparation of SIC meetings to come, s/he always asks some teachers to participate in the co-construction of the SIC meeting to come. S/he is a go-getter, a doer. Although s/he is convinced of the urge of discussion and dialogue on identity-related topics, s/he is restless and prefers to roll up sleeves and come up with a do-able solution. As a product of SIC, this principal prefers clear deals on identity-related subjects.

	Group	Individual
Reflective	Researcher	Inviting
Do-er	Co-ordinator	Group worker

Fig. 1

The second leadership style we identified is an inviting style: inviting team members to explore topics instead of searching for short-term solutions. S/he in a very natural way asks open questions and thus invites the members of her team to be actively involved in the SIC process. This principal creates a space for reflection-in-depth with regard to the teacher’s personal involvement, on narrow as well as broad aspects of the school’s identity. S/he is an observer in SIC meetings, but actively participates in evaluations and preparations of SIC meetings.

⁸The dialogical interviews are embedded in the Self Confrontation Method, embedded in the Valuation Theory (H.J.M. Hermans & E. Hermans-Jansen 1995).

⁹For the description and for the assignment of concepts to the different leadership styles, we took our starting point in the work of De Caluwé, Kor, Weggemen and Wijnen (2002) on “Essentials in organising, managing and changing”.

The *coordinator* is the principal who organises SIC and coordinates its evaluation and preparation meetings. The coordination is not extended to the tuning in of other (broad) identity-related activities. At crucial moments s/he does not participate in the team discussions. Reflection by this principal is interpreted as causal reflection, aimed at short-term solutions. S/he keeps away (even literally!) from reflection-in-depth. S/he is reluctant to present a personal point of view.

The principal as a *researcher* explores with all related experts the complexity of the school's identity. This principal adheres to an extended interpretation of identity. S/he is eager to learn more about the SIC-concept as well as the theoretical frames of reference, and is in for new ways of shaping the school's identity together with the team of teachers. S/he is selective about participating in SIC-meetings and does so in a manner that is distanced but committed at the same time.

Now that we have a clear picture of the variety of ways in which principals take their role in the SIC process, in the next paragraph we will reflect upon the relation of these leadership styles to a successful SIC.

Hindrances and Recommendations for a Successful SIC in Multifaith Context

In the SIC process not only do teachers get to know each other in a more profound way (an unintended team-building effect), also their (religious) self-understanding improves. As we have shown above, the strengthening of the normative and reflective professionalism of the teacher, and the identity development of the school reinforce one another. The success of the SIC process, however, is heavily dependent upon the leadership style of the principal. From the above descriptions of principals as SIC leaders, we noted the professional as well as personal qualities of the inviting principal and of the principal as a researcher which, in a complementary way, give shape to SIC in the way it was meant to operate. That is, it was a process "to discuss in depth the encounter of Islam and Christianity in the context of the daily practice of their primary school".¹⁰ At the other side of the continuum we find the principal as a coordinator, working hard on the organisation of SIC and the related evaluative and preparatory meetings, but not really showing her/his professional nor personal commitment to the content-related subjects of SIC.

The preliminary findings of our research project seem to call for focused coaching of principals in their role of leader of the SIC. A development should be stimulated from the principal as a do-er to the principal as an inviting researcher. The leadership style of the principal as a researcher, in our view, seems to be most promising to profit in full of the SIC process as it is facilitated by the trainers of the "Utrechtse Adviesgroep". However, this coaching process should focus on aspects of situational leadership and explore the variety in the repertoire of actions the director already has at her or his disposal. As well, in our view, the focus of the coaching

¹⁰See Terdu and Bakker (2000).

process should be on the life theme of the principal, in particular on the old routines persons easily fall back into when stress is induced. As is the case, for example, of situations where (secularised) Christian and Islamic rules and regulations not only result in contrasting perceptions, but bring to the surface conflicting perceptions in classroom interaction, like in the “critical incident” of Miss Janet. We suggest a follow up of the biographical dialogical interview, starting from the “diagnostic” point and aiming at encouraging flexibility in the principal’s different aspects of (religious) self-awareness. This will stimulate the development of the principal as a reflective professional. As such s/he will be able to lead the inductive SIC process in such a way that each of the teachers develops commitment to the construction process of SIC, and a *sense of belonging* to the school identity.

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Informing the Pedagogical Practice of Interreligious Education: Critical Social Science Directions

Leona M. English

Introduction

I was raised Roman Catholic in a small rural area, went to Catholic school, attended a public university, and returned to a Catholic high school to teach when I graduated university for the first time. My family of origin, life experiences, and educational circumstances were very homogeneous until I became a graduate student in the Master of Religious Education program at a Roman Catholic college of the University of Toronto in the mid-1980s. It was within ecumenism classes in this Catholic college that I was encouraged to attend various Christian worship services and to broaden my religious horizons.

During my master's degree, I participated in a study tour of Israel and experienced first-hand tensions among Muslims, Jews, and Christians in a land that continues to need dialogue about interreligious matters. All of this was some time ago; yet, apart from some informal and incidental learning, my subsequent education in ecumenical or interreligious dialogue has been null or nonexistent (Eisner, 1985). Media reports on the 2008 presidential campaign in the United States helped me realize that I am not alone. Democratic presidential candidate Barak Obama had to steadily contend with reports he was a secret Muslim since so many Americans were fearful of Muslims. Neither our culture nor our religion has done a good job of cultivating difference and mutual understanding among and between religions.

Within Canada, I note an absence of related adult education programs for interreligious education in parishes, retreat centers, and other places that Roman Catholics gather. In its place there is fear of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, and a great deal of uncertainty around relationships with people of other religions, not to mention Christian denominations. Concerns are heightened by recent Vatican comments, which have been interpreted as suspicious of Islam (Baum, 2006). Roman apologetics and explanations aside, the effect of these comments has been to raise questions

L.M. English (✉)
St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS, Canada
e-mail: lenglish@stfx.ca

about the Roman Catholic tradition's commitment to engagement with the Other (<http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/09/16/pope.statement/index.html>).

Yet, I am conscious that the need for interreligious education is ever present. It did not begin with the war on terrorism, nor with the rapid fire advances of globalization, and ought not to be dictated by them. As a Roman Catholic with a professional and academic interest in adult education, I wonder what can be done and has been done from an educational perspective to address the interreligious divide in an age that can no longer ignore differences and which dearly needs increased understanding and information. I am interested here in highlighting the many ways in which this education might take place: in formal learning (e.g., degree level), nonformal learning (e.g., workshops, seminars and conferences), and informal and incidental learning (e.g., radio, television, casual conversation).

This chapter is rooted in curiosity, and proposes that we examine several of our existing curricula, our most intense efforts to educate religiously, to see if we can find some hints of dialogue, openness, and possibility for the kind of engagement that is necessary. But before we launch into the deep, I must say a word about what I mean by interreligious education. I most often use interreligious to refer to interfaith education among and between the great world religions – Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism – because this seems to be the most neglected and crucial area. Yet, I recognize that there is necessarily an ecumenical or inter-Christian element to this education, since it is hard, if not impossible, to think about respect between Jews and Christians, for example, when Christians are not in dialogue with each other and are suspicious of one another. An overlapping discourse exists then between interfaith and ecumenical education, though the primary emphasis here is on interfaith education between the major world religions. Furthermore, because I am situated with adult education, and know Catholicism best of all the Christian traditions, I will locate my remarks and analysis there, though my reading, education, and understanding are somewhat broader.

With this introduction and clarification in mind, I turn now to what Roman Catholic theological documents have to say about interreligious education and learning. I speculate that examining curricula on interreligious dialogue is important since *what we do* says loudly about what we value; we must follow our practices to find out what we really believe. Following (A) our blueprint or plan as articulated in our curriculum theory or theological documents, this chapter moves to (B) what we actually do – our theory in practice or what we actually do or teach in adult religious education programs, and then proceeds to discuss (C) what we might do – a proposal to move beyond present theories, guided by insights from educational theory about sound educational teaching and learning in the twenty-first century.

Section A: Documents or Theory (What We Say We Do)

The typical curriculum developer begins with a document, a series of statements and beliefs about goals, as well as a pedagogical and theological orientation. This document usually serves as a basis from which a teacher might choose a textbook or

design a class, given that the document itself is not a textbook. Roman Catholicism is strong on such documents though in a church context they are usually called theological or even Vatican documents. With regard to relationships with persons of other faiths, the seminal Vatican II document from 1965, *Nostra Aetate*, sets the stage, calling us “to promote together for the benefit of all mankind [*sic*] social justice and moral welfare” (see Abbott ed., 1996, no. 3). This document is the foundation on which all interreligious education must be based, since it establishes a spirit of openness to dialogue and mutual learning with world religions. When it was published it marked a turning point for Catholic relations with world religions, and its influence continues to today. With particular reference to Muslims, *Nostra Aetate* says that:

The Church regards with esteem also the Muslims. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, Who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their desserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting. (no. 3)

Though written four or more decades ago, this church document makes it clear that Roman Catholicism has committed itself to understanding and respecting Islam. *Nostra Aetate* also contains respectful and open pronouncements on other world religions, making it reasonable to expect that subsequent documents (if not papal comments) embody a generous spirit, and by and large they have. Since the Second Vatican Council, however, traces of intolerance remain and are heightened by explosive and confusing remarks by leaders in the tradition.

The most prominent of recent church texts on education is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC; 1992), which serves as “A point of reference for the catechisms . . . that are prepared for various regions” (p. 6). The catechism is broader than a textbook; it is intended to set direction for future catechetical activity. The second church document is *The General Catechetical Directory* (GCD), which was published in the early 1970s, directly following Vatican II, as a “directory for the catechetical instruction of the Christian people” (p. 11). The GCD was groundbreaking in its attempts to draw out educational principles and beliefs. The revised *General Directory for Catecheses* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997), issued in 1997, drew special attention to the importance of educating adults in the faith. Unfortunately, the catechetical forms that are listed in the GCD are traditional, educator-directed, and church-organized experiences such as Scripture classes and sacramental preparation sessions (# 171). Still it is useful to look at what each says about education of adults and interreligious dialogue.

The third key Catholic document, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community* (ACCC) is from the International Council for Catechesis (1990) and is adult education centered. The fourth key document, though national, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us* (OHBW), from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

(USCCB, 1999a) is intended to make adult education the central church vision of education. Though varied in scope, these four reveal the religious education direction of the Roman Catholic community: What we should teach (content), why we should teach it (epistemology), and how we should teach it (pedagogy). Each of these speaks to interreligious relationships and dialogue in a particular way. In Table 1, I illustrate their respective positions on (a) adult education and (b) interreligious education. I distinguish ecumenism from interreligious dialogue, where relevant.

Clearly, at the level of theory/theology, the curriculum documents of Roman Catholicism are supportive of interreligious dialogue (both interfaith and ecumenical), and education. Each of the key documents cited points to this as an area of study and a necessary component of formal, nonformal, and informal learning within this religious community. Since these are directional and foundational education documents, one would expect then that our practice at the parish or diocesan level would be to promote interreligious education. We move now to where the curriculum document becomes enacted in our educational texts and syllabi to see if this is so.

Section B: Particular Programs in Adult Education (What We Do)

The two most pervasive nonformal adult education initiatives in Roman Catholicism are lay ministry education programs and the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The third is the formal Master of Divinity program pursued by candidates for priesthood and ecclesial ministry, as well as the Master of Religious Education degree offered to students who wish to become leaders in religious education and catechetical ministry. I recognize, but do not consider here, specialty and ad hoc courses such as Landings (for adults returning to Catholicism after time away); Dignity (for gays and lesbians); Swords and New Beginnings (for the divorced and separated); and mandated continuing professional education programs for teachers in Catholic schools, such as the school board programs in religious education in the province of Ontario. As well, I recognize, but do not address, the largest venue for teaching of other religions, religious pilgrimages to Israel, and other biblical and sacred places. This informal education, though quite extensive, is far too elusive to track in such a short time frame.

Case 1

The emergence since the mid-1980s of a plethora of programs to address the laity's needs for faith formation, ministerial preparation, and leadership training (all purposes ascribed to at least some of these programs) raises questions about their purpose and outcomes. While education in any form is ostensibly favorable, the

Table 1 Interreligious education in our documents

Document	Adult education	Ecumenical directives	Interfaith directives
<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i>	# 172 “The discourse of faith with adults must take serious account of their experience or their condition in, and the challenges which they encounter in life” Does not deal with this issue directly	#86 “Catechesis will possess an ecumenical dimension”	# 86 “Catechesis is necessary for inter-religious dialogue”
<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>		# 821 Unity requires “fraternal knowledge,” “ecumenical formation” and “dialogue”	# 842. “The Church’s bond with non-Christian religions is in the first place the common origin and end of the human race”
<i>Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community</i>	Entire document is dedicated to adult catechesis	#51 “Catechesis must encourage an ecumenical outlook”	#51 Catechesis “must be open to confronting and entering into dialogue with the great religions” # 96 the adult is to “appreciate the value of <i>interreligious dialogue</i> and contacts, and promote the Church’s mission <i>ad gentes</i> in the local and universal church”
<i>Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us</i>	Entire document is dedicated to adult education	#95 “support the ecumenical movement and promote the unity of God’s people”	

unbridled enthusiasm for these programs and the lack of regulation of them, is cause for concern. In response to some of this concern and out of a legitimate need to exercise leadership in this area, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (Murnion, 1992) has initiated research into lay ministry. The researchers recognize that “the number of lay parish ministers has increased by 35 percent” (Murnion & DeLambo, 1999, n. p.) and that the number of educational programs, outside of seminaries or schools of theology in the United States is high (in 1998, there were 183 programs, p. 29).

In a recent study of a lay ministry program in Canada, I (English, 2000) surveyed some 35 leaders of lay ministry education programs in Canada to provide information on programs and their participants. None were teaching courses on world religions or interreligious dialogue. Standard topics included sacraments, scripture, and ecclesiology. These programs, arguably the largest adult religious education in North America today, educate laity to assume positions of church leadership. In an evaluation study of one such program, I (with English, MacDonald, & Connolly, 2006) found no courses of the eight required to graduate that were interfaith or ecumenical in nature. The insularity in the programs is not surprising when one considers they are often sponsored by dioceses and offered in isolation from schools of theology. Yet, the silence is disturbing given the many encounters we each have with adherents of world religions. The city of Toronto, for instance, has the greatest variety of languages and religions of any city in the world, yet one is hard pressed to find a lay ministry program in that city that contains an interreligious component.

Case 2

The second adult education initiative, the RCIA program, as noted in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC, 1971/1997) is the *sine qua none* of Catholic adult education and is intended to provide a catechetical framework for other religious education initiatives. The GDC stressed the catechumenate process, the heart of RCIA, as the ordinary form of catechesis, in recognition that as an extended period of education and guided faith formation for those seeking membership in the Catholic community, the catechumenate is an ancient and effective process (see Jones, 1997). Yet, my personal experiences of RCIA, as well as my study of the books, guides, and rites related to it, do not reveal a substantive interreligious component to this standard bearer. When one considers that RCIA is used to welcome people into our religious community, it is surprising that discussion of Catholicism and its relationship to other world religions is not a high priority. Books on RCIA concentrate on Roman Catholicism itself since the idea and focus is to welcome people into the faith and its practices (<http://www.usccbpublishing.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=25>). This welcome has been interpreted as full immersion into Catholic ways and practices. In focusing primarily on Catholic practices and beliefs, the RCIA unintentionally promotes inward focused theology and faith.

Case 3

The third adult education initiative is the largely church-funded graduate programs in ministry, which are attended primarily by women and second career adults. Canada has a number of such divinity programs, often located in large metropolitan areas such as Toronto, Ottawa, and Vancouver. Some of these provide an ecumenical setting for education. The Atlantic School of Theology, which comprises a small student body, has an ecumenical curriculum and outlook. Vancouver School of Theology and Toronto School of Theology provide graduate ministerial education for students from the major Christian denominations, through a system of separate, religiously affiliated denominational colleges within them. One commendable effort at ecumenism is the Toronto School of Theology's integrated approach to content areas such as scriptural study. Students in their first year study the New Testament together in a common class with common lecturers. Given that the Master of Divinity and Master of Religious Education programs are the usual route to active sacramental and priestly ministry, and religious education, one would expect that these students would not only have to go to some classes together but that they would be required to study world religions, engage in interreligious dialogue, and become more acquainted with the diversity of religious practice and belief. A perusal of the online syllabi of three of the largest programs in this country shows that no world religions courses are required and in some cases, none offered. This is quite surprising in 2007, 7 years after the bombing of the World Trade Center, 4 years after the War on Terrorism began and the consequent increase in racism, intolerance and fear of difference. It is also surprising given the increasing spread of globalization, which furthers the need for interreligious education.

Each of these three cases points to a serious gap in our educational ministry. Yet, we must acknowledge that there are considerable strengths. In each of these cases, we see a commitment to adult religious education, a general agreement in our Catholic tradition that education is important and that it ought to be cultivated in schools, parishes, and community. We see evidence of strong and deliberate curricula that provide formation (catechesis) and education in our scripture and tradition, and which build on several millennia of scholarship in Catholicism. Knowledge of our own religious beliefs and practices is a solid foundation on which to build and move outward. Knowing our own tradition is a must for genuine dialogue and interchange with adherents of other faiths.

Section C: Learning from the Social Sciences (What We Might Do)

In looking at our texts and theories-in-use, we can see what has been done in terms of interreligious education, and where that leaves us. There is obvious truth in Rebecca Chopp's (1995) observation that it is our practices of Christianity that are the most revealing. We can also understand and appreciate her challenge to develop a "thick

description of the present” (p. 115); these cases have been a partial attempt to name the present. Chopp’s particular phraseology (i.e., “thick description”) is familiar to us in qualitative research circles who know it as a way to record and read the data, and to learn from it about what we “think”. When we actually consider the data of our theories in practice in interreligious education, we see that despite its strengths in content and format, Roman Catholicism in Canada and the United States has shied away from genuine education about the Other. Both our theory and our practice in interreligious education are in need of attention and reform. On the one hand, our curricular documents speak to an education that is open to other perspectives. The ACCC, GDC, OHBW and CCC state our intent to learn from and about others, and to be open to difference. Yet, our practice, certainly in terms of our major adult education initiatives – lay ministry education, professional ministry graduate education, and RCIA – points to our need to be less insular and more outward focused.

In response to this lacuna, I offer a direction that we might consider for interreligious dialogue, one that is borrowed from the insights of three major and current emphases within social science: postfoundationalism (postmodernism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism); feminist theory; and critical theory. As Rubenson (2000) notes, these are the three strongest and most relevant research emphases in the social sciences and humanities. Our theological curriculum, as strong as the Association of Theological Schools in North America holds that it may be, is insufficient in interreligious educational matters. It would seem logical to turn to education research and to learn from what it might teach us about addressing the gap.

Before I launch into a discussion of specific social sciences, however, I ought to make some common comments here about the gap between theory and practice that haunts all professions, and which increasingly is the site of much scholarship and observation. One of the ways that scholars have attempted to increase the links between theory and practice is through the creation of new names and terms such as reflective practitioner (Schön, 1987), contemplative practitioner (Miller, 1994), and practitioner-researcher (Jarvis, 1999). Each writer is concerned to ensure that what is learned in a classroom, for instance, has relevance to the workplace, and that what is learned in the workplace is valued by the academy. Each is concerned, albeit to varying degrees, with the larger socio-cultural context in which learning occurs, and with the need for continued negotiation and discussion about the inherent tensions between practice and theory. The challenge is to value both and to not see them as diametrically opposed but as a continuum of lifelong learning. Linking what we say we will do with what we do is perennial and well known to educators at large.

Insights from Critical Theory

Critical theory, drawing on a rich body of literature from the social sciences, employs Marxian terms and understanding to critique current educational practices especially as they concern the central aspects of power and knowledge. Informed by the work of Marx, Engels, and Habermas who directly addressed the mechanistic

and Fordist approaches that had become predominant in the late 1960s and early 1970s, critical theory became a means for those in sociology and education to address the inequities of class, race, and gender, in particular. Educators who used the tools of critical theory found a way to critique the nexus of power that had come to limit and prevent any permanent change in educational systems. The educational approach that draws on critical theory is often called critical pedagogy and is closely associated with Michael Apple and Henry Giroux, and best known in religious education circles through the work of Paulo Freire (1970) and bell hooks (1994).

Critical pedagogy encourages us to engage difference, to name our world and its issues, and to point to blocks in communication. Specifically, it draws attention to structures and the use of critical consciousness raising to understand how we are oppressed. In terms of interreligious dialogue it opens the way to a critique of how religious institutions may have neglected dialogue, supported a siege mentality, and failed to engage with one another. Critical pedagogy raises the possibility that the interlocking issues of race and gender have been stumbling blocks in engagement with groups such as Muslims and Jews. For instance, it may be possible that the practice of conservative Muslim women who wear the burka is viewed by some Catholics as an extension of an overall anti-female stance within Islam. Furthermore, Reform Judaism's embrace of the female rabbi may be seen as threatening to Roman Catholics who do not ordain women. Is it possible that the institutionalized racism in North America against men of Middle Eastern descent, as shown in unfair prosecution and uneven airport screening practices, may have precluded genuine education about the other? Indeed, the much publicized and clearly unsubstantiated incarceration and torture of Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen, as a suspected terrorist following the World Trade Centre attack is evidence that racism and religion are entwined in the cultural fabric of our country. Systematic and critical analysis of societal practices, informed by critical theoretical perspectives, is required to untangle and clarify our relationship to others.

Along with analyzing broad cultural issues, the critical gaze can be cast directly on religious history and practices. Puett (2005), for instance, draws attention to the lack of interreligious knowledge when she proposes that we acknowledge the historical struggles between the traditions, and the exclusive and triumphalist attitudes and positions of some. She sees critical pedagogy as providing a way to participate in the larger social and cultural reconstruction projects that our world needs. Applied to Judaism, for instance, a critical pedagogy approach would encourage Catholics to think about language that may have been used such as "the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus" or hesitations that we might have had about marriage outside our faith. Alternately, critical pedagogy would challenge some Jewish people to think of their resistance to mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews for fear that Judaism would be diluted. Critical pedagogy forces us to think about how we may use power-filled languages and practices to elevate ourselves, resist dialogue, and truly engage with those less like ourselves. It is precisely this kind of challenging and yet engaged pedagogy that we can learn from in interreligious education. Critical pedagogy forces us beyond the ACCC, GDC, OHBW, and CCC

to the messy world of practice, to think of the ways that we might implement our new found understandings. In the classroom critical pedagogy might look like small group learning situations, as well as informal meals and social activities, all of which could be designed to increase contact with the unknown, and to heighten learners' awareness of difference and similarity. Critical pedagogy, of course, requires sensitivity to rules of respectful dialogue and willingness to move into a space that may at times be uncomfortable.

Critical pedagogy asks us to think critically about existing church and religious structures and how they assist or work against unity and dialogue. Attention to the interlocking systems of oppression constituted by the nexus of race, class, and gender would force us to do a very careful reading of our current religious situation and to acknowledge, however painful, the ways in which our respective histories have avoided dialogue. Critical theory asks us to look at how racist, gendered, or classed stereotypes may prevent us from understanding one another. It would ask us not only to name our fears but to address those areas that we may not come to agreement on such as strict Muslim dress for girls, celibacy of Catholic priests, or food injunctions for Muslims and Jews. Interreligious education and dialogue may not lead to consensus, and like other types of dialogue may lay bare our difference. This is an eventuality that we can anticipate, yet the possible increase in insight makes it worthwhile.

Insights from Feminist Pedagogical Practice

The second area that we can borrow from the current emphases in social science is feminism which has been largely known to Catholics in the form of challenges to an all male priesthood and patriarchal language. Feminism shares with critical theory attention to power and inequity, though its primary emphasis is on women; the aspect of it that I would like to focus on here is the implications for education and learning. Since most adult education is done by women for women in churches, feminism and its insights into women and learning are especially important for this discussion. Feminist scholarly work has been instrumental in making visible the many hidden educational inequities with regard to women, the disadvantaged, and people of color.

Within education, feminism has challenged us to look at how women learn and how they are affected by educational policies and procedures. The literature on women and learning, in particular, has grown since the publication in the 1980s of *In a Different Voice*, written by Carol Gilligan (1982), a Harvard psychology professor who proposed a groundbreaking theory of women's development. Her insights about the particularity of women and their preference for caring and connected knowing was pursued by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) in their book *Women's Ways of Knowing* (WWK). The latter launched almost two decades of research and interest into women and learning, much of it aimed at clarifying their ideas and expanding them for the classroom. The primary research question for

Belenky and her team was: How do women know what they know? I explain here some of the key terms arising from that discussion and describe their application to interreligious education.

Voice and Silence

Voice is a metaphoric term that refers to the ability of people to speak, or more precisely to be heard in some way. Voice is not intended in the sense of letting a person speak, but rather to being open to and facilitating the many ways in which women can and will be heard. Women can choose silence (of choice, not fear) as when they decide not to speak either because they have nothing specific to contribute at that time or because they need space to consider their views further. Other women have silence foisted upon them and may feel oppressed, in which case they are voiceless and powerless. In a classroom situation, such women may feel too numb to speak. They do not think they have the right or the ability to even receive knowledge. Within the Belenky et al. framework, silence is often viewed as an oppressive condition. Yet silence, like voice, is metaphoric.

When one considers the preponderance and enduring influence of male theologians and writers within the Catholic tradition, it is not surprising that much of what is written is by males and reflects logical, systematic, and rational theories of belief. Indeed, the documents that we have examined above ACCC, GDC, OHBW, and CCC have largely been informed by rational, logical thought, and yet have not been enacted in any meaningful way, at least with regard to interreligious education. Perhaps, since women are more likely to respond to an invitation to educational programs, we ought to be aware that voice may be facilitated by small groups, collaborative learning, and shared inquiry, less than pronouncements, lectures, or speeches. Voice likely will be encouraged through personal engagement, experience-based learning, and connectedness. When Catholic educator Mary Boys and Jewish educator Sara Lee came together to carry out a 30-year Lilly-funded study of Jewish Christian dialogue, they set out a process of six 2-day meetings that allowed for facilitated conversations on personal experience and education on Judaism and Catholicism and how their conceptions of one another and of themselves as religious persons had occurred (Boys & Lee, 1996; see also Boys, 2000). Within this research process, Catholics were encouraged to look at some of the tradition's misconceptions of Jews (e.g., of the Jews' role in Jesus' death) and Jews were asked to think about how their identity as a people had been constructed (e.g., as victims who always had been persecuted by Christians). The purpose was not to condemn but to transform one another through engagement and story.

Constructed Knowing

Belenky et al. (1986) promoted also the ideas of women's need and preference for constructed knowing, acknowledging that women view knowledge as contextual and

believe that they have a role in its construction. According to Belenky et al., women see themselves as both capable of subjective (connected knowing) and objective (separate knowing) strategies for knowing. Constructed knowers need to connect to real people and to real things. Our feeling and our emotions need to be part of our learning; women as learners pay considered attention to whole person knowing and we encourage others to do the same. In terms of interreligious learning it would mean that we bring our whole persons – fears and joys – to the table so that others can know what we have. Connected knowing assumes honesty among the various partners, and it assumes full and active engagement in the learning process. It also says that we respect what people bring, we do not censor it and we do not condemn it. In terms of practice, constructed knowers likely will appreciate hearing about personal experience, engaging directly with people of different beliefs, and having the opportunity to acknowledge feeling about others, in discussion. An example would be eating with friends of different religions to learn about Hallal (Muslim food regimen) and Kosher (Jewish food regimen).

Attention to the Body

Another important idea from women's learning literature is that woman show a preference for whole person knowing and incorporation of the body in their learning (Clark, 2005). In a very immediate application is that we facilitate learning by sitting in circle formation and looking at each other as real people in a real situation. It also means that we allow emotion and we allow movement in the learning situation. For instance, as facilitators of interreligious learning among Hindus and Christians, we might bring particular attention to the role of body painting and dress in religious and cultural practice. This might be facilitated by discussions on news items such as debates in Canada on Sikh police wearing the traditional head dress and teenagers carrying a kirpan (sword) to school. Singing and dancing might be included in order to practice, to feel what they feel, to see what they see. One of my own most vivid experiences of attention to the body is being on a kibbutz and eating a kosher meal with a Jewish family. Attention to the body means not ignoring difference in dress and lifestyle, and bringing in culture to the conversation. Hindus might benefit from knowing the ways in which the body is involved in Roman Catholicism through kneeling and fasting. The meeting of bodies of difference can be educational and revelatory.

Insights from Postfoundational Theories

A third area of social science theory that may be helpful is the emergent post-foundational theories that provide critical tools and lens through which to examine identity, difference, and knowledge. Postfoundationalism deconstructs the grand narratives/myths of progress, rationalism, classification, and the Enlightenment's assurance that scientific progress would be the cure for all that ails us. It also

disrupts the many binaries created by the modern and structural need to classify and divide; examples include: mind/body; theory/practice; sacred/secular; individual/group (Hemphill, 2001, pp. 17–18). Postfoundationalism offers, instead, questions, uncertainty and attention to difference. It draws special attention to language, constructions, and to how the meaning in language is never static or fixed (see Hemphill, 2001).

The spirit of postmodernity for religious dialogue is captured by Diarmuid O’Murchu in *Consecrated Religious Life: The Changing Paradigms* (2005), “Liminality is about growth and risk at the cutting edges . . . it is about fluidity and flexibility, creativity and courageous abandonment to divine recklessness.” Postmodernity is no simple challenge for interreligious dialogue. It serves as a challenge to modernity’s characteristics of universalism, dualism, supernaturalistic theism, individualism, anthropomorphism, patriarchy, militarism, and consumerism (see Harvey, 1989; Hellas, 1998, pp. 2–5). A postmodern adult religious education among religions would reach ahead to a world that is ecologically responsible, peaceful, and inclusive of feminist epistemology(ies). Some other implications of this postmodern thinking for interreligious dialogue are discussed here:

Moving Beyond Binaries

One of the key offerings of postmodernity and related theories is that we need to move beyond a notion of us and them. The uncertainty and fluidity of postmodern perspectives encourages us to see belief as on a continuum that needs to be engaged and thought of as fluid. We need to see the commonality of our search for the divine and the need to live right. This is a pedagogy of inclusion that involves the need for all adherents to resist the fixed “truth” of our tradition and to be open to learning from the other, whether they are Confucian, Buddhist, or Christian. In a pedagogy of inclusion the whole community is involved in our conversation and our discourses. On a practical level for adult education, a pedagogy of inclusion might embrace active involvement in dialogue, informal learning, classes, preaching and teaching, and community-based organizations. To put postmodern and postcolonial theory into practice involves resisting the binary logic of the lifeworld versus the state, the private versus the public, or one religion versus another. We might indeed move the dialogue forward through looking at a variety of representations of the Other in fiction such as in Salman Rushdie’s (1988) *Satanic Verses* and Frank McCourt’s (1996) *Angela’s Ashes*, or in film through *Schindler’s List*, as well as through more traditional sources such as the Torah, Qu’ran, and Bible.

Attention to Difference

In theory, certainly in the theological texts cited above – ACCC, GDC, OHBW, and CCC – Roman Catholicism is an open, Catholic so to speak, religious tradition. Yet, in educational practice, it can be closed, affected by the context in which

it is formed and nurtured. This distance has often resulted in our inability to see each other as real and credible, such as is the case between Christians and Muslims in the Western world. We need to draw on our previous success with ecumenical (Anglican–Catholic) and Catholic–Jewish education (Boys & Lee, 1996; see also Charaniya & Walsh, 2001) to negotiate the difference and to acknowledge how we have been shaped by power and power relations. For Muslims it may include a historical reading about the persecution of their religion in Europe and Africa, in order to see how this history has affected present thinking about Christians. Exploration of the relationship of their particular type of Islam (i.e., Sunni or Shiite) and the culture(s) in which it found itself may also be important here. Patti Lather (1991) describes the emergent critical pedagogical stance that we might embrace in this regard:

Pedagogy becomes a site not for working through more effective transmission strategies, but for helping us learn to analyze the discourses available to us, which ones we are invested in, how we are inscribed by the dominant, how we are outside of, other than, the dominant, consciously/unconsciously, always partially contradictorily. (p. 99)

These postmodern approaches offer room for difference and the acceptance of a multiplicity of voice. The challenge for adult educators, especially those in a more liberal stream, is to take difference seriously and to engage with not only the likeminded but with those in human resource development, competency-based education, and in more behaviorally oriented studies. This multiplicity ought not to replicate the tyranny of the left or right, or of being the right kind of Christian, Muslim, or Jew. Implicit in such a pedagogy is reflexivity, whereby we continuously engage our minds and hearts, and allow our feelings and thoughts to enter into the process; for Catholics this may mean unlearning negative message and stereotypes of other Christians as well as Jews and Muslims. As Webb (1997) says, we need to rethink “the personal and the objective in Christian pedagogy” (p. 763) so that we are fully present and fully reflective on our interreligious dialogue, both with our intellect and our human subjectivity. In such a pedagogy, our own narratives matter, as do our feelings of fear, compassion, and unknowing. Journaling and reflective writing may be part of this reflexive process, in that they allow us to connect the paths of action and reflection. Journaling is a way to answer questions like: How do I know that I know?

Concluding Note

Despite the discrepancy between what we say we will do (our theology and theory) in CCC, ACCC, OHWB, and GDC, and what we actually do (our practice) in RCIA, the Master of Divinity and Master of Religious Education degrees, as well as in lay ministry education, there is considerable hope for a more progressive interreligious education. The first step is identifying these discrepancies between our theory and practice; the second is pointing ways forward that are guided by social science theorists. We can make common cause with feminist, postmodern,

and critical theories to advance a relevant, insightful, and current way of addressing the problems of silos and divisions among religious communities. These theories not only offer ways forward not in specific techniques for teaching, but in ways of thinking about how we might approach interreligious education. We can take seriously our established documents and bring them into conversation with real-life learners in our local and global communities to broach difference and to engage with it. And in the spirit of engagement and pedagogy, we may indeed have deeper insight into our own hearts and our relationship with the Divine. Perhaps John Dewey was right when he observed that “Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he [*sic*] is studying at the time” (p. 48). We may indeed learn much more than we even think possible about our own faith and our relationship to it when we allow an inclusive pedagogy to emerge.

Yet, there is a point at which we do need to be comfortable or accepting of continued change and uncertainty. There will always be tensions of various sorts when we confront or encounter the unknown, and it is probable that differences will continue to exist, even within a united Christianity. We know from ecumenical studies that the goal of these religious educational endeavors is neither conformity nor unanimity; we can be united in our differences, without losing sight of unity. Interfaith and ecumenical education calls us to be ready for the long haul and to be ready to see ourselves as others see us. Our globalized world has pushed us beyond our own circle of concern and to be Catholic in the true sense of the word. My closing thought is that operating within a Catholic enclave until young adulthood, as I did, is no longer tenable or desirable, and that we must do all that we can to make sure that our religious horizons broaden.

Acknowledgment The author would like to thank Professor Lorna Bowman, Academic Dean at Brescia University College in Ontario, Canada, for helpful comments on an early draft.

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An Inter-religious Basis for a Denominational Religious Education: A Paradox?

Adrian Gellel

Introduction

Denominational (Confessional) Religious Education and Inter-Religious (Multi-Faith) Education have often been seen as two competing and irreconcilable concepts. At different fora, arguments have been brought forward to justify the inclusion in the school curriculum of either one or the other type of Religious Education since both are seen as contributing to the holistic development of pupils, as a key to understanding culture, identity and society, and as a means of promoting social cohesion. When understood from an exclusive perspective, it is clear that different political and ideological stances are at play. But exclusivist perspectives tend to minimise, and at times ignore, the complexity of reality, including various tensions such as the rights of parents and children versus the rights and duties of the wider community, and contextual realities versus global realities. Given that Denominational Religious Education is a reality in many contexts, the present chapter explores whether and how inter-religious education can be incorporated in Confessional Religious Education, in particular in Catholic Religious Education, without reducing its confessional character.

Definitions

It may appear superfluous to start a discussion on Religious Education by defining what is meant by Religion and what is meant by Education. However, the truth is that discussions on the subject very often depart from different positions and different definitions. This is the main reason why we have so many models and practices of Religious Education in schools. After all, there are also various positions with regards to the terminology one should use when speaking of this

A. Gellel (✉)
University of Malta, Msida, Malta
e-mail: adrian.gellel@um.edu.mt

scholastic discipline. Plurality in the field of Religious Education, a term which we are agreeing to use in order to facilitate some form of understanding, makes a difference not only with regards to the content that is delivered but more so in the methodology and theories of this curricular subject. “Religious Education”, “Religious Knowledge”, “Religious Studies”, “Catechesis”, “Christian Education”, and “Religious Instruction” are only some of the overlapping terms that are used and each term brings with it different emphasis and consequently different academic and ideological underpinnings.

Both Religion and Education are complex realities that do not lend themselves to easy definitions with a broad consensus. Education has always played a fundamental role in the development of the human community but it is only recently, with the introduction of compulsory schooling, that society has witnessed enormous advances in its way and standard of life.

Almost 70 years ago, Jacques Maritain (2001) emphatically stated that the main aim of education is the full formation of the human being. The other aims of education, such as the transmission of cultural heritage and preparation for social life and good citizenship, are essential but nonetheless corollary ends. Likewise, the Commission, set up by UNESCO in the 1970s for the study of development in Education, understood:

that the aim of development is the complete fulfilment of man, in all richness of his personality, the complexity of forms of expression and his various commitments – as individual, member of a family and of a community, citizen and producer, inventor of techniques and creative dreamer. (Faure et al., 1972, vi)

This principle was once again reiterated by the UNESCO commission set to reflect on education and learning in the twenty-first century (Delors, 1996). In this document the commission insists that in order to be successful, Education needs to organise itself around four fundamental ways of learning

- i. the need to know and, therefore, the need for the ability to acquire knowledge,
- ii. the need to be able to apply this knowledge and therefore the need that knowledge should contribute to the development of the economy,
- iii. the need for knowledge and acceptance of others, and
- iv. the need for self-realisation.

While in principle there seems to be agreement on holistic education, different governments with different ideologies put emphasis on different aspects, often depending on the definition they give of the human person and on their conception of *paideía*. A case in point is the general aims and function of Education as perceived by legislators in the European Union. The Lisbon Strategy approved in 2000 determined that the European Union has

to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. (European Union, Council of the European Union, 2000, par 5)

In line with this goal, the European Council suggested that “Europe’s education and training systems need to adapt both to the demands of the knowledge society and to the need for an improved level and quality of employment” (European Union, Council of the European Union, 2000, par 25). This is not the only document where the European Union makes explicit its belief that the focus of education should be subservient to the economy and to the demands of society. It is true that in the report of the future objectives of education, the Council of Education stated that the three main objectives of education are

- the development of the individual, who can thus realise his or her full potential and live a good life;
- the development of society, in particular by fostering democracy, reducing the disparities and inequities among individuals and groups and promoting cultural diversity,
- the development of the economy, by ensuring that the skills of the labour force correspond to the economic and technological evolution (European Union, Education Council, 2001, p. 4).

However, one should also note that besides putting emphasis on economy and society, the document seems to have a very limited understanding of the human person. The Education Council specifies that individuals are to “realise their potential as citizens, as members of society, and as economic agents” (European Union, Education Council, 2001, p. 7). The individual human person is not understood as being unique, autonomous and capable of entering in relationships and thus needing to be educated to develop his/her every human dimension fully. Understanding the individual as only a subset, as just a member of a society, and as a contributor to the economy implies a utilitarian education that forms individuals according to the needs of the state, social coexistence and the economy as perceived by the political class. In the case of the EU, it is evident that it is ideology and political and economic interests that are shaping a definition. In such circumstances, what one would term as Religious Education would have a restricted scope, since it would only be used to promote social conviviality and understanding of others, even if hopefully, legislators, educationalists and curriculum developers would also include the religious contribution towards a sustainable and ethical economy. Apart from these aspects, the full development of the self, understood as having pre-eminence over any other educational aim, and thus the formation of a personal and communitarian identity and the consequence enhancement and discovery of spirituality and religious language, would be given minimal importance.

Westerners have an obsession for categorising and shaping definitions. It is this obsession that has led to the creation of the term “world religions,” that as Tomoko Masuzawa (2005) points out, is not so innocently devoid of meaning and ideology. She believes that the term is the product of the late nineteenth century Western secular Christian-Modernity in an attempt to be neutral and scientific. After all, the term “religion” itself also came to be defined in a European context between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries (Smith as cited by Beyer, 2003) while previously

it had been synonymous with Christianity. Europeans understood the world of what we shall call “religion” as the Jews who had refuted the call of Salvation, Muslims, who were considered heretics, and other religions, i.e. those who had not as yet heard the Good News, with Christianity over them all. The cross over the Egyptian obelisks in Rome is possibly the most obvious symbol of the perceived superiority of Christianity over other cultures and religions; the obelisk in front of St. Peter’s Basilica being probably the most representative. Being a pagan monument in front of the church that most symbolised Christianity, it becomes a symbol of humanity reaching out to Christ. Originally, the monument was erected by Emperor Caligula and had an urn with the ashes of Julius Caesar at its top. The urn was replaced with a bronze cross containing a fragment of the true Cross and at the base two exorcism formulas were inscribed together with the words *Christus Vincit, Christus Regnat, Christus Imperat. Christus ab omni malo plebem suam defendat* (Christ Conquers, Christ Reigns, Christ Commands. May Christ defend his people from all evil).

Many argue that “religion” as defined in the modern era was constructed to serve European colonial expansionist purposes. For this and other reasons, the term has for these past six decades been criticised by a long list of academics as being distortive.

Similarly, political interests are thought to be the major influences when the discipline of Religious Studies is defined, mainly with the intent of imposing and controlling concepts and symbols (Beyer, 2003). In an analysis of contemporary society, Drees (2008) points out that “religion” assumes various meanings according to the context and to the ideology of the definer. He argues that in the public sphere, strong forms of secularism and religion have contributed to define and strengthen each other at the expense of moderate positions which have been marginalised. He fears that the media and the academic and political spheres are accomplices, and at times perpetrators, of an attitude which excludes the contribution of various forms of being religious, and thus contribute to the formation of polarised positions.

However, political influences are not the only reason for negative criticism. Another major line of criticism arises from the inability of the term to do justice to the various forms of practices, commitments, meanings and beliefs both within the same “religion” and in contrast with other conceptually similar or totally dissimilar “religions”. In other words, various academics voice their concern that the term is too reductionist.

While agreeing that the term religion is a constructed category aimed at distinguishing situations, concepts and ideologies from others, such as magic from religion, or science from superstition, Ivakiv (2006) advances the idea of understanding religion as a distributed significance across spaces. The plurality and complexity of a post-modern western society and the globalisation brought about by information and communication technology, by politics and by the media require the continuous outlining of (re)distributions and (re)configuration of meanings and practices. Thus, religion and sacrality, or the lack of one or both, are understood as a means of understanding identity of humans in the context of a space and time, just like ethnicity, political and ideological understandings and social class.

Context

Understanding religion, belief and/or life stances through a contextual lens seems the most appropriate way. While it was perfectly legitimate to have the parish priest to teach catechism and the history of religion in the elementary schools of the nineteenth century Lombard–Venetian region (Braido, 1991), such a state of affairs is no longer tenable. It is not because there was anything wrong with the parish priest teaching catechism to those pupils but it is because the historical and social contexts have changed and the pupils residing today in those regions have different needs. Similarly, while having Catholic Religious Education, understood as a means of understanding one's culture and identity, is legitimate in Rome, it is equally legitimate to have Multi-faith Religious Education in cosmopolitan Birmingham.

While, to a certain extent and with extreme caution, one might say that in Europe religion does not have a stronghold on society and the individual, this is surely not the case in most countries in South America. However, once again even this kind of statement is not altogether correct.

Peter Berger (1999) argues that at present there is a resurgence of religion and religiosity. He argues that the world is as furiously religious as it has ever been before. Although Europe seems to be an exception to this rule, especially on the level of expressed beliefs and church-related behaviour, Berger is still hesitant to apply the term secularisation to European countries. He argues that rather than a process of secularisation there has only been a shift in institutional location.

Berger is not the only academic speaking of the respectable health of religion in general. Casanova (1994) was among the first to speak of a global trend that points to a “de-privatization” of religion. But once again plurality of understanding is evident. Casanova (2008) points out that both America and most European societies can be considered as secular, but the difference between the two geographical contexts is that the meaning of the term “secular” is different. Casanova proposes that, due to the influences of Anglo-Protestantism and Calvinism, there is a tensionless connivance between the secular and religious spheres. In the United States, the success of the secular was aided by the religious. So while the Americans are proud of and steadfast in their belief in the separation of Church and state, at the same time, one notes the continuous references made to the Gospel and to Christian values by many social movements and even by American presidents and presidential candidates. On the contrary, in Europe the struggle between the Churches and the state and the wars among the different denominations led to secularisation being seen as a victory of reason, progress, liberty and worldly pursuits. However, the same, or even similar categories, cannot be applied to other geographic areas with different predominant religions, such as regions practising Confucianism, mainly because they have always understood themselves as worldly and because they have no ecclesiastical organisation.

Notwithstanding this diversity and the conception of multiple modernities, Casanova (2005) does see parallel developments even if in different contexts and during different historical periods. Casanova sees striking parallels between the contemporary discourse on Islam and the mid-nineteenth century

discourse on Catholics especially in Anglo-Protestant societies. The specificity of the parallel does not lie in the development of trends but in perceptions of totalising discourse on religion, be it the nineteenth century Catholicism or contemporary Islam, as essentially anti-modern, fundamentalist, illiberal and undemocratic.

Diversity and complexity seem to be the key concepts that prevail in this area. Grace Davie (1999) points to the complicated nature of religiosity in European countries by demonstrating that there is no one clear pattern among countries. While Europe can be defined as a secular society in a strict sense, recent sociological data show that Europeans are not indifferent to the religious and spiritual dimensions (Berger, 1999; Davie, 1999; Greeley, 2003; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). It seems that in Europe citizens have developed a private religion rather than having abandoned religion altogether. Religion has become invisible rather than non-existent. The emphasis has been switched to individualisation of belief, the compilation of personal creeds that give meaning to one's unique existence, according to one's experiences, interests and aspirations.

How to respond to this complex situation? In what way is Education to meet the holistic needs of the younger generations? Although Education, and more so, Religious Education, has strong political and ideological components, it responds to the needs of the contexts in which it operates. The main problem is that not only is there no clear definition of religion, education and religious education but there are a multitude of voices which create different contexts and situations. This cacophony of understanding, practice and living makes it very difficult to find a common denominator which promotes single educational models. The key to best practice seems to lie in accepting, and living diversity.

Diversity a Human Condition and a Theological Concept

We seem to be living in a "seismic" context where change is the rule. No other era has witnessed so many changes in such short periods and due to situations in such a wide context. Communication and Information Technologies together with global politics and economy have drastically changed our relation with the dimensions of time and space. Education is faced with the serious challenge of knowledge and learning that may become easily irrelevant to the context students will be working and living in. The answer to such unstable and ever-changing reality seems to be an education which rests on the concept of diversity.

Diversity is an obvious concept which everyone has to face everyday in any context. As much as creation is rich in diversity of species and matter, so much more is human reality marked by uniqueness and individuality. Human beings vary in different ways. Individuals do not only differ in physical appearance and in ways of socialising but they also differ in ways they adapt and construct their environment. Diversity is so self-evident that it was more than 4,000 years ago that the Chinese

gave the first recorded attention to individual difference through the introduction of competitive tests in order to select civil servants (Snow, 1982). However, just as diversity is a human reality, it is also true that humans feel the need to classify and categorise in order to minimise and control diversity.

As Slavin (1936) noted, the problem of individual difference and its effects was treated by various Christian authors including, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Abelard, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Aquinas, Scotus and Occam. Differences are not so much the reflection of fragmentation as the reflection of God's eternal and infinite nature. On this point Thomas Aquinas (1981) states that no one creature can adequately represent God's goodness. Difference is needed in order for God to communicate his goodness to creatures.

Indeed, for Christians all diversity stems from the eternal God. God is both One and triune. God is One and so is the reality that He created. Similarly, God is a communion of three individualities and so creation is, or should be, a unity in diversity. The perceived fragmentation and the inability to relate and deal with diversity are a result of original sin, which brought disorder to the whole of creation. From a Christian perspective, understanding the paradox of a one and triune God is essential to understand and accept diversity.

In the early formulations of the concept of the Trinity, Tertullian used the word "person", which was until then only a referent for the mask used by actors, to refer to God because of the word's ability to suggest individuality. In the fourth and fifth century the Cappadocians, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory of Nazianzus used the word "person" not only to imply the distinctiveness of the persons of the Holy Trinity but also the relational nature of the Trinitarian God (Rudman, 1997). It was they who highlighted the individuality of the divine persons. Later St. Augustine, in *De Trinitate*, links the concept of the "persons" of the Trinity with the fact that humans are created in the image of God, thus asserting that human beings are indeed human persons, individuals in relation. Augustine insisted on the irreducible uniqueness.

So, for Christians, uniqueness and autonomy are human characteristics in so far as they reflect the shared personhood with the divine persons. So, human diversity is not only a reflection of God's eternity but it is also the natural consequence in our being created individuals, unique and therefore different. It is basically this sharing in the divine life and this uniqueness that originate human dignity and command respect not only for life but for ideas, decisions, beliefs and expressions.

However, Christians insist on the concept of person precisely because of the belief that individuality must be complimented and balanced through relationality. It is only in the understanding that the human person is created to be in communion with others and with the rest of creation that one can respect and accept diversity. Insisting on individuality and on the self without taking into account our being created open to the other and in need of being complimented and authenticated by the other would serve to strengthen the vortex leading to egocentrism and fragmentation rather than to wholeness.

Diversity in Beliefs

Uniqueness is the cause of diversity among human persons. This diversity is reflected not only at macro levels but also at micro levels. Ivakiv's (2006) suggestion to consider religion and life stances in terms of "distributed significance" makes sense precisely because there is not only difference between traditions but also in the way people live, understand and express those traditions. It is one thing to be a Muslim living in Arab and Near East regions, and another to be a Muslim in, say, Singapore. It is difficult to accept the idea that religion "is something introduced into – or superimposed upon – society from outside. . .whereas society creates its own ethnicity, it is a passive recipient of religion" (Ahmed, 1984, p. 262). Plurality exists in Islam because of the interaction with culture and background (Dangor, 2004). This is evident, for instance, in the complex way in which Islam has come to develop in Malay, that is, in an interaction with the cultures and civilisations of India, China and Europe, with the animistic beliefs of the indigenous, with the Buddha–Shiva mystics and with the Christian liberal British colonisers (Shamsul, 2005).

But plurality of beliefs and practices is especially true in Christianity where the faithful believe that the divine Word became flesh. The Word of God, i.e. that which is totally other, became concrete at a specific time and space and expressed himself in and through a particular culture and language. Since Christians believe that God's salvation is universal, they also believe that the message is not limited to one language or culture. This was the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures and of the words of Jesus that prevailed at the very beginning of Christianity. The Acts of the Apostles gives only minor hints of what actually happened. The two major groups within the Christian community were the Jewish Christians, led by James, the brother of Jesus, and the Hellenists (see Acts 6, 1) probably represented by the group of seven deacons, led by Stephen. The former group observed fully the "Torah of Moses" while the group of Stephen argued for a relaxation of the strict requirements of the Law, in order to make it easier for the Gentiles. Walter (1997) suggests that the Hellenists developed their theological line after considering Jesus' words and actions with the outcasts of Israel and they probably concluded that God's love for all creatures cannot end with national, cultic or ritual boundaries. It is evident that the Hellenist Christians succeeded in imposing their own interpretation over that of Jewish Christians. A case in point is the way Evangelists were free to adapt the Gospel to the culture, custom, and needs of particular communities (Esler, 1989). There are various instances in the New Testament where scholars have found parallel concepts that may point to the New Testament authors' use and adaptation of Graeco-Roman theological concepts in order to build a new Christian theology. *Apotheosis*, *Theos Aner*, and cosmic conflagration are only a few examples of Hellenist theological concepts that Christian authors have used in forming the New Testament (Colins, 1997; Pilgaard, 1997; Van der Horst, 1994).

The theology of contextualising the message not only led to the hellenisation of the Judeo-Christian message but to the creation of various rites, such as the Coptic and the Syriac, with their own theological emphasis. Unfortunately, with the institutionalisation of the Church, the schism between East and West, and with

more importance given to the Church of Rome, lesser importance was given to the *catholic*, universalistic expression of the faith in various cultures.

The contextual way of reading and interpreting the message is only recently resurfacing in the Catholic way of doing theology. A clear statement in this direction comes from the Second Vatican Council when it declares that,

the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse, just as the word of the eternal Father, when He took to Himself the flesh of human weakness, was in every way made like men. (Second Vatican Council, 1965a, p. 13)

The obvious implication of this declaration is that God did not only become flesh but also entered in human language, discourse and culture. So God is present in the diversity of cultures and language since the Christian God is not only transcendent but immanent in that God chooses to walk and dwell with his people. Although holding different creeds, cultures and pertaining to different races,

one is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men. (Second Vatican Council, 1965b, p. 1)

The oneness celebrated by the Catholic Church, so emphatically stated through such common symbols of the Pope, the Eucharist and the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is also counter-balanced by less visible and yet equally authentic expressions of diversity within that oneness such as a Catholic Malankara bishop, a Catholic Byzantine liturgy or a married Catholic Antiochian priest. The Catholic Church is after all a communion of diversities. This diversity has been made more evident after the Second Vatican Council, not only with the different rites but also through the many lay spiritualities and movements that have arisen. Catholicism is not a monolithical reality, it encompasses different ethnicities, cultures, liturgical rites, theological positions, spiritualities and, therefore, different ways of living the Catholic faith. There are obvious differences between a Benedictine monk and a religious priest pertaining to the Jesuit congregation, just as there are striking differences between a member of the charismatic renewal and a member of the Opus Dei, or between a Maltese and a Chinese Catholic.

Pedagogical and Methodological Implications

The thesis promoted by this chapter is that diversity is a self-evident reality that cannot and should not be overlooked. The concept of distributed meaning, the will to respect individual students and to form and educate the human person in his/her fullness leads to the adoption of various models of Education, including Religious Education. There is no one method or model of Religious Education that should prevail as long as the method adopted respects the local context in which it is operating.

While there is much talk of an Inter-Religious Education, the reality is that many countries still hold a denominational model of Religious Education in state schools, let alone in private schools (see, e.g. Kodelja & Bassler, 2004; Pajer,

2002; Schreiner, 2007). The plurality of Religious Education models very much depends on the history, culture, religious tradition/s and politics of the country and/or region (see, e.g. Kallioniemi, 2003; Skeie, 2001). As Casanova (2008) noted, in the European context, while there is a predominant discourse on secularisation, understood as a victory of reason, progress, liberty and worldly pursuits, there is still

a one single national church that claims to be coextensive with the nation or that of two (usually Catholic and Protestant) competing but territorially based national churches, along with an indefinite but limited number of religious minorities, which has assumed the structural position of sects vis-à-vis the national church. (p. 111)

In his opinion, all European countries, with the exception of the United Kingdom, share a pattern of limited religious pluralism. Furthermore, Casanova (2004) believes that, once again with the exception of the United Kingdom, the “other” in Europe is principally the Muslim which is normally an immigrant, of a different race and is socio-economically underprivileged.

This does not disqualify any discourse on Inter-Religious Education but should make us particularly sensitive to the validity of different models which at times might vary within the same countries such as is the case of the existence of Denominational Religious Education in Alsace and Lorraine in France which is noted for its *laïcité* that requires strict privatisation of religion.

The concept of Religious Education as a contextual endeavour is not new (see for instance Leganger-Krogstad, 2001). However, what is being proposed here is a much looser interpretation of the dimensions of time and space. Given that we all live in a global village where ideologies, cultures, lifestyles, beliefs, which may not be geographically present, still influence our everyday life, immediacy should not be the limiting factor through which one reads the interrelated dimensions of time and space.

In such a perspective, if Religious Education is respectful of the individual student, it should move beyond a curriculum which is mainly interested in promoting social conviviality and the understanding of the other. The focus of Religious Education should be the full development of the individual human person which in this context would focus on empowering students to live the Good life. If the curriculum develops students’ potentials to the full, then the utilitarian concerns of having good citizens, better social cohesion and a good economy should follow naturally. Such a Religious Education would, among other things, enable personal and communitarian identity formation, access and use spiritual and religious languages, help students acquire skills that enable them to critically understand the context in which they live and respond to it.

Catholic Religious Education, then, can be used as a test case in order to assess the feasibility of having an inter-religious basis for a denominational approach without renouncing its confessional character. Catholics are supposedly accustomed to paradoxes – they, among other things, believe in one God who is, however, three persons, they believe in a transcendent God who is, at the same time, immanent, and they hold the value of a universal Church although each diocesan Church is a Church on its own. Due to its catholic (universal) vocation,

Catholic Religious Education may be able to transcend dichotomies of particularistic rigid truth versus wide understanding of truth and acceptance of different means of achieving fullness. Admittedly, there are difficulties in attaining such a vision but it is hereby claimed that these difficulties are not inherent in the faith tradition but are rather ways which different members of the community conceptualise their religion. There are Catholics who have a very rigid and conservative conception of what it means to be Catholic. This is best exemplified by a rigid loyalty to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992) which is after all not fully representative of the diverse traditions that exist within the Church. However, throughout Church history, doctrine and liturgy there are clear indications of the diversity existent in the same faith. For instance, the liturgical hymn *Urbs Jerusalem beata*, used for the feast of the dedication of a church, describes the Church as a whole city, and not just one house, with shining facets of living stones (Blückert, 2006). In the past one and a half centuries, due to various historical situations, Catholicism has been able to transcend national boundaries imposed by the modern era and has been able to become a globalised religion (Casanova, 2005). The present challenge for Catholicism is indeed to overcome the temptation of becoming a monolithic centralised religion where diversity of expression is not tolerated.

In true respect of the doctrine of the Trinity, a Catholic Religious Education should promote unity in diversity. Diversity should be presented as a reality and as an enrichment to personal development. Knowing and experiencing the other helps one to become aware of, and possibly experience God's eternity.

Departing from what is familiar to the student, one starts to introduce the concept of diversity as a concrete reality which we have to face and celebrate in our daily lives. By moving from what I know and gradually encountering the unfamiliar, the content will not remain on a purely cognitive level but will educate the affective and the spiritual dimensions of the student. Thus, the focus would not be on the different ways of practice and creeds, which could lead to temptation to consider the content as interesting, but the emphases would be on the very fact that diversity is an indispensable human component which emanates from the truth that we mirror God's eternity and, therefore, to be understood and lived as an essential part of being.

The concept of starting from what is near, what I experience, is certainly not new. Leganger-Krogstad (2001) has produced a model which moves from first-hand experiences along the line of family, friends/neighbours, school up till what is global. She also claimed that the importance of context was even present in the catechetical programmes of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c 315–387).

Figure 1 is an attempt to present the basis for a Catholic Religious Education syllabus which centres on the concept of diversity. It has to be kept in mind that the model is built in the context of educating Catholic children in a predominantly Catholic country.

Personal and communitarian identities are held to be central in this formation programme. Students should be able to grasp their *mother tongue* in order to be able to master the skill of understanding, appreciating and, possibly, using other *tongues*. This is the reason why Catholicism is placed at the centre of the model.

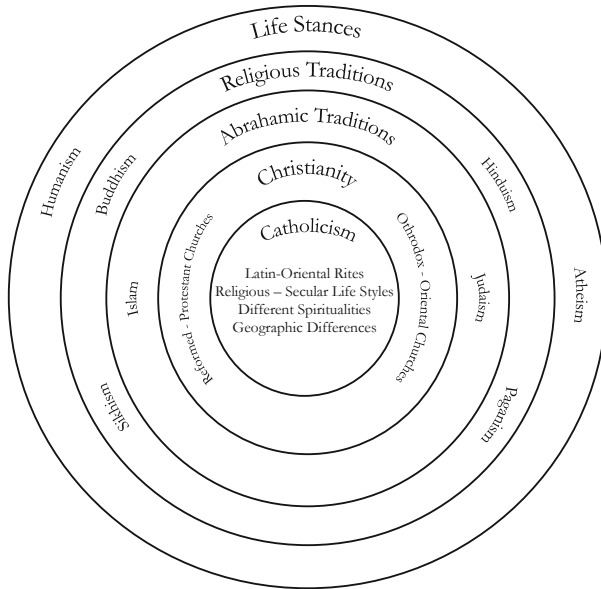


Fig. 1 A possible model for a Denominational RE that promotes the acceptance of diversity. N.B. the above mentioned religious traditions and life-stances are only meant to serve as an example for the development of specific syllabi

However, while deepening the understanding of the faith of their parents, students are introduced and exposed to the paradigm of diversity. This could be done by making students aware of the diversity they encounter in their everyday lives. In understanding diversity, reflected not only in nature but especially in human beings, as a natural outcome of God's eternity, it should be relatively easy to make students aware of the difference that exists in their faith tradition. Moving from what is familiar to what is non-familiar in one's own faith tradition should help reduce attitudes of non-acceptance of other forms of life stances that are not Catholic. Such an educational method should help to reduce stereotyping and is intended to help students to be critical at any attempt, normally by the media, to be minimalist and to present only one view of a faith tradition, or to identify any particular lifestyle with a faith/non-faith tradition. So the aim of this model is not simply to promote tolerance but it is the acceptance of reality which should, in turn, lead to respect of the other and, at a deeper level, awe for the infinite ways of being human and reflection on eternity.

In a scholastic setting, time is a genuine constraint. The richness and vastness of the content at hand and the curricular constraints make it a real problem to do justice to the Catholic faith itself, let alone to other life stances. The curricular subject should be conceptualised as an invitation to open doors left ajar. Students should never be understood as passive recipients but, on the contrary, should be empowered as active and critical constructors of meaning. In order to achieve this goal, they must be given the tools to understand and transform the reality they live in.

Figure 1 is neither conclusive nor definitive. There are various life stances that have not been mentioned in the model. The Toledo Guiding Principles (2007) could be extremely helpful in evaluating which life stances one is to include in the syllabus. Furthermore, the model does not explain when and how students are to move from one circle to another. It is suggested that the programme be gradually developed over the compulsory school years. So, while in their early years of schooling children are helped to become aware, comprehend and celebrate diversity in their own faith tradition, in the middle years they come to meet other life stances present in their community, in the latter years they should be able to confront themselves with other life stances that are different to what they are used to encounter. For instance, in a Maltese context these could well be Buddhism and Humanism.

Through the framework of diversity and through the development of a sound Catholic identity, students may be empowered to acquire the symbols and language through which their families and previous generations have dealt with the ultimate questions of life and they may also acquire the grammar and syntax necessary for dialogue with other life stances. Understood in this way, an inter-religious basis for a confessional Religious Education may be considered a paradox but is definitely not a contradiction.

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Finding a Way Forward: Interreligious Education and Religious Education in Aotearoa New Zealand

Kevin Wanden and Lyn Smith

Introduction

Hūtia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea te kōmako e ko?

Kī mai ki ahau: He aha te mea nui o te ao?

Māku e kī atu: He tangata he tangata!

If you pluck out the heart of the flax bush, how can the bell bird sing?

You ask me: What is the greatest reality of the universe?

I reply: The human person!¹

On a global scale, the events of September 11, 2001, and its subsequent aftermath have raised the profile of religion in the political and educational spheres. While religion may never be far from the media spotlight, its place in the curriculum is still contested. In Aotearoa New Zealand recent trends in immigration have resulted in an increasing ethnic diversity and religious pluralism, while census data also indicate a shift in religious affiliation. At the same time, there is also an increasing awareness and respect for the role of spirituality, particularly influenced by Māori and Pacific peoples.

In order to understand the situation in Aotearoa New Zealand in the light of recent global and local events, it is necessary to understand something of the history of Religious Education in this country. Historically, the country has no State religion, although the majority of the population has had a traditional affiliation with Christianity. Since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi² in 1840, when Governor Hobson responded to Bishop Pompallier (the Catholic Bishop), that “the several

K. Wanden (✉)

NCRS, Wellington, New Zealand

e-mail: k.wanden@clear.net.nz

¹This is a common Māori proverb.

²The Treaty of Waitangi between the British crown and a number of Maori chiefs was signed on 6 February 1840. See Orange (1987). *The Treaty of Waitangi* (p. 53). Wellington Allen & Unwin. 0868614270.

faiths of England, of the Wesleyans, of Rome, and also the Maori custom shall be alike protected,”³ the State has recognised a diversity of beliefs in New Zealand.

While Religious Education formed part of the curriculum in the first colonial schools, the 1877 Education Act adopted a secular stance towards the teaching of religion, in part to avoid sectarian conflict. As a result, with the exception of Catholic and other Church-sponsored schools⁴ and the Christian Religious Education (Bible in Schools) programme in some State primary schools,⁵ little Religious Education was taught in Aotearoa New Zealand schools. While the secular clause was a legacy of nineteenth-century sectarian arguments, it has resulted in an increasing religious illiteracy at a time when the profile of religion on the global scene is becoming increasingly more prominent and a growing realisation that religious literacy and interreligious education have a valid place in education for understanding our increasingly global world. As Matsuura, the UNESCO Director-General noted, “it is essential to encourage the acquisition by all learners of a basic level of knowledge and understanding of the world’s main cultures, civilisations and religions.”⁶

Until recently, interreligious education in Aotearoa New Zealand would have been understood as taking place between different Christian denominations, more accurately described as ecumenism. The secularist viewpoint that seeks to exclude religion from the classroom has until recently held a dominant position; however until a way is found to address religion in the classroom context, no effective interreligious education will be possible.

The School System in Aotearoa New Zealand

The following is a brief description of the school system in this country to help contextualise the education system. Schools are categorised as State,⁷ State Integrated⁸ or Independent.⁹ Table 1 shows the number of schools by type and category and Table 2 shows a breakdown of schools by religious affiliation.

³This was a verbal commitment made by William Hobson RN, representing the British Crown at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

⁴The phrase “Church-sponsored schools” is used to describe schools established by Protestant denominations, as distinct from Catholic schools.

⁵This programme is sponsored by the Churches Education Commission, see <http://www.ccc.org.nz>.

⁶Speech at the opening of the interagency meeting on “Promoting Peace and Security through Education and Science: Elements for a UN Strategy against Terrorism”, Paris 26 February 2003. See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org>.

⁷A State school is one established by the government.

⁸A State Integrated school is one usually established by a church and has become part of the State system, retaining the right to exercise its Special Character. It receives full operational funding from the government.

⁹An Independent school is one that is privately operated.

Table 1 Number of schools in Aotearoa New Zealand by type and category as on 1 July 2006

	State	State integrated	Independent
Primary	1,775	236	40
Secondary	265	69	18
Composite ^a	124	22	47

Source: www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling.

^aA composite school is a mixture of primary and secondary year levels, e.g. years 1–13 and is usually in smaller rural towns.

Table 2 Number of schools by religious affiliation as on 1 July 2006

	State integrated			Independent		
	Primary	Secondary	Composite	Primary	Secondary	Composite
Anglican	3	8		10	5	6
Catholic	190	49				
Jewish	1			1		
Muslim			1		1	
Presbyterian		6	1	1	2	4
Seventh Day Adventist	13	2	1			
Non-denominational	14	1	13	3	1	16
Other Christian	6	1	3		1	1

Source: www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling.

All Catholic schools and a number of other Church-sponsored schools are State Integrated, under the provisions of the Private Schools' Conditional Integration Act (1975). An Integrated school is one that was previously Independent and has become part of the State system. The State assumed the operational costs and the Proprietor¹⁰ was responsible for Special Character¹¹ and for major capital works. Independent schools, many of which are Church-sponsored, receive a financial subsidy from the State.¹² Generally, the Special Character of Catholic and other Church-sponsored schools was based on a particular religious tradition and allowed for the teaching of Religious Education as part of the curriculum.

¹⁰The Proprietor is the legal owner of the buildings and land.

¹¹The Special Character of an Integrated school distinguishes it from a State school. For religious schools this is usually defined in relation to the faith tradition.

¹²*Schooling in New Zealand: A guide* (2001). Wellington: Ministry of Education 0478187440. See www.minedu.govt.nz.

Demographic Change

New Zealand's ethnic demography has undergone significant change in the last decade. The 2006 census reported that 67.6% of the population were European,¹³ 14.6% Māori¹⁴ and 6.5% Pacific peoples.¹⁵ Of the minor ethnic groups shown in Table 3, the Asian ethnic group was the fastest growing between 2001 and 2006, increasing almost 50% since 2001, while those who identified as being of Pacific origin recorded a 14.7% increase over the same period. This demographic change has resulted in an increasing ethnic and religious pluralism.

Table 3 Selected ethnic groups: 2001–2006 censuses

Ethnic group	2001 count	2006 count	Percentage change 2001–2006
European	2,871,432	2,609,589	–9.1
Māori	526,281	565,329	7.4
Pacific Peoples	231,801	265,974	14.7
Cambodian	5,268	6,918	31.3
Chinese	105,057	147,570	40.5
Filipino	11,091	16,938	52.7
Indian	62,190	104,583	68.2
Japanese	10,023	11,910	18.8
Korean	19,026	30,792	61.8
Sri Lankan	7,011	8,310	18.5

Source: Statistics New Zealand (2006).

Change in Religious Affiliation

The changing ethnic demography has also resulted in a shift in religious affiliation. Three trends that indicate a change in religious affiliation can be identified as (1) a decline in the mainstream Christian traditions, (2) an increase in other religions and (3) an increase in no religious affiliation, as indicated in Table 4.

In the 2006 census, 55.6% of respondents indicated an affiliation with a Christian denomination, compared with 60.6% in the 2001 Census. While there was an overall decline in the percentage of affiliation with Christianity, some Christian denominations increased and others decreased. There was an increase in the number of people affiliated with the Catholic and Methodist denominations, and a decrease in the number of people indicating an affiliation with the Anglican, Presbyterian, Congregation

¹³European or New Zealand European is the ethnic group descended from European migrants, predominantly from the British Isles.

¹⁴Māori are the indigenous people or *tangata whenua* people of the land.

¹⁵The ethnic groups deriving from the Pacific Islands, particularly from Samoa, Cook Islands and Fiji with whom Aotearoa New Zealand has had historic ties.

Table 4 Largest Christian Denominations, other religions and no religion: 1956, 2001 and 2006 censuses

Religion	1956 count	2001 count	2006 count	Percentage change 2001–2006
Anglican	780,999	584,793	554,925	–5.1
Catholic	310,723	485,637	508,437	4.7
Methodist	161,823	120,546	121,806	1.0
Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed	491,392	431,139	400,839	–7.0
Christian not further defined	163,976	192,165	186,234	–3.1
Buddhists	111	41,634	52,362	25.7
Hinduism	1,597	39,798	64,392	61.8
Islam	200	23,631	36,072	52.6
Jewish	3,823	6,636	6,858	
Sikh		5,199	9,507	82.6
No religion	17,376	1,028,049	1,297,104	26.1

Source: 1956 statistics (Hill, 1985, p. 142). The 2001 and 2006 statistics: Table 28 Religious Affiliation (Statistics New Zealand, 2006).

and Reformed denominations. The increase in Catholic affiliation was due, at least in part, to immigration from the Philippines and India.

While Christianity has played, and continues to play, a significant formative role in the development of the country in terms of the nation's heritage, culture, beliefs, institutions and values, the majority of those who affiliated with Christianity do not regularly attend Church. The description of Aotearoa New Zealand as a Christian country relates to its cultural and legal heritage rather than in demonstrable professed belief, as Oliver (1962) observed when commenting on the call for the construction of a national (Anglican) cathedral in Wellington,¹⁶

The Christianity which characterised the bulk of the New Zealand people is a vestigial sort which is manifested fitfully, in moral attitudes rather than in explicit beliefs or overt behaviour. It is enshrined, not in any building, but in such phrases as “giving a man a fair go”, “doing the decent thing”, “playing the game”, and “lending a hand” – colloquial debasements of the Golden Rule. (Oliver, 1962)

The situation described by Oliver 45 years ago is still pertinent today. For many, Christianity is at most, part of their cultural heritage. However, in order for students to effectively participate in interreligious education, they will need to recover their religious heritage.

The second trend that emerged in the 2006 census was an increase in religious other than Christianity. The number of people who indicated an affiliation with

¹⁶Wellington situated at the southern tip of the North Island is the capital city of New Zealand.

the Sikh religion increased by 82.6%, Hinduism by 61.8%, Islam by 52.6% and Buddhists by 25.7%. These increases were attributed to recent migration; for example, 78.8% of people affiliated with Hindu and 77% with Islam were born overseas and almost half of these had arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand within the last 5 years (49.8% and 48%, respectively).

Increase in No Religion Affiliation

The number and percentage of people who indicated an affiliation with no religion increased significantly since the 1956 census as shown in Table 4. This category increased 34.7% between 2001 and 2006, representing approximately one quarter of the total population. This increase was particularly evident among the European and New Zealander ethnic groups (37.7% and 37.6%, respectively), rather than among Asian, Māori or Pacific ethnic groups. The age profile indicated that the trend in no religious affiliation was likely to continue, as it was more prevalent in the younger age groups, 43% of Children (0–14 years) while only 11.8% of people 65 years and over recorded no religion. One challenge this may present for interreligious education is that many students may have difficulty in engaging in dialogue as they lack an understanding of religion and a degree of religious literacy.

Recognition of Religious Diversity

Since colonial times, there has been religious diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand, however, this diversity was primarily among Christian denominations. Changing ethnic and religious diversity as well as global events have resulted in an increasing recognition at a national level, of the importance of interreligious education as an integral component in building social cohesion and the place of education to achieve this end. A number of initiatives have been undertaken, including hosting two international conferences and the development of a statement on religious diversity.¹⁷

Te Ngira: The New Zealand Diversity Action Programme, assisted by the Human Rights Commission, developed a National Statement on Religious Diversity, which was endorsed at the National Interfaith Forum in February 2007. Item six of the statement which addressed education, recommend that, “schools should teach an understanding of the diversity of religious and spiritual traditions in a manner that reflects the community of which the school is a part” (New Zealand Diversity Action Programme, 2007, #5). While this currently occurs in many Catholic and other Church-sponsored schools, it is more difficult in State schools as Religious Education is not part of the curriculum.

¹⁷For the Statement on Religious Diversity, see <http://www.hrc.co.nz>.

In May 2007 the government hosted two conferences, an International Symposium on the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations report and the Third Asia Pacific Regional Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation. These conferences emphasised the importance of education in providing an accurate picture of other cultures, peoples and religions in order to engage in effective dialogue. The New Zealand Diversity Forum sponsored a forum on religion in schools in August 2007, which explored implications for religion in the new school curriculum.

The New Zealand Curriculum¹⁸ (Ministry of Education, 2007) included a strong emphasis on cultural diversity, which recognised diversity of belief; however, it did not explicitly mention the need to study the major world religions nor did it use the word “religion”. The statement on Values in the curriculum required that:

Through their learning experiences, students will learn about:

- their own values and those of others;
- different kinds of values, such as moral, social, cultural, aesthetic and economic values;
- the values on which New Zealand’s cultural and institutional traditions are based;
- the values of other groups and cultures.

(Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 10)

One implication that could be drawn from this was that all students should learn about the contribution of Christianity to the formation of foundational values of the country’s culture and its institutions.

Unlike the Year 1–13 school curriculum, the early childhood curriculum *Te Whariki: He whariki matauranga mo nga mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1996) explicitly acknowledged the need to recognise the spiritual dimension as part of the holistic development of the person (p. 41). As students progress to primary school, spirituality may, at least for some, carry over into the curriculum.

These initiatives and others acknowledged the reality that religion cannot be ignored in, nor excluded from, the curriculum. However, to some extent at least, the role of religion in the public sphere remains a contested area. While it cannot be ignored, it is more difficult to identify ways to address it at a national level and within the education system. One of the difficulties is that there is little dialogue concerning the role of religion in education other than in Catholic and other Church-sponsored schools. The secular position suspects that Religious Education is a vehicle for the Churches to proselytise and gives little recognition to the significant theoretical and pedagogical changes that have taken place within the discipline over recent decades. One of the contributions that Religious Education teachers could make to this discussion is to provide a language of discourse that addressed the educational rather than the theological dimension of Religious Education.

¹⁸See www.minedu.govt.nz.

Bicultural Education

Aotearoa New Zealand holds a special place in the world with regard to its cultural heritage. As a result of the Treaty of Waitangi the country has a strong commitment to biculturalism in writing, although its actualisation requires further development in practice, especially with regard to education.

The experience of an emerging bicultural pedagogy in Aotearoa New Zealand may provide indicators to assist the successful development of interreligious education. At one level interreligious education may be seen as an aspect of bicultural and multicultural education in that religion forms a significant dimension of many indigenous cultures, and as such, cannot be ignored. Bicultural education seeks to adopt a culturally responsive pedagogy that is responsive to the leaning needs of students. The development of bicultural and multicultural pedagogies may also provide a starting point for interreligious education by allowing issues relevant to students to surface in the classroom.

One of the four interdependent concepts that formed the foundation of the Health and Physical Education learning area in The New Zealand Curriculum was *hau-roa*, the Māori philosophy of well-being. *Hau-roa* comprised four elements: *taha tinana* (physical well-being), *taha hinengaro* (mental and emotional well-being), *taha whānu* (social well-being), and *taha wairua* (spiritual well-being). The conceptual understanding of *hau-roa* (well-being) was derived from Durie's (1994) *Te Whare Tapa Wha* model in which the four elements were compared to the four walls of a *whare* (house), each supported and influenced the other. All four elements were necessary for the structural integrity of the building and by analogy, the person. This highlights the importance of spirituality as a component of well-being.

Ho, Holmes and Cooper (2004) identified two factors that are important for multicultural education and a culturally responsive pedagogy:

- Critical multicultural education emphasises the need to be aware of power structures in education and the propagation of the dominant cultural ideology through ethnocentric biases.
- Multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy aim for inclusive, reciprocal and reflective teaching and learning (p. 54).

The adoption of a bicultural pedagogy would encourage an inclusive, reciprocal and reflective interreligious education. It would also challenge teachers to engage in dialogue with students.

Bishop¹⁹ (1999) suggested that *Kaupapa Māori*²⁰ offered a new approach to interpersonal dialogue in the classroom. Many classrooms, according to Bishop, are

¹⁹For an explanation of Bishops' Te Kōtahitanga project that investigated how to improve the educational achievement of Māori students in mainstream secondary school classrooms, see www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/te_kotahitanga.

²⁰A phrase that means based on Māori principles.

still dominated by a traditional model with the teacher supplying pre-determined uncontextualised knowledge that the students replicate, rather than a discursive model where students are actively engaged in their learning.

Bishop identified a number of principles that could be applied to effective interreligious education:

- Culture counts. Classrooms are places where learners can bring “who they are” to the learning interactions in complete safety, and their knowledges are “acceptable” and “legitimate”;
- Learners can initiate interactions;
- Learners are able to be co-inquirers, i.e. raisers of questions and evaluators of questions and answers;
- Learning is active, problem-based, integrated and holistic;
- Learning positionings are reciprocal and knowledge is co-created (p. 21).

These principles relate well to recent pedagogical developments in Religious Education that promote critical interpretive inquiry, discussed later in this chapter.

Bishop also identified the importance of being well grounded in one’s own culture as foundational for entering into bicultural, multicultural and interreligious education. Developing a “world of understanding requires first understanding both of one’s own culture (its values, beliefs and preferred practices) as well as understanding how one’s own culture differs from the cultures of students from different ethnicities” (p. 6). As religion was an aspect of a student’s culture, in order to engage in effective interreligious education, students would require a grounding in their own religious tradition.

Commenting on multiculturalism in a European context, Lane (2006) cautioned that it “should not be about the assimilation of the minority by the majority; instead it should be about cultural integration in a way that respects difference, acknowledges diversity and values otherness” (p. 906). For effective interreligious education, students needed to be able to acknowledge, name and critique religious difference in order to develop a better understanding of themselves and others.

Bicultural and multicultural pedagogies that promote an inclusive, reciprocal, contextualised learning environment that encouraged student engagement may provide a model for effective interreligious education as they would provide a safe educational environment that respected and valued students’ contribution.

Religious Education in Aotearoa New Zealand

Since the establishment of the first school by English missionaries in 1816, the Christian churches have had a continuing involvement with education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Initially, the provincial governments provided financial support for a mixture of State and Church schools. With the passing of the Education Act (1877) all financial assistance to Church schools ceased and the teaching of Religious

Education was excluded from the primary school curriculum. Although the secular clause was included to prevent denominational rivalry, it had the effect of completely eliminating Religious Education (Petersen, 2006). The Christian Churches responded differently to this issue. The Catholic Church established a parallel system of schools, while Protestant denominations tended to concentrate on Sunday schools. In 1897, the Nelson System was devised which permitted some Religious Education to take place at primary schools outside the legal operating hours.²¹ In 2005, Religious Education programmes administered by the Churches Education Commission were operating in over 60% of State primary schools (Petersen, 2006).

In State secondary schools, while Religious Education was not explicitly prohibited by legislation, the entrenched secular view of education has prevented any significant change. While the original intention of the secular clause may have been for the State schools to remain neutral on religious matters, it has come to be interpreted as the exclusion of religion from schools or secularism, rather than neutrality. This secularist position has made it difficult for State schools to teach about religion and its role in society or its historical and cultural influence. Adopting a “secular”, rather than a “secularist” approach, would allow religion to be addressed as part of the curriculum. Part of the discourse that needs to be held concerns the clarification of the terminology related to Religious Education in the school context.

Unlike Australia and many other countries that have developed Religious Studies curricula for the senior secondary school, Aotearoa New Zealand has so far resisted this trend. Although not specifically mentioned, religion could find a place in the curriculum as it is an aspect of Social Studies in Years 9 and 10 where students study cultural diversity, law making and how peoples pass on and sustain their heritage.

Since the 1960s a number of education commissions and reports have recognised the role of religion in society and its place in education. The 1962 Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand (Currie Commission) was of the opinion that the secular clause did not prevent the “teaching *about* religion” (p. 675)²² in secondary schools,

Knowledge about religion as a part of our culture heritage, of the Bible, of Christian standards and values as the unifying ethical basis of our community life and of the Church as a moulding force in our history, can be justly claimed to come within the purview of a complete education. (Commission on Education, 1962, p. 687)

The Commission recommended that secular not “exclude reference to religion and religious history in the primary and secondary syllabus of social studies” and further recommended “that secondary schools be encouraged to include objective discussion upon comparative religion in their programmes of senior studies” (Commission on Education, 1962, p. 697).

In the 1970s two committees reported on various aspects of education. Both of these stated that religion had a place in schools. The Committee on Secondary

²¹The operating hours for schools was 9 am to 3 pm, so Religious Education could be taught before 9 am or after 3 pm.

²²Emphasis in original.

Education (McCombs Report, 1976) noted that students should experience a culturally appropriate education of which religion forms a part and that spiritual needs are an aspect of individual student development. Schools, in the opinion of the Committee could not avoid religion; “students, especially adolescents frequently ask ‘ultimate questions’. The avoidance of giving answers is in itself an answer” (Committee on Secondary Education, 1976, p. 40). As a curriculum subject, the Committee stated that

Religions and ideologies are significant studies in their own right; they are part of human experience and they make claims which, if true, have important consequences. (p. 74)

The Committee appeared to suggest that students want to engage and discuss these issues and that schools should provide this opportunity and not ignore religion or restrict it to “giving information”. At the very least schools should “explain how Christianity has helped to shape our present society” (p. 74).

The Committee on Health and Social Education (Johnson Report, 1977) stated that “the spiritual dimension is part of being human” (Committee on Health and Social Education, 1977, p. 35). The Committee suggested an integrated curriculum approach rather than introduce a specific subject. It recognised “that there is a place for open-ended discussion which deals with spiritual matters” (p. 36) and that students should have a safe environment in which discussion can occur. One of the Committee’s recommendations was that “the fostering of non-sectarian spiritual dimension in New Zealand state education be accepted” (p. 37).

These reports all acknowledge that religion, usually referring to Christianity, has a place in contemporary education and make the distinction that learning should be *about* rather than *in* religion.

Approaches to Religious Education and Interreligious Education

As a subject area, Religious Education perhaps more so than others, has experienced a considerable change in theoretical and pedagogical approaches since the 1950s.

There are many ways to conceptualise Religious Education as a subject. In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, it would be important to distinguish between confessional or denominational and non-confessional Religious Education as a way to address secular concerns. Four dimensions of teaching religion can be distinguished as:

- learning *about* religion,
- learning *from* religion,
- learning *to be religious*,
- learning *to be religious in a particular way*.²³

²³These terms are used by Gabriel Moran and Michael Grimmitt.

The first two dimensions, learning *about* and learning *from* religion could form an educational basis for Religious Studies in State schools, whereas Religious Education, particularly in Catholic and other Church-sponsored schools may include the additional dimensions of learning *to be* religious within a particular faith tradition. The distinction between confessional and non-confessional orientations provides a way to move beyond the nineteenth-century rhetoric and provides an opportunity for students to explore their religious heritage and identity, the place of religion in culture and human development as well as issues relating to religion in the contemporary context.

Pedagogies for Interreligious Education

Phenomenology has traditionally been the approach used for teaching non-confessional Religious Studies. This approach focused on learning *about* religion. Students studied the observable features, sacred sites, festivals, rituals and essential beliefs of a religion. While phenomenology presented the religious beliefs with accuracy, empathy and understanding (Grimmitt, 2000), it nevertheless can result in trivialisation of the tradition, reducing Religious Education to an accumulation of facts, particularly when the presentation of complex religious realities may be limited by teaching constraints, for example, a lack of teacher subject matter content knowledge or timetable pressures.

New Pedagogies of Religious Education

While phenomenology may have addressed the issue of learning about religion, knowledge of itself is insufficient for effective interreligious education. To be effective, the educational dimension of religion must engage students in the critical analysis of religion and the relationship between religion and culture. Religious Education is a complex subject in which how students learn determines to an extent what they learn (McArdle, 2003). This has implications for teaching, as research indicates that teachers require specific subject-related pedagogical content knowledge “which is quite different from knowledge of general teaching methods” (Codd et al., 2002).

In reflecting on the English experience of teaching Religious Education, Jackson (2006) traced a shift in pedagogy from phenomenology to interpretive and dialogical approaches. An interpretive pedagogy aimed at allowing students “find their own position within key debates about religious plurality” by encouraging them to ask their own questions (p. 44). This critical Religious Education would go beyond learning *about* religion, seeking to learn *from* religion, in order to avoid reinforcing existing stereotypes and to come to a personal understanding of religion (Jackson, 2007).

Melchant (1995) has suggested that in a postmodern world, a pluralistic approach to Religious Education needed to be developed as the study of religion using a phenomenological approach risks presenting religion as other, of being strange because, “what is most familiar is a secular culture” (p. 348). Pluralistic Religious Education fosters understanding of the student’s “own tradition without denying other traditions; it respects nature rather than dominates it; it eschews violence; it favors particularity and avoids universalizing; and it relies more on narrative and concrete, lived experience than on abstract or theoretical principles” (p. 350).

In a re-evaluation of the phenomenological approach, Barnes (2003) noted the need for Religious Education to critique contemporary secularism,

A culturally relevant religious curriculum needs to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn about religion and to learn from religion; it must also equip pupils with the necessary skills to evaluate the ambiguous reality of religion as it is practiced in an increasingly secular context, a context that has its own particular bias and ambiguity. (p. 39)

In order to overcome the objection of fostering religion, phenomenology has tended to adopt a comparative but non-evaluative pedagogy. However, if interreligious education is to achieve its educational aim, the engagement in a critical study of religion, it will inevitably require an evaluative dimension. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) have suggested that an issues-based approach could complement “an empathetic, non-evaluative study” and foster “the development of critical evaluative skills for informed decision-making” (p. 475). This has the advantage of addressing the issue of relevance.

Kung (2007) addressed the issue of spirituality in the context of teacher education, and made a number of points that could be applied to secondary education. Any reference to spirituality in the classroom would inevitably require teachers to address the place of religion. Kung called for the adoption of a critical education that recognised both the multifaceted nature of contemporary education and the “diverse multiethnic groups of students from a range of religions and faiths.” The aim of a critical education approach would be the “freedom to search, explore, and investigate all forms of truth,” that was not an open-ended discussion, but an engaged critical dialogue. Kung cautioned that “it is imperative to signal that this search for truth is not irresponsible freedom of deconstruction that leaves the spiritual arena borderless, but a critical reconstruction that liberates students to find their way through the maze of spiritual traditions” (p. 73). This is a complex task that presents a challenge for interreligious education as it places a considerable responsibility on teachers who may not have sufficient subject matter or pedagogical knowledge.

The Religious Education classroom is one of the few places that some students can explore issues of belief and how these integrate with life and culture for themselves and others, in a safe non-threatening environment, that allows them to make meaning from the plethora of religious ideas with which they are confronted. Promoting interaction, dialogue and communication between students from different religious traditions may promote interreligious and intercultural understandings (Jackson, 2007), which may result in a more cohesive society.

While educational approaches such as these may become increasingly important as Aotearoa New Zealand develops into a more multicultural and multifaith society, interreligious education faces a number of challenges. The first challenge is the development of an educational rationale for interreligious education. In order for students to engage in meaningful interreligious dialogue, they have to have something to dialogue about, particularly knowledge of their own religious tradition or heritage and a basic religious literacy. It would appear, for example, that one of the assumptions of interreligious education is the promotion of tolerance through a change in attitudes and thereby assisting greater social cohesion. If this educational aim is to be achieved, then the purpose of interreligious education will involve more than the mere accumulation of knowledge. It will require students to critique, reflect on and process this knowledge in order to understand the other. In short it may require students to change their preconceived attitudes and opinions.

A second challenge for effective interreligious education is related to teacher qualifications and professional learning. Teachers will not only need to acquire a broad range of specific subject matter content knowledge related to major world and indigenous religions, but will also need to acquire the subject-specific pedagogical content knowledge in order to engage with students in a learning process.

Why Religious Education Is Important in Contemporary Education

Religious Education can contribute to two important areas of education: the development of religious literacy and the search for personal identity and meaning.

Religious Literacy

Religious literacy is important at two levels, global and national. Religion is an important part of the culture in many parts of the world. It is difficult for people to be able to respond intelligibly to events at home or abroad without some understanding of the role of religion in the history and culture of the region. Religious literacy provides students with the language required to engage in dialogue. Second, given the increasing religious plurality of Aotearoa New Zealand, religious literacy education in schools may develop a greater awareness and understanding of different migrant groups and lead to greater social cohesion.

A basic religious literacy that includes an appreciation of the role of religion in society and its meaning for people, should be a basic requirement for any educated student to contribute positively to society and to understand intelligently the global world. Hill (2006), commenting on Australian schools, has identified five reasons for including religion in the curriculum of State schools:

- Appreciating our cultural heritage
- Understanding present pluralism

- Contributing to values education
- Contextualising spirituality
- Integrating personal identity.

(Hill, 2006, pp. 51–58)

Critical religious literacy seeks to engage students in informed dialogue about their own religious beliefs, by providing access to their religious heritage, and the beliefs of others. This provides a basis for exploring the religious plurality of contemporary society and a way of contextualising spirituality. In order to engage in effective interreligious education, students require a thorough and sophisticated grounding in their religious tradition as any understanding of difference hinges to an extent on their self-understanding.

Personal Identity and the Search for Meaning

Contemporary education while frequently claiming to address the whole person, in many instances particularly in State schools, excludes the religious dimension. Schools face significant challenges as they attempt to address issues of spiritual, values and moral development in the contemporary world. Religious Education can provide a way to develop values and assist in the integration of personal identity. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) have identified three key areas where Religious Education can assist students develop personal identity and meaning by:

- giving “adequate educational access to their traditions of meaning, identity and spirituality”,
- assisting to develop “an understanding of the process of construction of meaning, identity and spirituality across the life cycle”
- acquiring the skills to identify and evaluate “what counts as meaning, identity and spirituality in the light of community values” (pp. 18–19).

Lovat (2003) has argued that one of the aims of interreligious education should be a self-knowledge that will promote peace and understanding,

We need a religious education that promises self-knowing of the kind that is likely to impel change, new attitudes and behaviour, new practical action (*praxis*). In this quest, the role of interfaith studies is essential. (p. 8)

A critical Religious Education that assists students to develop personal identity and gain a degree of self-knowledge requires schools to develop appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and a reflective capacity that will allow students to participate intelligently in an increasingly pluralistic world.

The Emergence of Religious Studies

If the study of religion contributes to the enlargement of knowledge and understanding in an increasingly pluralistic society and world, then the question becomes *how* to study religion in schools, rather than *why*. A recent initiative that may assist the inclusion of religion in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools is the development of Achievement Standards²⁴ in Religious Studies that will allow schools to assess courses in religion. The establishment of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)²⁵ in 1990 led to the development of national assessments at the senior secondary level in Unit Standards²⁶ that could be used to assess Religious Studies. While very few State schools have opted to use them for assessment, the option exists. The encouragement for schools to develop their own curriculum within the context of The New Zealand Curriculum may also allow schools to address the question of religion when engaging in, for example, Social Studies or values education.

There are a number of Unit Standards relating to world religions, which provide an opportunity for interreligious education. The most popular standard used for assessing interreligious topics in Year 12 is UST 6005 *Explain the functions and describe the dimensions of religion with reference to different religions*.²⁷ Students credited with this standard are able to explain the functions of religion with reference to different religions, describe the dimensions of different religions and explain how the functions of religion may be observed in the dimensions of one of the religions.

In 2005, 30 Catholic schools, two other Church-sponsored schools and one State school assessed against UST 6005. In 2007, the number of State schools assessing against this standard increased to three. This may indicate that at least in some State schools there is a growing interest in teaching about religion. However, as Table 5 shows, while this Unit Standard is becoming increasingly popular, the students represent only 4.7% of those achieving a standard, indicating that a significant section of secondary students do not have the opportunity to be assessed in Religious Studies.

In 2007, the Ministry of Education undertook initial steps to develop Achievement Standards²⁸ in Religious Studies. These aimed to provide all secondary schools with a range of standards that could be used for assessment in religion. These standards were framed sufficiently broadly to permit both religious and State schools to assess student learning in this subject.

²⁴Achievement Standards: nationally registered, coherent set of learning outcomes that specify three different standards of performance and the method of assessment, which may include national external assessment. See www.nzqa.govt.nz.

²⁵For an explanation of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), see www.nzqa.govt.nz. Sixth Form Certificate (1974–2004) had allowed schools to develop and assess local courses in Religious Education.

²⁶Unit Standards: nationally registered, coherent set of learning outcomes. See www.nzqa.govt.nz.

²⁷For a copy of this standard, see www.nzqa.govt.nz.

²⁸For an explanation of Achievement Standards.

Table 5. Number of students gaining credit in UST 6005

Year	Number of students
2006	2,254
2005	1,692
2004	1,552
2003	856

The number of students achieving a standard in Year 12 in 2005 was 47,760.

In framing an assessment tool for Religious Studies, the Ministry of Education did not intend to develop a Religious Studies curriculum for schools. By developing their own curriculum, this may provide schools with an opportunity to avoid a heavily descriptive phenomenology-based course in favour of more issues based course that was relevant to the needs of contemporary students.

Interreligious Education in the Catholic Schools

For Catholic schools, the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) provided an explicit mandate to support the study of other religions,

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. It has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men [and women]. . . The church, therefore urges its sons [and daughters] to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions. (*In Our Day: Nostra Aetate* #2)

As early as 1969, *Christian Living*²⁹ the curriculum used in Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic secondary schools, introduced in response to the Council, made an attempt to incorporate some material on other religions. The Form 5 (Year 11) student textbook had sections that covered,

God in other creeds; evolution of the ecumenical reality; ecumenism, search for the plenitude of the mystery of Christ, in communion with the Christian communities; ecumenism a perpetual discovery; God in non-believers.

The student textbook also had a section on “systematic atheism” (Larkin, 2006, p. 31).

The *Understanding Faith* Religious Education curriculum in Catholic secondary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, while using a religious education approach that aimed at “furthering knowledge, understanding and appreciation of faith and religion in a formal educational setting” (National Centre for Religious Studies, 1991),

²⁹The *Christian Living* curriculum was introduced in 1969 and was replaced in 1979 by *The Way, The Truth, The Life*.

adopted what may best be described as a phenomenological approach when teaching about world religions.

The Approach to Interreligious Education in the Catholic Secondary Curriculum: Understanding Faith (1991)

In *Understanding Faith*, links with other religions were identified at all year levels in the scope and sequence charts under the strand Universal Religious Dimension. At most year levels some reference to world religions was incorporated into various topics, although this related primarily to Judaism, religious rituals especially from Judaism as they related to Christianity, indigenous religious practices, particularly Māori and significant religious and spiritual leaders. At Year 12, a specific topic *Religions of the World* was taught. The teacher background notes in the *Teacher Guide* for this topic draw from *In Our Day: Nostra Aetate* (1965) and material from the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue.

Year 12 Religions of the World

The structure of this topic was consistent with that advocated by the *Statement on Religious Diversity* (2007), as it began by examining the students' understanding of religion, then explored the major world religions and indigenous religion in Oceania.

Students were encouraged to understand religion as grappling with “mystery”, a response to sacred realities and an attempt to answer life's ultimate questions. The aim was that students gained and applied greater knowledge and understanding about other religions in the hope that this would lead to greater respect for other people. In the *Teacher Guide*, teachers were reminded of the importance of being aware that at times, other religions will be misrepresented in what is taught so as not to reinforce stereotypes.

While the approach was essentially phenomenological, concentrating on sacred texts, stories, symbols, beliefs, rituals, organisational structures, moral teachings, religious experience and religious history, the students were encouraged to critically engage with the concepts in order to learn *from* rather than simply *about* religion. Many schools augmented the classroom teaching with visiting speakers, visits to Mosques, Synagogues and Temples where these exist.

The Achievement Aims and Objectives clearly indicated that an objective Religious Education approach concentrating on knowledge and understanding was to be adopted when teaching this topic,

Achievement Aims

In this topic students will gain and apply knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to understand:

1. The nature and function of religion.
2. The Catholic Church's attitude and response to non-Christian religions.
3. Significant features of major world religions and of indigenous religions of the Pacific region.

Achievement Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Explore the nature and function of religion.
2. Develop an understanding of the Catholic Church's attitude and response to non-Christian religions.
3. Develop an understanding of the indigenous religions of the Pacific region, including traditional Māori spirituality.
4. Identify and investigate significant features of the major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
5. Develop an understanding of the process by which Christianity and the indigenous religion of Aotearoa New Zealand interacted to form new religious movements.

(NCRS, 2005, pp. 4–5)

The *Teacher Guide* emphasised the importance of religion in traditional cultures and of inculturation when it quoted *Ecclesia in Oceania: The Church in Oceania*,

When the missionaries first brought the Gospel to Aboriginal or Māori people, or to the island nations, they found peoples who already possessed an ancient and profound sense of the sacred. Religious practices and rituals were very much part of their daily lives and thoroughly permeated their cultures. The missionaries brought the truth of the Gospel which is foreign to no one; but at times some sought to impose elements which were culturally alien to the people. (2001, par 7)

In part, interreligious education explores the impact of religion on the daily life and beliefs of people and recognises the cultural importance of religion for many indigenous peoples. The importance of the interrelationship between culture and faith in respect of Māori was referred to by Pope John Paul II when he stated that,

As you rightly treasure your culture, let the Gospel of Christ continue to penetrate and permeate it, confirming your sense of identity as a unique part of God's household. It is as Māori that the Lord calls you; it is as Māori that you belong to the Church, the one Body of Christ. (Excerpt from Pope John Paul II, homily at the Mass celebrated in the Auckland Domain, New Zealand, Saturday, November 22, 1986)

One inference that can be drawn from this statement, in the context of interreligious education, is the importance of being grounded in one's own culture and religious identity in order to be able to engage in interreligious education.

An Innovative Approach to Interreligious Education

St. Thomas of Canterbury College³⁰ in Christchurch has had an ongoing relationship with the local Mosque as part of its Religious Education programme. In 2006, as part of the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES),³¹ a group of Year 11 students developed *Salam Biscuits*. The idea arose in part, from concern about the religious and cultural divisions in society. The students entered into dialogue with the local Islamic community and developed a recipe for the biscuits in conjunction with a Muslim girls' youth group. The biscuits were sold locally, the profits going to the International Red Crescent. A shipment of the biscuits was also sent to the New Zealand Army in Afghanistan for free distribution to children. This initiative is an example of how students can engage in interreligious education through an integrated approach to the curriculum (New Zealand Catholic Education Office, 2006).

Conclusion

Interreligious education in Aotearoa New Zealand is still in its infancy and will need to be developed as the religious plurality of the population changes due to immigration and a shift in religious affiliation. Continued immigration will probably have the most significant impact upon this need for interreligious education. Aotearoa New Zealand is rapidly transforming from a country which was once dominated by Christian values to one that is coming to terms with a growing plurality of faith traditions as evidenced in the 2006 Census statistics; while still having to understand itself as a country committed to the Treaty of Waitangi which ensured "the several faiths of England, of the Wesleyans, of Rome, and also the Maori custom shall be alike protected."

The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) promoted the importance of values, and while it did not specifically name religion, it did speak of "diversity, as found in our differing cultures, languages, and heritages" and that students should "respect themselves, others and human rights." This would give educationalists the opportunity to open the discussion and raise student awareness of the interreligious dialogue that needs to take place if Aotearoa New Zealand is to continue to be a country which sees "fairness, social justice and the common good", as important values for students to acquire.

The development of bicultural pedagogies may indicate a way to include religion in the curriculum. The small beginnings of Religious Education programmes, the introduction of Achievement Standards in Religious Studies, the Religious Diversity statement and initiatives of schools like St. Thomas of Canterbury give hope that

³⁰See www.stthomas-coll.school.nz.

³¹See www.enzt.co.nz.

Aotearoa New Zealand has started to initiate a process of interreligious education. While this process will be fraught with difficulties, the potential benefits for individuals and the country are incalculable.

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Is Difference Good for Us? A Report on the Hampshire and Its Neighbour's Social Cohesion Project, UK

Clive Erricker

Introduction

This chapter is a report on the Hampshire and its neighbour's pilot project on social cohesion conducted between March 2007 and March 2008. It was financed by Hampshire County Council, NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education) with the Westhill Trust and Aim-higher. It involved six schools, secondary and primary, in Hampshire and Southampton. The purpose of the project was to conduct a pupil-led enquiry into the concept of difference and determine to what extent and in what ways forms of difference impacted on these pupil's experiences and attitudes as they pursued the project. At the end of the project, pupils presented their findings and recommendations at a conference held at the University of Winchester on 27 March 2008. These suggest that pupils were significantly affected by the experience of undertaking the project, that their attitudes were affected by participating with pupils in schools other than their own, and that their perceptions of difference and awareness of the significance of social cohesion were appreciably altered.

The chapter begins with a review of relevant literature; goes on to present the methodology employed by the project; documents three case studies based on the pairing of two schools in each one; presents the findings and recommendations of the pupils and concludes with an analytical commentary on the project overall.

Literature Review: Religion, Ethnicity and Social Cohesion

Reviewing recent literature on what we could call social fragmentation we find some interesting observations and opinions.

C. Erricker (✉)
Inspector of Religious Education, Hampshire, England
e-mail: cerricker@hotmail.co.uk

In one of his studies for his book *Brideless in Wembley* (Suri, 2007), Sanjay Suri parked himself on a bench in Leicester's largest mall, The Shires, to conduct a study, between 12 pm and 5 pm concerning 'what I dared to call myself a rough quantitative survey . . . I wanted to see how many came to The Shires with their ethnic own, and how many with others. . .the mall seemed a random enough place to see who might step out in mixed ethnic company' (p. 23).

After 5 hours he reports:

I scanned perhaps 12,000 to 15,000 people. Through this I counted only 44 people in 12 mixed groups. . .Most of these mixed groups were clearly university students. . .If this observation was valid we were talking zero point zero zero something by way of multicultural Leicester . . . Leicester did not appear a multicultural city, only a city of adjacent cultures. Perhaps not even that; just variously monocultural. (p. 25)

Delving deeper into divisions in later chapters he gives various examples of how and why these divides occur not only between so-called black and white citizens (the stereotypical way in which ethnicity is most often presented) but between and within those who share Indian heritage. In a chapter entitled 'London Leather' he deals with the case of the chamaars (traditionally, within the Indian caste system, leather workers and thus untouchables). He documents the lack of acceptance afforded to them in the Hindu mandirs and Sikh gurdwaras of Southall. This leads to them setting up their own scripture based on the writings of Ravi Das (Shri Guru Sikhya Sahib), a new name for their community as Ravidassias, and a separate gurdwara. This was not dependent on the Ravidassias still being leather workers, which they are not necessarily nor mostly, in London. Rather it was based on the insistence that that was still their designation regardless of profession. What we are witnessing is the determination of a transplanted Indian culture to retain its traditional customs, structures and forms. This, in turn, will ensure that such significant mechanisms for the maintenance of the same are ensured generationally, for example, in marriage. Suri provides an illuminating insight on this in a subsequent chapter concerning Gujarati marriage melas in London (p. 368ff). Following Suri's discoveries what matters is not belief, but the retention of traditional social forms that exclude others, in each case. The idea of difference and its maintenance is an imperative. Is this something we should be dealing with? It is significant that the systems and mechanisms employed are not specifically to do with Indians preventing the inclusion of white Anglo Saxons or vice versa, this is a strictly intra-Indian affair designed to maintain an historically separatist identity and social hierarchy in a new national context.

With the sort of complexity raised by this study in mind, let us turn to the literature on social cohesion that has been published and the findings and recommendations produced. A number of reports on social cohesion have appeared in recent years. The ones documented below present both different analyses and differing states of affairs.

A lot done, a lot to do: our vision for an integrated Britain (Commission for Racial Equality, September 2007).

This report focuses on inequality in relation to the situation of ethnic minorities and champions their need to gain equal status in relation to economic and social capital. It identifies extremism as a consequence of the disconnectedness produced by inequality.

'Extremism, both political and religious, is on the rise as people become disillusioned and disconnected from each other' (p. 1), and that 'The pace of change in Britain over the last few years has unsettled many, and caused people to retreat into and reinforce narrower ethnic and religious ties' (p. 1). 'Often they (different groups) lead parallel lives that never meet' (p. 2) and that 'To achieve an integrated Britain, we need to achieve equality for all sections in society and participation by all sections of society' (p. 2).

There is a problem here of competing interests across agendas of representation. Whilst it is the case that certain ethnic minority children are underachievers and that certain ethnic minority adults suffer from lack of employment prospects, the same is true of working class white citizens in similar areas of the country. There is also a second problem that ethnicity and religious adherence are related or dis-related in complex ways, as is 'culture'. The point made about parallel lives echoes Suri's observation in Leicester, but in this report the analysis suggests (though it is not explicitly stated) that the problem resides largely in the economic sphere which drives the 'pace of change' and creates wider gaps between the advantaged and disadvantaged in relation, in particular, to education.

Diversity and Dialogue: building better understanding between young people in a multi-faith society (Becky Hatch, Save the Children Fund, 2006)

This report focuses on the youth from different religious backgrounds and the need for young people brought up within different religious traditions to recognise their common heritage based on values and, as a result, bring about 'a more harmonious and cohesive society . . . where there are strong relationships of trust and friendship between people of different faiths and beliefs' (p. 10).

The report relies extensively on the voices of young people being quoted, 124 young people from different 'multi-faith' schools, and yet there is no specific symmetry in what they say. For example:

A jew crew forms in every year . . . because we feel a connection. (Group 2, female, Jewish, p. 15)

As a white girl, I guess you don't know if there's racial tensions. (Group 9, female, non-religious, p. 13)

It's different for different people isn't it – this is mostly Islam[ic students] and there are loads of Asian people. And for the white people, they might not like it because they are in the minority. (Group 4, female, Muslim, p. 13)

We all mix with different races and religions, but when you get out of school that's a different thing . . . Outside, people judge you like a book. (Group 5, female, Christian, p. 13)

One group is all Muslims, one is black people and English people, and then one's like a mixture in between . . . We never ever mix for some reason. (Group 7, female, non-religious, p. 15)

From this report we might conclude that there is a natural tendency to mix with one's own kind and that 'mixing' in school is possible but that the tendency is rather to be with one's own group whilst recognising the existence of others'. There is no suggestion of an economic problem here but again the idea of 'parallel lives' is evoked.

Guidance on the Duty to Promote Community: draft guidance for schools and Consultation Response Form (DfES, 2007)

This document, sent out for consultation to all schools and local authorities, followed the new duty for schools to promote community cohesion under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (p. 1). It quotes the *Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review* published in February 2007:

...we passionately believe that it is the duty of all schools to address issues of 'how we live together' and 'dealing with difference' however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem. (p. 1)

All well and good but it is both an idealistic and aspirational vision to suggest that: 'we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities: a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all' (p. 2). And, I suggest, somewhat insulting. Aspirationalism can be interpreted as a cosmetic for not dealing with the actualities, especially when it is suggested that that we live in a society in which 'strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community' (p. 2). I cannot resist asking by whom is this state of affairs observed, and then I am reminded that this is a document sent to schools with the responsibility that they have a duty to develop social cohesion. There is a difference between 'strong and positive relationships' suggesting in some sense a shared sense of identity as well as other differing sub-identities (the idea of multiple identities perhaps) and what we have noted in the other two reports and Suri's study, suggesting identities exist in parallel lives with the commonality being in coming together only to share in a common activity, whether that be shopping or schooling.

Whilst remaining sceptical of the responsibility that government is prepared to take in the social cohesion venture it is, nevertheless, something that we should investigate but not as a compliance measure but as a research enquiry: to what extent is social cohesion possible? What can be achieved given the limits of resources available? What issues prevent it and how might they be overcome, if at all? What attitudes and structures remain, so far, intractable and why? Does this influence what we think we can achieve, and do we view that positively or negatively as a result?

The four reports above, whilst allowing that they have different foci, seem not to agree either on the scope of social cohesion (is it to do with faith, ethnicity, capital?) or the state of affairs at present ('strong and positive relationships exist', 'there is a tendency for young people to keep with their own', 'we lead parallel

lives that do not meet'). There is also the question of how to go about 'dealing with difference'.

At the heart of this literature there are some significant unsystematic messages. The idea of dealing with difference is a new one because it recognises there are differences to be dealt with. Previously, within multiculturalist messages we encountered not difference (with its negative assumptions) but diversity (with its positive assumptions). The phrase 'dealing with diversity' was not part of the multiculturalist agenda because diversity is (presumptuously) enriching. This, however, is a cultural diversity played out at the level of cultural, in the sense of aesthetic, expression, 'multiculturalism'. Such diversity did not take on board the differing culture of ideas, or social habit, as the basis of difference that these cultural groups sought to maintain as a key reference point for identity in the face of the threat of assimilation, integration and modernisation (the three terms most often used to promote living together).

Of other reports produced one is notable, *Our Shared Future* (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007) because this follows on from the Commission for Racial Equality Report since the Commission for Integration and Cohesion has replaced that body. Its emphasis on shared futures is linked to surveys carried out in the context of its research. In its executive summary the report describes Shared Futures as 'an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them, and prioritising a shared future over divided legacies' (p. 7). In the Hampshire project reported below we shall consider to what extent this aspiration is a possibility and what obstacles need to be overcome to make it so. The shared futures report identifies that 79% of people, in their survey, 'agreed or strongly agreed that people of different backgrounds got on well in their local areas' (p. 21). We shall investigate what 'getting on well' means. Does it mean not being in conflict? Not intruding on each others' lifestyles? Both could be examples of living parallel lives. Or does it mean working together for achieving shared aims in an integrated way? In the shared future report a link is made to deprivation and the findings of the 2005 Citizenship survey, 'which found that people who lived in more affluent areas were more likely to agree that people of different backgrounds got on well together and ethnic differences were respected' (p. 25). Why might this be and what exactly does that mean? Again we shall examine this in relation to this Hampshire report.

In summary, the major questions taken forward from this literature review to inform the Hampshire report will be:

- To what extent is social equality feasible and what obstacles might lie in the way of that?
- To what extent are 'shared futures' and integrated lives a possibility and to what extent do we find evidence of that at present?
- Do people live parallel lives, in their respective schools and groups or do they interact at a meaningful level?
- Are specific differences a barrier to integration, cohesion and getting on well with one another?

At an annual conference for older secondary school pupils in Hampshire and Portsmouth, I chair a panel of faith representatives who have given workshops attended by the students during the day. At this point the students were asked to present the representatives with questions. One question asked was 'What would you do if your child converted to another faith?' One Sikh man on the panel considered this very carefully, he took it seriously. After some deliberation he said, 'I think I would disown him because my faith means so much to me'. The audience were visibly shocked. On a similar occasion a question was asked about views on homosexuality. Only the Buddhist representative (a nun and a western convert) and one of the two Jewish representatives gave a positive response (he declared he was a homosexual and thought it important to witness to that within as well as beyond his own Jewish community in order to change attitudes). The students expressed positive views on the acceptance of homosexuality and were again shocked by the dogmatism of most of the religious views expressed by the panel of faith representatives. The other Jewish representative had whispered in my ear that he thought things were getting too adversarial.

What are the implications of the above for social cohesion? What do we think social cohesion would have to entail regarding the homosexual Jew and the disowning Sikh? Are we going to celebrate the diversity of the putative disownership of the Sikh's son and the homosexuality of the practising Jew? That does not sound quite right since the underlying values differences are very marked. On the other hand, are we going to accept, tolerate, embrace or oppose both or one of them as differences we can or cannot accept? Exactly what does constitute social cohesion when we address specific differences of this kind? How do they relate to shared futures, integration or parallel lives?

The Hampshire and Its Neighbour's Social Cohesion Project

Background

Following events of recent years, most obviously the attack on the twin towers in New York, the London bombings, the activity of Al Qaeda, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the recognition that suicide bombers were often 'home grown', there has been an increasing concern about the cohesiveness of British society, on the one hand, and 'homeland security' on the other (for relevant recent literature on this subject see for example Ali, 2007; Husain, 2007; Omaar, 2007; Spencer, 2006). Because recourse to God has been a significant feature of these events it has impacted locally in Hampshire on some parents' attitudes to what, previously, would have been seen as positive, or at least unobjectionable, multicultural educational provision; most obviously visits to places of worship by schools.

Headteachers began to notice and report increasing parental withdrawal of consent for their children's participation in these events, especially in 2006–2007. This withdrawal was especially related to visits to a local mosque in Southampton but

also applied elsewhere, Sikh Gurudwaras and Hindu Mandirs, since many parents regarded all these communities as similar in respect of their own classifications. One primary school headteacher reported a 10% withdrawal rate by parents when she had previously run the visit to the mosque for several years with no parents withdrawing their children. Reasons for withdrawal could be varied but one given was that a parent was afraid of her child being bombed (there had been a recent bombing of a mosque in France). Therefore, it would be wrong to conclude that it was just attitudes to Islam that were changing when the safety of offspring was also an issue.

To counter negative attitudes to Islam, the Muslim Council of Great Britain launched a poster campaign depicting Muslims in professional roles in British society: as police, teachers, university lecturers, and more cool role models, a British Muslim Rap Group 'Mecca2Medina' The legend beneath each picture ran 'Proud to be a British Muslim. ISLAMISPEACE.ORG.UK'. Whilst benign and PC, there was an assertiveness about this campaign. It was propaganda and represented Muslims as good British citizens to counter the terrorist and extremist images evident in the press. A local mosque, in Southampton had been, and still is, pro-active in seeking that schools and their pupils should visit and find out what Islam was really about: peace. The presentations given there were equally assertive in propagating this message. The pupils were not meant to be inquiring into Islam and asking questions about the complex contemporary situation. Rather, they were told that 'terrorists' were not Muslims (in the sense that they were in error even if they claimed to be). However, along with this message there was also one which implied that Islam, or at least belief in God and the inerrancy of the Qur'an, was to be respected. Thus, occasional disparaging reference to 'the monkey theory' (evolution) could also be included. The fractiousness evident in the last comment also emerges in other ways. For example, in the complaint that it is not possible for Muslims to take their family to the beach on a summer's day because of the way that people are dressed there. As a result, Muslim families can only go in the evening, when the bathers are gone. Although this is a particular and personal view being expressed, it is different to the spirit of harmony and positivity of being a British Muslim conveyed in the poster campaign. In other words, there is other stuff going on beneath the surface that still has to be addressed but is not being presented openly.

If we are really to address questions and issues beneath the surface that are instrumental to social cohesion, then we must excavate them and scrutinise them in the full light of day. The alternative lies in a pretence that all is well with the exception of the 'extremists' and that positive propaganda is the way of dealing with that. Clearly, in surveying the literature presented above we have found that that is not so.

Methodology

A steering group was formed in April 2007 in order to structure the approach of a pilot project, extending to April 2008, at which point initial findings and recommendations would be made. This group consisted of the Hampshire Intercultural Inspector, responsible for the Rights, Respect and Responsibilities initiative in

Hampshire based on the United Nations Children's Rights declaration; the two Hampshire RE Inspectors, responsible for Living Difference, the locally agreed syllabus for RE, with its conceptual enquiry methodology (Hampshire County Council, 2004); the Hampshire Archive and Local Studies officer, to ensure both an historical context within the approach and a record of the project for archive purposes (to be accomplished through filming the project at appropriate points); a representative of the University of Winchester, as a partner higher education organisation; and a further Hampshire divisional inspector with expertise in constructing research programmes in local government organisations. In the context of some stimulating and challenging debate the principles of the approach were determined as follows:

It would not be.

- A project confined to religious education. Whilst the enquiry approach being used was taken from the locally agreed syllabus, Living Difference, the idea of it being an RE project would confine it to a restricted area of the curriculum and, as a result, might create perceptions amongst teachers, pupils and others involved that it was meant to promote a positive view of religion, or indeed restrict its scope to religion rather than a broader notion of social cohesion.
- A project focused on diversity. The concern, again, in this respect was that diversity would be understood from the outset as a positive attribute of a perceived 'multicultural' society with the concomitant suggestion that diversity should be celebrated and that the project, as a result, would ignore deeper issues that needed to be addressed.

Neither of these issues were resolved without significant dialogue taking place but we arrived at the agreement that the project would be:

- A research-based enquiry, process driven and undertaken by pupils in Primary schools (with year 6, 10-year-old pupils) and Secondary schools (year 7–11, 11–15-year-old pupils)
- Focused on the concept of difference, with the initial research question: 'What differences do we celebrate, which do we tolerate, and which do we find problematic?'
- A project underpinned by the principles and processes of the Rights, Respect and Responsibility initiative in Hampshire

An operational working group was formed that included teachers from those schools invited to become involved. It was important to involve schools at this stage, in the initiation of a pilot project, that were familiar with and had successful experience of working with, the conceptual enquiry methodology in Living Difference, and with the R,R and R initiative. We were able to do this to some degree. Choice of schools also depended upon there being schools with diverse catchment areas being involved to determine that ethnically, culturally and religiously there was

as wide a representation as possible. Hampshire schools, in the main, lacked this broad representation whereas some Southampton schools had a broad and diverse intake. Six schools were chosen on the basis of the above criteria. It was decided that the schools would work in pairs. In the north of Hampshire a secondary school in Basingstoke (school Co), which was just receiving its first intake of Nepalese pupils, was twinned with one of its feeder schools (school F) that had a significantly diverse linguistic intake in terms of pupils' mother tongues. In the south of Hampshire a secondary school (school W) in a suburban area close to Southampton, largely middle class in terms of catchment, significantly white in terms of ethnicity, and one of Hampshire's leading schools in terms of pupil attainment was twinned with a Southampton secondary school (school Ca) with significant ethnically diverse pupil intake. Two primary feeder schools (schools K and M), one to each of the secondary schools, were then twinned. Each had similar pupil and catchment profiles to their respective secondary schools, with the caveat that the Southampton school (school M) which was a junior school (intake of 7–10 years old) was in an inner city location with a very low intake of children from ethnically 'white' backgrounds or from middle-class homes. Their pupils are mainly drawn from first, second and third generation immigrants from the Asian sub-continent and some, in recent years, from Somalia and Poland.

The working group struggled again with the question of 'diversity' or 'difference' with some teachers fearing that the latter would be divisive and not celebrate successes in the way they sought to promote diversity in their schools. They also struggled, in some respects, with the idea of a pupil-led enquiry, since this conflicted with their usual approach in their teaching roles. We were aware that there was significant work to be done in stressing this approach, especially with schools where the teachers lacked familiarity with the conceptual enquiry methodology in Living Difference or the R,R and R programme. This resulted in lively discussion and the need for some clarification as the project progressed.

Commentary on School-Based Research

In the secondary schools, pupils were chosen to form the researching group on the basis of their willingness to volunteer but also by seeking to create a spectrum of diversity in the group. For example, in school Co 8, pupils met together of which 6 were Nepalese, one Polish and one Caucasian British. In school W, pupils were selected from the school council and provided a broader range of diversity than in the school as a whole. The intention was not to provide a group representative of the school as a whole but to represent diversity within the school, and in the case of school Co to significantly represent the Nepalese intake. In the secondary schools the groups met after the school day. Within the feeder primary schools the decision was taken to involve year 6 classes as a whole, within curriculum time, though when it came to presenting their research selected pupils would be chosen or volunteer.

Format for Enquiry

The format for the enquiry was similar in outline across all the schools though differed in direction as the enquiries progressed. A baseline questionnaire was used that asked pupils to reflect on their perceptions of difference within their school and surrounding environment and how that related to their own feelings of being safe, happy or respected and valued.

During their weekly meetings at their own school, pupils were then asked to construct cultural maps designed to highlight particulars of their own cultural and social experiences and then share them with partners to identify similarities and differences. This leads both to greater understanding of each others' lives and a deeper recognition of ways in which differences were manifested and why; and recognition of shared similarities. It led to deeper recognitions of identity and belonging and a focus for addressing the idea of difference in a concrete narrative way. From this it was possible to survey and record findings that the group could reflect on and determine how that helped them to reflect on previously held assumptions in relation to one another.

These initial aspects of enquiry (which relate to the Communicate and Apply elements of the conceptual enquiry methodology) allowed pupils to investigate difference within their own school context and prepared them for a larger investigation of the concept in relation to experience of migration in Hampshire over time which was presented by the Hampshire archivist and tailored to the requirements of the different schools and pupils involved (this constituted the Enquire element of the methodology). Following that, the twinned schools met up to take their enquiry forward in partnership (the Contextualise element of the methodology) before presenting their findings and recommendations (the Evaluate element). We can reflect on the outcomes of this process by dividing these three different research enquiries into respective case studies.

Case Study 1: Schools Co and F

Before meeting together the pupil groups in these two schools identified specific issues and offered the following responses:

In school Co, their cultural maps conveyed significant issues concerning migration due to the newly arrived Nepalese pupils. Pupils in the school had no previous knowledge of their cultural identity and its connection with local history (see below).

A fight broke out between two year 10 girls, one Nepalese and the other not, in the school library. This was interpreted by some non-Nepalese students as being wound up by the Nepalese talking in their own language about the other girls and making 'sly' faces at them. At the social cohesion group another interpretation emerged, that the Nepalese girls were on the receiving end of the 'silly' faces. However, as the teacher made clear in the report (Costambeys & Shaw, 2008) the pupils in the school, including the non-Nepalese on the social cohesion group had no knowledge of 'why the Nepalese were here or of their Gurkha military history' or any other

aspects of their culture. Since a Gurkha presence in northern Hampshire was long-standing, with the proximity of the Aldershot barracks, and since there was already a Gurkha museum nearby, there was clearly a need for this to be introduced into the education of the schools' pupils to pave the way for the new arrivals. This the Nepalese girls duly did within the social cohesion group and this then set the scene and focus for the input from the Hampshire archivist. This then gave more specific direction to the direction of the enquiry at that school, relevant to its pupils' local needs.

In school F, they brainstormed difference, did baseline questionnaires and life or cultural maps on difference: they related this to religion, ethnicity and, in particular, the bomb threat at the local mosque. Nevertheless, overall showed positive attitudes towards difference but found it difficult to relate to themselves until doing the life maps which surprised them by showing how different they were compared to others and how much they learnt about each other as a result. Doing subsequent Venn diagrams they identified differences and similarities which they suggested showed the importance of talking to individuals. For example the remark: 'You know their personality when you talk to them' (Costambeys & Shaw, 2008). Religious identity figured most prominently in three Muslim life maps.

When the twinned schools met up (as related to the contextualised element of the methodology), in this case school Co meeting up with its feeder school (school F) and shared findings from their own schools, it enabled the feeder school pupils to work together with the social cohesion group at school Co to develop strategies for addressing the issues arising through the intake of Nepalese pupils and, specifically, the contrasting perceptions involved in the incident involving Nepalese and non-Nepalese girls.

Interestingly, at this time a local newspaper carried a front page report concerning another north Hampshire school with a larger Nepalese intake of pupils where there had been fights outside school between Nepalese and non-Nepalese pupils, involving two arrests by the police. The headteacher was reported as saying, '...In spite of my explaining in assembly that Gurkhas had been given the right to bring their families and settle here and in spite of my explaining their role in British history; in spite of this, some white pupils have been niggling the youngsters' (Connop Price, 2007, p. 1).

This might suggest too little too late, but also that messages from the top down during assembly are no substitute for a proper educational enquiry carried out by pupils themselves involving actually getting to know and appreciate each others' identities and needs. It is also notable that the younger pupils from school F were able to be instrumental in contributing positively to a conflictual situation in school Co. We might ask whether this was due to the comparative diversity already existent in school F and their tendency to regard difference as personality rather than ethnically based. Whether or not this was the case it was clear from the situation in school Co, and the escalating tensions in the other secondary school with the greater number of Nepalese pupils, that the sudden increase of pupils of different ethnicity and cultural background in largely all white schools did exacerbate negative perceptions of difference.

Case Study 2: Schools W and Ca

In their initial research, within their own school, difference was identified in significantly diverse ways. At the beginning of the project I met up with the groups at school W and school Ca separately and asked both the same question: 'When you look around your group what do you think are the most significant differences between you?' With the pupils at school W one boy remarked that it was the skin colour of the only 'black' pupil in the group that stood out. This was not meant to be a racist remark; he simply commented that it was self-evident. She replied that he was thinking in too simplistic a way and referred to 'skin tones' as opposed to different colours of skin. Nevertheless, he was convinced of the rightness of his remark. When the same question was put to the Ca group it was 'self-evident' that the same differential distinction could not be made (whiteness or blackness simply was not a distinguishing feature of the group). Their response was that personalities were the distinguishing features (a much more inclusive recognition of difference and reminiscent of the response of the pupils in school F).

When the schools met up and compared perceptions based on their respective cultural maps the distinctions in categorisation made previously seemed to be an influence. The pupils from the different schools were quick to label each other. At school W difference had been observed on the basis of social groups and how this related to territory occupied in break-times around the school. Pupils tended to identify themselves according to self-defined tribes: Chavs or Emos, for example. School Ca pupils did similarly but sometimes with other ethnic/religious information, for example, 'Sikh Chavs'. However, more importantly than this socio-economic background was a significant factor in perception between schools and some Ca pupils spoke of feeling inadequate in terms of 'literacy' compared to pupils in school W. Also W pupils were observed as being more individualistic in their attitudes whereas Ca pupils more readily spoke for each other and W pupils were more insistent on race, gender and wealth as significant differences.

Meeting up in school Ca was not comfortable for all pupils from school W, and especially not so for the boy whose classification of difference had been based on skin colour. What was self-evident in one context was manifestly not so in this different one. One of the teachers at school W remarked, on recognising the withdrawal of some of her pupils from the buddy system constructed for the visit that this was not necessarily a discomfort with being with the other schools' pupils per se but a result of being in a context in which the distinctions previously developed were thrown into question.

The dis-ease, insecurity and negative perceptions that some pupils experienced on the respective visits, aligned to some degree with notions of race, class and socio-economic factors were reflected in parental concerns. Some parents withdrew their children from the project at this point; first from school W and then from school Ca. once the questionnaires, mentioned below, were distributed.

Attitudes of pupils changed as they started to work together to common purpose, with the focus on stereotyping and the media and with the recognition that they had to present a conference report together. Questionnaires were designed and findings

analysed. The fact that they would be presenting to adults and that this was to be taken seriously, was, as one of the teachers put it in their final report 'an excellent motivating force'. The conference presentation of these schools focused on stereotyping in relation to difference. First, in the way that the media stereotype religious groups, especially Islam, by suggesting that a minority of the religion acts as a characterisation of its majority of believers (reportage of 'extremist' groups and their activities being the obvious example). Second, however, in the way that stereotyping (in their view) of themselves as pupils of different schools had impacted on their own project; this relating more to the way in which schools are represented and the socio-economic, 'race' and class issues used to define them. As mentioned above, this had impacted on their own study in relation to parent withdrawal at the point of collaboration between the schools and with the production of a questionnaire. There was a marked change in pupils' attitudes when working to common purpose and they were not reticent in reflecting on negative parental attitudes in their report (see below and in Kariiya, Clarke, & Phillips, 2008).

Case Study 3: Schools M and K

The project of schools M and K, involving year 6 pupils only, focused most significantly upon their meeting together (the Contextualise element of the methodology) and the results of that. The differences, in terms of religious affiliation, ethnicity, socio-economic aspiration and school environment were most marked between these schools. The joint report of these schools makes this clear (Lewis, Griffiths, & Cutter, 2008).

M is a vast Victorian building, with high ceilings and spacious halls. It has a large concrete playground . . . whereas K has a 10 acre site of trees and fields.

K is predominantly a white 'Christian' school located in a growing suburb . . . Although there are small pockets of deprivation, the social conditions are very different to that of M.

M is a multi-cultural inner city school. The pupils are from first, second and third generation immigrants mainly from the Indian sub-continent. The largest percentage is Pakistani, Bengali and Indian and in recent years from Somalia and Poland . . . The largest religious group . . . is Muslims and we have a smaller but significant number of Sikhs. Many of the children live in extended family groups. . .

The focus of the research was differences and similarities between the children of the two schools. In their own schools, at the beginning of the enquiry, the children responded to a questionnaire with five key questions. Then, to facilitate coming together, they exchanged photographs between the two schools and then there was e-mail exchange between pupils who were paired up as partners.

Initially, in school K, pupils had difficulty articulating difference in their experience. Once the schools began communicating, they each discussed the group pictures that were exchanged. Pupils at school K picked out the skin colour of the school M pupils as a distinctive feature but were reassured that, nevertheless, many of the children were wearing trainers. At this point one of the school K parents

complained about the picture that had been taken home by the child. Once the children started e-mailing each other, the pupils became aware of further similarities between them, became more excited at the prospect of meeting up but also anxious that their partner might not like them. They also had initial difficulty with the names of school M pupils because, in many cases, they could not work out the gender of the child.

In school M the answers to the questionnaire revealed that their views of difference were also very limited. Their ven diagram, where they were seeking to identify differences in the wider world showed both positive and negative reactions, the latter relating mostly to vandalism, drug-peddling, street gangs, bullying and drunks. On studying the pre-visit photo of school K pupils they response with 'they are all one colour', 'they are all one religion', 'are they posh?'

When the school K pupils visited school M they enjoyed a celebration assembly with pupils playing drums but gravitated to their own pupils in the break. Upon returning to their own school the discussion revealed a reluctance to express opinions and then some negativity. Race and culture were not mentioned but behaviour, use of bad language and answering teachers back. Two parental complaints were received unhappy with names their child was called and the language heard. Children's responses varied greatly in their written reflections.

For the presentation ten children represented each school. From school M, eight were from Muslim families and two from Sikh families. All were fluent in their family's mother tongue and most have extended visits to the family's home country. From school K two of the children were regular church attendees, nominally all were of a Christian denomination, and one spoke English as an additional language.

There was some trepidation at meeting up and going through the experience itself, and this resulted in some significant reflections, as the following remarks by pupils show (taken from Lewis et al., 2008):

'I felt petrified and intimidated even though I knew what the teachers and my partner were like. I'd never felt so insecure' (H, female, school K) and yet she also said, 'I think it was a good experience for later on in life because you will always meet different people in life'.

I had cracked from my shell and felt like myself but I did feel like an odd one out. (S, male, school K)

When I was back at school I felt safe and at home. (M, male, school K)

These comments from school K pupils betray a greater sense of culture shock than those at school M, as the following fairly typical remarks show:

I learned that it doesn't matter that you are different religions or different backgrounds you can make friends. (A, female, school M)

I think it's worthwhile because we get to see new people and play with new people. I learnt how people's life is different. (I, male, school M)

I learnt that meeting other people gives you the opportunity to tell them what you are like. (M, male, school M)

Whilst there was a generally common agreement as to the positive outcomes of the experience, it is significant that school K pupils seemed less well prepared for

it, in terms of confidence accrued from their previous enculturation. Many were outside their comfort zone. The schools' final report concludes that:

They (the pupils) showed a curiosity in each others' backgrounds, a feeling of allegiance with their own class and school and a defensive, protective attitude. Remarks were not racist or anti a particular religion but about individual personalities.

Pupils' Findings and Recommendations

The pupils from the schools involved presented their findings and recommendations at the conference on 27 March 2008, working in their pairs. The main findings and recommendations are summarised below.

Findings

- that parents of pupils can prevent social cohesion by not allowing their children's involvement
- that media representation of schools and of religions can prevent cohesion amongst children and misperceptions of religion
- that a felt lack of national identity prevents cohesion
- that it is very easy for pupils from different schools to see each other as rivals and to initially be uncomfortable working together and make judgements based on 'race' and class. They need opportunities to share activities and experiences and to develop a project dependent on shared responsibilities and outcomes in order to enable friendships and respect to develop. For example, shared whole school days would allow for mixed team sporting and cultural activities. Working towards a shared presentation on this project increased commitment to one another.
- that the admission of new pupils of different ethnicity and mother tongue can result in tensions if pupils in the school are not prepared for this by the school.

Recommendations

- Prepare pupils for intake of new pupil admissions of minority cultural and ethnic backgrounds by educating pupils into the cultural heritage of new pupils
- Provide a buddy system for new pupils
- Ensure space is available for minority groups to meet together and use strategies to ensure that mixing together occurs more readily within school and class time. For example, by using teamwork strategies in classroom learning
- Support and monitor the integration of new pupils and provide opportunities for them to speak with other pupils about their cultural identity and experiences
- Teach cohesion in and out of school
- Address social cohesion with years 6 and 7 as pupils transfer to a new school

- That the Rights, Respect and Responsibility initiative should be introduced in all schools
- Link schools with different catchments in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3
- Educate parents through parent conferences/culture days
- That greater financial resources are required by schools to address social cohesion effectively

Concluding Analytical Commentary

The evidence from this project suggests a number of things. First, white middle-class parents can be reluctant to expand the socio-cultural experience of their children to include visiting other schools with diverse ethnic populations (see the experience of schools W and K). Second, parents from a more varied range of schools can be suspicious of genuine enquiry (see parental response school Ca). Third, schools with a more traditionally white and mainly middle-class population do not think in advance about the induction of a wider range of pupils with differing ethnicity (see school Co) especially where linguistic and ethnic difference is not the norm (as it is at M, F and Ca).

It is tempting to think there are clear socio-cultural divides implicit in the stereotyping of children's upbringing and choice of school (based on the idea of measurable academic attainment and success) that hinder a wider sense of learning and experience. Also, Ca, M and F children did not seem to suffer the same anxiety of cultural mixing as the white middle-class pupils from schools of the same kind. Is this because they encounter plurality as a matter of course and, therefore, develop a maturity in that respect to difference and a different perspective on its cultural significance and value? The judgements they made in that respect (see schools Ca, M and F) suggest that personality of the individual is a more prominent distinction than broader categories based on ethnicity or colour. Is this a case of wider learning and development being in conflict with the narrower but much vaunted importance of GCSE attainment? Do we have two cultures of education in tension with each other and both being promoted by government agencies but parents voting with their feet?

In his study of the attitudes of children in areas with little or no minority presence, *We're all white, thanks, the persisting myth about 'white schools'* (Gaine, 2005). Chris Gaine highlights the 'learned misinformation' of these children (pp. 1–3) and the negative assumptions about those who speak another language (p. 16). Both pertinent to the findings in our study. He identifies three motives for engaging with the issue of race equality, whatever the makeup of the school. The first is pragmatic: It is required by law; the second and third are his principled motives: to equip majority young people with an understanding that diversity is not necessarily to be feared and to provide a safe and affirming educational experience for minority pupils. The study we have carried out suggests that Gaine's conclusions are correct and that schools and parents in areas with few or no minority children have, by and large, not taken this message on board and recognised its educational significance.

This would seem to be the case even, as in this study, when schools with 'majority' young people are situated within 10 minutes drive of schools with a high population of 'minority' young people.

Certain, further and tentative, observations follow from the evidence in this study. What seems to be clear is that there needs to be greater attention given to how pupils can interact with one another across schools, not being in competition but learning from one another to inform a broader perspective on life and the skills that accompany such interactions. We are still, it would seem, in many ways, either variously monocultural or else part of a pluralist inner-city subculture. When pupils of different cultural heritage and ethnicity suddenly arrive, unannounced, in traditionally white middle-class schools those schools seem to have done little or nothing to prepare for that (for example in school Co with new Nepalese students). It seems that there has to be a significant critical mass of minority subculture to create a noticeable problem (for example, why is the much smaller Polish minority in school Ca not a problem yet?). There appears to be a geographical and psychological issue of territory at play here, in so far as a significant cultural minority may feel the need to bond together in new socio-cultural surroundings. It appears the case that younger (primary) children adapt better than once they reach the teenage years (as was suggested in the M and K report by school M).

We are left with a lot of issues to pursue that require further research. Relating the above analysis to the questions posed towards the end of the literature review, it would seem that social equality is not necessarily a priority of white middle-class parents; that integrated lives are hampered by a schooling system that demarcates according to catchment areas; that parallel lives may even be a generous description for what appears to be the norm, which we might call implicitly segregated lives. What, nevertheless, was very encouraging was the way in which pupils from these twinned schools worked together once given the opportunity to present their findings and recommendations of their projects to adults. Thus we might conceive that shared futures is a possibility but not without changes in perceptions and new conceptions of social interaction being promoted between schools. As one pupil at the conference pointed out, normally the only place we would be likely to meet in Southampton is at West Quay, the equivalent mall of the Shires in Leicester. But of course you would not 'meet' if you did not already know one another. Just another case of parallel lives or ones that are variously monocultural? However, the combined energy, enthusiasm and conviction entailed in creating the presentations, findings and recommendations is evidence of 'meeting' to common effect and would seem to be a good example of what the Shared Futures report called 'getting on well' with one another.

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Contact as a Means of Inter-religious Engagement: The Role of Religious Culture in Peace-Building Activities

Yaacov Boaz Yablon

Historical Context

Israeli society is split into national, ethnic, and religious sectors and groups, and divided by various intergroup conflicts. Each of these groups has different social, economic, and political, agendas which, more often than not, are at odds with each other. One of the major conflicts within Israeli society is between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs, two groups whose relations are permeated with latent hostility which only grows and deepens with time (Mossawa Center, 2006).

The conflict relationships between Jews and Arabs in Israel relate to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to the national aspirations of the Zionist and Palestinian movements and their struggle over territory, nationality, and self-identity. What began as a local conflict at the end of the 19th century when Jewish immigrants began realizing the “Zionist dream” of reviving the Jewish nation in its historical homeland, later became a conflict between two national movements. This change took place after the United Nations General Assembly voted for Resolution 181 (of 29 November, 1947) calling for two states for the two nations. It turned into all-out warfare when Israel declared independence in May 1948, and faced the Arab nations of the region. This 1948–1949 war is known as the War of Independence by the Israelis and the *Nakba* (disaster) by the Arab nations. As a result of and during this war a large segment of the Palestinian Arab population that lived in the territory that became the State of Israel have been forced or chosen to leave their homes for refugee camps in Gaza, the West Bank, and Jordan. Those who remained became Israeli citizens, and the relationship between them and the Jewish citizens of Israel are the focus of this study.

Since the 1949 cease-fire, there have been many wars between Israel and its neighboring Arab countries (in 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, and 2006), interspersed with numerous armed clashes, terrorist attacks, and air strikes. In 1987–1991 the

Y.B. Yablon (✉)
Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel
e-mail: yablon@mail.biu.ac.il

first Palestinian uprising (*Intifada*) emerged, and in 2000 began the second *Intifada*, currently with no end in sight. Nevertheless, in 1977 a peace agreement was signed between Israel and Egypt and in 1994 between Israel and Jordan. During the years numerous peace negotiations and peace treaties were signed between Israel and the Palestinian authorities (e.g., the Oslo Accord of 1993, the 2000 Camp David Summit, and the 2007 “road map”). Unfortunately, these gained only little success and usually, as a result of the failure of the peace talks, relations were negatively escalated to the use of armed forces.

Although it may seem that the Jewish-Arab conflict is mainly based on claims for territory it is also deeply rooted in struggle between ideologies and has religious, cultural, and emotional aspects (Bar-Tal, 2007). Religion is implied in all aspects of the conflict – both in the struggle over control of the holy places, and in the religious reasoning for war or peace. It is also suggested that the nature of the conflict impedes the development of a transcendent identity of the two parties as it stresses a negative interdependence between them so that asserting one group’s identity requires negating the identity of the other (Kelman, 1999). This, of course, not only deepens the conflict between the groups, but also makes it intractable and a major obstacle for almost any possible solution that focuses only on territory.

After the cease-fire agreement ending the 1948–1949 war, the 150,000 Arabs who remained in the new State of Israel comprised, at that time, around 10% of all Palestinian national populations and around 15% of the Israeli population (Peleg, 2004). This made them the largest minority group within Israeli society, and one that differs from the Jewish majority in many aspects including language, religion, and nationality. Today, the Israeli Arab population numbers around 1.5 million people and comprises 20% of the overall Israeli population (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Thus, tensions between the Jewish majority and Arab minority in Israel are based not only on the national identity of the two groups, but also on a battle over resources. Although Israel’s Declaration of Independence states that the State of Israel will maintain complete social and political equality among its citizens with no distinction based on religion, race, or gender, the tension and hostility between the two groups are very much rooted in the different level of governmental, municipal, and public services available to Israeli, Jews, and Arabs (Mossawa Center, 2006), adding social causes to the national ones. On the one hand, Israeli Arabs have always supported, and in recent years increased their support of, and identification with, the Palestinian struggle against Israel (Kaplan, Abu-Saad, & Yonah, 2001), while on the other hand, they also increased their social demands for equal status as Israeli citizens (Mossawa Center, 2006; Peleg, 2004). At the same time, the Israeli Jewish population is suspicious of the Israeli Arab demand for social integration, and doubts their loyalty to an Israeli identity (Seginer, 2001; Smooha, 1988).

Since 1948 and up until today, the Arab minority in Israel has experienced different levels of citizenships. All Arabs who remained in Israel after the 1948 war were entitled to receive Israeli citizenship. Some of them even voted in the first democratic elections for the Israeli Knesset (the Parliament) in 1948, and three Arab

delegates (out of 120) were elected. Today there are 13 Arab delegates in the Knesset (9 of them delegate Arab parties) and an Arab minister serves in the Israeli government. Israeli Arabs enjoy equal protection under the law, have full and equal rights, Arabic is the second official language in the state (after Hebrew) and, as all other citizen, they enjoy all liberties that accompany democracy. Yet, from 1948 to 1966 Israeli Arabs were under military governance, as they were still seen as a potential threat to the new state. Under this military governance their educational, municipal, and many social agencies were supervised and carefully scrutinized for any signs of disloyalty (Ghanem, 2001; Rekhess, 1988). Since the end of the military governance in 1966 and up until today a dramatic change has taken place – Arabs are more concerned with their own civil rights and have also had more influence and success in gaining equality (Ghanem, 2001; Peleg, 2004). The successive governments of Israel have also embarked on a policy of equalization to provide the Arabs with efficient government services such as education, health, and welfare as well as to narrow the social differences between the two groups (Rekhess, 2005).

These changes in policy, however do not necessarily reflect in the relationships between the two groups which were never stable, and which changed with social and political developments in the region. To date, the Arabs are still a non-assimilating minority in Israel and the policies of the successive Israeli governments are still perceived by the Arab population to be discriminatory and maintaining their inequality (Mossawa Center, 2006). Indeed, inequality still appears in almost any aspect of life and, in general, Arabs live on a lower standard of living than the national average. In the educational system, for example, despite growing state allocation, Arab schools still lack physical facilities, such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and gyms. They suffer from a significantly higher student dropout rate than the Jewish schools, a low rate of success in the matriculation examinations (a major criterion for university admission), and almost a total lack of school-initiated extracurricular activities. All these contribute to a feeling of alienation and desperation on the part of the Arabs, as well as a feeling of hostility towards the Jewish authorities, and – by extension – the entire Jewish population.

On its part, the Jewish population is very suspicious of the Israeli Arabs' loyalty to the State of Israel and to the Jewish majority (Seginer, 2001; Smooha, 1988). As most Israeli Arabs identify their nationality as Palestinians (Suleiman, 2004; Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004), the fear and tension which characterize the international relations between Israel and the Arab nations in general, and with Palestinians in particular, also reflect in the intragroup relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Many Israeli Arab citizens are related to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and emphasize with their struggle against Israel (Kaplan et al., 2001). In a reality where most Arab countries and many Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank still do not recognize the legitimacy of Israel and its right to exist, Israeli Jews cannot help but wonder whether Israeli Arabs share these ideas. Suspicion also exists as a result of hostile actions and declarations made by leaders of the Israeli Arab population or by individuals. Thus, for example, during recent years Israeli Arab leaders, and among them Knesset members, led a campaign against Israel and its actions against Palestinians. As part of this campaign Israeli Arab leaders visited Arab

countries (which do not recognize Israel and do not allow Israelis to enter them) and voiced their identification with the Palestinian acts. For instance, in December 2005, a leading Arab Knesset Member visited Lebanon and told an audience that Arab citizens “are like all Arabs, only with Israeli citizenship forced upon them” (Shaked, 2005).

It also should be mentioned that during the last decade tensions escalated to a boiling point in October 2000, when Israeli Arabs in northern Israel joined the protest that the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank began with what is now known as the second *Intifada*. Soon it escalated into clashes between the Israeli Arab protesters and the police, and ended with 12 dead Arab citizens, all shot and killed by the police. This increased tension and suspicion of the Arab population toward the police and the government, and of the Jewish population towards the Arabs citizens and their active role in identifying with the Palestinian struggle. Finally, there have been occasions when Israeli Arabs participated in Palestinians terror attacks against the Jewish population. In March 2008, for example, an Israeli Arab who lived in East Jerusalem entered a crowded library of a religious high school in Jerusalem and opened fire. Eight students, ages 15–19, were killed and nine others wounded. Again, although carried out by an individual, such an act shapes the Jewish public opinion against the Arab minority as a whole, and maintains a deepening of the suspicions that already exists.

In sum, the conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Israel is rooted in battles over resources and in the national aspirations of both the Zionist and Palestinian movements. These relationships are shaped and reshaped by social, political, and international developments, and have seriously deteriorated in recent years. There is no doubt as to the urgent need for peace programs for enhancing possible positive relationships between the two groups who share not only territory, but also citizenship.

Encounters as a Means of Peace

With this ongoing conflict casting its shadow over society, Israeli educational authorities and many NGOs devote educational and monetary resources to the development of intervention programs designed to mitigate at least those aspects of the conflict that exist within the school system (Winer, Bar-On, & Weiner, 1992). These projects provide an information base, and are a meeting place for members of the two groups who rarely have personal contact. Designed to illuminate ethnic stereotyping and misconceptions through personal encounters, the aim of such projects, then, is to reduce anxiety and hostility. With these obstacles partially removed – or at least recognized – the road is paved for dialog and attempts at conflict resolution based on participants’ better understanding of their own ethnic identity and of the way they are seen by others. This, in turn, should provide a positive inter-ethnic experience.

Recently more than 200 different programs designed for dealing with the Jewish-Arab conflict in Israel were counted (Abraham Fund Initiatives, 2002), and funds

are continually allocated. For the most part, Allport's (1954) *Contact Hypothesis* is the underlying theoretical basis for these programs. The hypothesis postulates that constructive and guided face-to-face meetings between members of conflict groups can reduce intergroup tensions and promote understanding between the members of conflict groups. In his well-known classic summer-camp study, Sherif (Sherif, 1966; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961) put these principles into practice: Members of conflict groups worked together on joint tasks and, as a result, demonstrated positive attitudes toward their counterparts. Following his studies, a great number of similar programs were established worldwide and include, for example, programs designed to enhance positive relationships between native-born and immigrants (e.g., Voci & Hewstone, 2003), heterosexuals and homosexuals (e.g., Herek & Capitanio, 1996), general society and people who suffer from various psychological disorders (e.g., Kolodziej & Johnson, 1996), and between majority and minority groups (e.g., Wagner, van-Dick, Pettigrew, & Christ, 2003).

Nevertheless, while contact as a means of enhancing positive relationships between groups became popular and widely used, on many occasions it is not without limitations. Allport (1954) himself suggested that contact in itself would not necessarily yield positive modification unless it was made when the groups have equal status, the participants have common goals and inter-group cooperation, and the meetings are supported by the authorities. Later studies have suggested additional conditions to these four, referring to either structural elements of the contact, such as that meeting groups have a common language and that their members participate on a voluntary basis (Wagner & Machleit, 1986), or elements referring to the content of the meetings, such as the type of information provided to each of the groups (Cook, 1978). Pettigrew (1998) even argued that there are so many cited conditions that it is now important to distinguish between essential and facilitating conditions. However, the place of religion in peace programs was mainly overlooked (Cox et al., 1994; Fox, 2001) and is the main focus of this paper.

Religion and Peace

Religion is part of people's worldview and it influences values, perceptions, and meaning systems, as well as actions (Silberman, 2005a; Stark & Bainbridge, 1985). People use religion to interpret and give meaning to the world around them, to organize experiences and to guide their actions. It has a meaningful role in both international and national levels and on issues such as human rights, education, medicine (e.g., organ donation, contraception, and euthanasia), marriages and divorce, law, immigration, and many other social issues and political structures (Silberman, 2005a, 2005b). Most people regard themselves as followers of a religious tradition (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997; Kimball, 2002), and, in recent years there is evidence that even many of those who are not affiliated with organized religion have increased their quest for spirituality (Fox, 2002; Gopin, 2000). Religious leaders (such as the Pope and the Dalai Lama) are among the most

influential people in the world and international and national leaders state that religion has a meaningful contribution to shaping who they are and to what directs their actions.

Considering the meaningful contribution of religion to humankind, and its appearance in both social life and individual behavior, it is suggested that while it has been used to explain (or enhance) war and conflict between groups, religion can also be used for enhancing peace. In his seminal work on religion and prejudice, Allport (1966) wrote that “there is something about religion that makes for prejudice and something about it that unmakes prejudice” (p. 447). It is suggested, therefore, that religion can also contribute to the abolishing of intergroup conflicts, enhance tolerance and understanding between different groups, and support various peaceful goals. Indeed, there is already some empirical evidence for the positive contribution of interfaith and inter-religious dialog to intergroup relations (e.g., Abu-Nimer, 2001; Garfinkel, 2004). However, as mentioned earlier, religion as a mean for peace, and for enhancing positive intergroup relations in particular, is usually overlooked (Cox et al., 1994; Fox, 2001).

Focusing on the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Israel (the present study addressed Muslim Arabs who constitute 80% of the Arab population of Israel) one should note the idea of peace as a religious tenet in both Judaism and Islam. Peace, and its religious meaning, is already embedded in both Jewish and Muslim sacred writings which call for peace and equality. In both Judaism and Islam peace is seen as part of the religious aim to realize God’s kingdom on earth. It is interesting to note that one origin of the word Islam, for itself, is *salam* which means “peace,” and according to the Quran (e.g., 60:8), relationships with non-Muslims should be based on justice, mutual respect, and cooperation. Judaism teaches that all humankind is commanded to live righteous lives and calls for world repair (*tikun olam*) (Shakdiel & Shalvi, 1998). According to Jewish tradition the whole of the *Torah* aims at promoting peace (e.g., B. Talmud, Tractate Gittin, 59b) and even in extreme situations, such as in times of war, the *Torah* calls to act with mercy and to first seek a peaceful solution before declaring war (e.g., Deuteronomy, 20:10).

Silberman, Higgins, and Dweck (2005) suggest a theoretical framework of *meaning systems*, to the study of religion and its use to explain the dynamic and function of religion in people’s lives, including their striving for either war or peace. Such meaning systems refer to cognitive structures as well as to emotions, goals, and active processes that can illuminate the processes by which religion serves as a source of meaning that affects people’s lives. It is suggested that religious people, like every other group, have an idiosyncratic meaning system through which reality is perceived and interpreted. This system is unique for religious people in that it is based on what is perceived by them as sacred, and that they believe that their acts carry spiritual rewards. Therefore, it is suggested that if someone inherently acknowledges the importance of peace, rather than violence, as part of his or her religious meaning system, that person would be more obliged to such a way of life than others.

Furthermore, it is suggested that religious meaning systems inherently include values that enhance peace (see, e.g., Gopin, 2000). This includes explicit

encouragement of nonviolence and values such as selfless love and compassion that relate to the belief that all people are created in the image of God. The importance of forgiveness, empathy, and understanding of the others, including enemies, is also a salient value in many religions, and can support the enhancement of peace and reconciliation. Humility and self-criticism are also common to various religions and may support positive interactions between members of conflict groups and enhance tolerance and understanding. It was already suggested that on the basis of religion both individuals and leaders are often better equipped to influence others maintain peace than in other political or social ways (Johnston & Sampson, 1994). Thus, emphasizing religious values which shape the individual's meaning system, or stressing these values through educational programs or during intergroup encounters, can be used for enhancing positive relations between individuals and conflict groups, and may benefit the respective groups.

In sum, religious meaning systems, through religious values, norms, and attitudes have a meaningful influence on intergroup relations, as do any other cultural attributes. Nonetheless, such systems may have an even greater contribution for the enhancement of peace, tolerance, and understanding if peace itself is seen as a religious goal. The aim of this study was to enhance peaceful relationships between religious Israeli Jewish and Muslim Arab high school students and to reveal the possible contribution of interfaith dialog to the enhancement of positive intergroup relations in Israel.

Method

Participants

The research sample included students from four (two Jewish and two Arab) 10th-grade classes (15 years old) who had participated in intergroup encounters as part of their school curriculum. Students were free to choose whether to attend the program or not. Of these, 41 Jewish students (19 male, 22 female) and 42 Arab students (19 male, 23 female) completed the research questionnaire both at the onset and the end of the program. All participants came from religious schools and hold a religious (Jewish or Muslim) identity.

Measures

Three different aspects of the social relationships between the Jewish and Arab participants were measured: (a) feelings toward members of the other group; (b) perceptions of members of the other group; (c) social distance. The three questionnaires used to measure these aspects had been previously used in studies conducted in Israel for measuring relationships between social groups (e.g., Yablon, 2007a). The three questionnaires were:

Feelings

A 21-item Feeling Checklist, based on a valid and reliable established checklist (Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999) was translated and adapted to the needs of the Israeli population by Tur-Kaspa-Shimoni (2001). The checklist includes 21 emotions, such as anger, warmth, and shame, and the respondent is requested to indicate on a 7-point Likert-type scale the degree of each emotion toward members of the other group. Face validity, judged by four experts, was set as the validity criterion for the 21 items. Items were summed to yield a single index of emotions; a high mean score on the 21 items was related to positive and favorable emotions toward the other. Internal consistency for the feeling checklist was measured by Cronbach Alpha and yielded a correlation of 0.75.

Perceptions

A 21-item semantic differential scale was used to measure the cognitive aspect of the relationships which was the participants' perception of traits of the "typical other." The questionnaire was used by Ben-Ari and Amir (1987) and revised by Saporta (1993) for use in Israeli society. Respondents were asked to characterize their perception of the "other" triads with bipolar adjectives such as: honest–dishonest, open-minded–close-minded, and gentle–rough, on a 7-point scale. High mean scores for the 21 items related to a positive perception of the other's traits. Internal consistency for the trait rating was measured by Cronbach Alpha and yielded a correlation of 0.77.

Social Distance

A 13-item questionnaire was used to measure the participant's willingness to interact with someone from the other group. The scale developed by Saporta (1993) was based on the Social Distance Scale (SDS), originally developed by Bogardus (1959). The questionnaire samples verbal reports about the degree to which the participants are willing to interact with a person from another group. Participants were presented with 13 statements (e.g., "study with him/her for exam," "live with him/her in the same building," and "be his/her partner for a trip"). Instructions were: "Rate the following statements on the following scale about a person of the same sex from the other group" using a Likert-type 7-point scale (1 – definitely unwilling, 7 – definitely willing). Items were summed to yield a single index of social distance. Internal consistency for the questionnaire was measured by Cronbach Alpha and yielded a correlation of 0.92.

Procedure

After a research assistant explained the aims of the questionnaires, the research questionnaires were administered on two occasions in student's classrooms – a week

before the onset of the encounters and a week after the end of the last meeting. The intervention included four full-day meetings (8 hours each) held at 1-month intervals. Between each meeting students in both Jewish and Arab schools separately took part in sessions where they discussed issues related to the meeting in which they participated.

The encounters included small-group discussions, lectures, and social activities. Students participated in lectures and panels conducted by religious practitioners of their own communities and in talks by national well-known religious leaders. They also participated in informal face-to-face inter-religious small-group meetings in which they were encouraged to get to know each other and discuss the issues presented in the lectures and panels. The first meeting day was dedicated to self-disclosure, where students presented themselves, their way of life and their beliefs – including some of the holidays and traditional ceremonies. The second and the third days were dedicated to issues regarding living in a democratic country where religion plays an important role, and for seeking ways of solving conflicts using both the tools of democracy and religious values. The fourth day was dedicated to social issues common to both societies (e.g., women's rights and the relationship between modern and religious life). During each of the meeting days students had lunch together and leisure time for informal meetings. As a main goal for the encounters, participants were asked to compose an "interfaith declaration" regarding coexistence in Israel. The group leaders then proposed that the signed declaration be sent to the Minister of Education.

Results

The aim of the statistical analysis was to reveal the possible contribution of interfaith dialog to the enhancement of positive intergroup relations between the Jewish and Arab-Muslim high-school students who participated in the interfaith dialog. Students' feelings, perceptions, and social distance before and after participation in the encounters are presented in Table 1.

In order to examine the contribution of participation in the intervention to students' social relationships, their responses to each of the research questionnaires were compared in a series of pre-post *t*-tests. Results (see Figure 1) indicated a significant difference in the feelings and perceptions of both Jewish [$t(39) = -2.93; p < 0.001; t(40) = -2.37; p < 0.05$] and Arab [$t(41) = -6.27; p < 0.001; t(41) = -3.21; p < 0.001$] participants before and after participation in the encounters. Thus, after their participation in the interfaith dialog, both Jewish and Arab students showed more positive feelings and perceptions towards their counterparts while no differences were found in their social distance.

Based on the quantitative findings, we asked to interview some of the participants in order to reveal more information about their opinion of the interfaith encounters and gain a deeper understanding of the study results. We, therefore, met with 10 of the participants (5 Jewish and 5 Arab) about 2 months after the end of

Table 1 Feelings, perceptions, and social distance of Jewish and Arab high school students before and after participation in interfaith dialog

Group	Factor	Time			
		Before		After	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Jews	Feelings	3.29	0.42	3.57	0.46
	Perceptions	4.09	0.64	4.43	0.63
	Social distance	3.42	0.86	3.64	0.79
Arabs	Feelings	3.11	0.47	3.65	0.34
	Perceptions	3.86	0.67	4.26	0.76
	Social distance	3.17	0.62	3.36	0.65

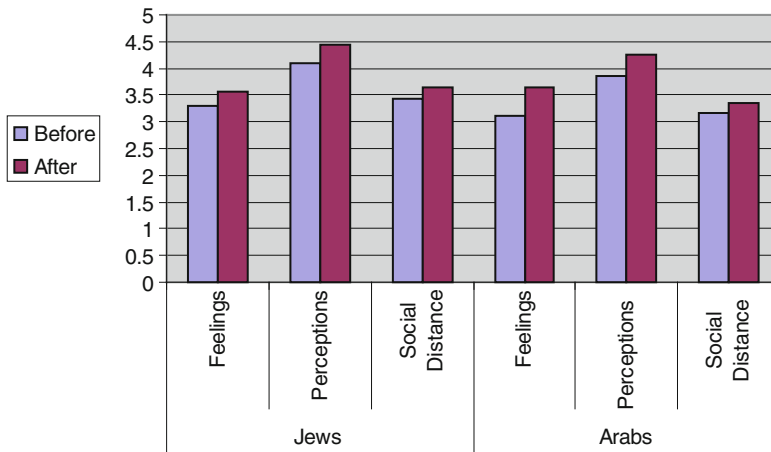


Fig. 1. Modification in students' social relationships after participation in interfaith encounters

the encounters. The interviews took place at a youth center midway between the schools, and were conducted in Hebrew.

We first introduced participants to the quantitative findings of the study and asked them how they would explain that there was no significant change in the social distance (e.g., that participants did not show a higher willingness to live together in the same building or be travel partners). We also asked them about the contribution of the religious content of the encounters.

In general, and regarding the findings that participants did not change their willingness to interact with each other as a result of the encounters, participants suggested two different perspectives to explain the findings: (a) lack of social support for such relationships; and (b) their differentiation between interpersonal and intergroup relationships. Thus, for example, Harel (here and throughout the text, names have been changed to ensure participants' anonymity) a Jewish participant said that:

I never thought about the question of living with an Arab counterpart in the same building as if it related to someone from the group. . . there are so many other [people] that I don't know and I'm not sure that even the Arab participants would like to live next to them.

When we asked him if he would say the exact same thing about Jewish counterparts he said:

Well, this is easier . . . but you will still not hear a 100% "Yes" from me . . . It's basically that if you don't know someone and if there are years of suspicions and fear, it's not so simple to immediately say Yes to the group as a whole . . . talking about individuals would be more simple in that case.

Nurit, another Jewish participant followed Harel's explanation and added that:

Maybe after many additional encounters, like we had, people would change their mind and have different opinion about this . . . the question is not whether Hallil [one of the Arab Students who participated in the encounters] and I would agree to live in the same building but whether our friends and families would accept that.

Umyma, an Arab participant said:

It is quite obvious that people who live different lives and follow different traditions would not want to live next to each other . . . Its not that I don't think that some of the reasons and maybe even much of it is the result of the suspicion between the two groups, but that there are many other social and political reasons as well.

When we asked her what she meant by "political reasons" she said:

. . . Like if you agree that there will be a mosque or a synagogue in your neighborhood . . . it is more a social issue than a personal thing.

Hallil another participant said said that:

When I'll go to university it's simple that I'd agree to live and maybe even share apartment with a Jewish student, but this is probably not the case when it will come to live in the same neighborhood after being married and having a family . . . mainly because there is still not enough social support for such thing . . . and we also know that there are many problems around these issues today . . . You don't want to make problems or cause damage to your family by living next to someone who is so different than you.

We then asked participants what would make the change so people from the two different groups would easily agree to live with each other in the same building. For the most part, they thought that it is mainly a question of time: Amal, an Arab participant said that:

There's a lot that still has to happen. . . if there will be peace then it will be easier for people. . .

Lubna, an Arab participant, said that:

You can expect that people would first be more tolerant to each other and know more about each other and only then they may also change their opinion about living in the same neighborhoods.

Ido, one of the Jewish participants, added that:

Already today there are many places in Israel where Jews and Arabs live in the same neighborhoods . . . somehow we don't hear about this much . . . but this is definitely something that happens more and more . . . We shouldn't ignore the problems and the history . . . so things take time and when more people will know each other there is also a chance for a change in that.

As was already mentioned, the second question which we presented to participants was about the contribution of the religious content to the encounters. More specifically, we asked them what they think about the idea of interfaith dialog and whether they found the religious contents of the encounter to be a contributing factor to the enhancement of understanding between them. Eran, a Jewish participant, said that:

"In the beginning I thought it's a bad idea, but as time passed I realized that it actually brings us closer." When we asked him to explain his statement he added: "At first I thought that religion, by its nature, is a polarizing factor, but then I saw that actually we come, in many aspects, from similar backgrounds . . . and we share the same problems when dealing with secular people . . . It doesn't look weird to me when someone goes to pray in the middle of the day nor that he can't work or go to school on his religious holiday."

Naama, one of the Jewish participants, also said that:

I couldn't believe that I would find religious Arab girls similar to me in ways that my nonreligious Jewish friends are so different . . . I also didn't know that the Quran calls for peace . . . Basically I now think that there is more in common between Judaism and Islam than with Christianity.

Samir, an Arab participant, said:

I also didn't know much about Judaism . . . I think that much of what I knew was about Zionism and I was surprised to learn about the different streams in Judaism as well . . . It is quite a pity that we don't really study about other religions in school.

Umyrna added:

I think that we found each other using the same terminology and this, in itself, is a change.

Following the students' responses to our question we also asked them why they think that much of the conflict between the groups is enhanced by religion. Lubna said:

Someone said before that religion is polarizing by its nature, so if someone wants he of course can use it for this reason. I think what we learned in the encounters was that we can use the same religious arguments but for peaceful needs.

Amal added that:

It's very easy for an extremist to use religion for any reason . . . even for arguments against women going to university. It's a powerful tool and you can use it for almost anything you want.

Harel, however, said that:

We have to be careful . . . because religion, after all, is something that keeps you from assimilation . . . we never allow, for example, religious intermarriage. So, on the one hand religion is a polarizing factor but on the other it calls for respect and peace and this is the

important thing It's a religious idea that you keep yourself unique but still respect the other . . . as we learned, in Judaism, we don't want to convert other people into Judaism but we also don't want to harm them . . . that's what extremists do not always understand.

Amal added that:

I have to admit that I'm quite pessimistic about these encounters . . . so many negative religious arguments have been heard and what we did was only one small thing.

Ido responded to Amal and said:

I agree with Amal but for myself this was the first opportunity to really learn about Islam and meet face to face with religious Arabs, and see that there is much in common. The idea that both Amal and I now know is that just as the extremists have a religious base for what they say, also people who want to bring peace can use religious arguments The question is therefore not what you believe but what you do with it.

Discussion

The annals of humanity contain many violent acts that were explained, even justified, by citing religious reasons (e.g., Kimball, 2002). Yet, against this common knowledge of the negative and detrimental side of religion, the possible positive contribution of religion to intergroup relations was mainly overlooked (Cox et al., 1994; Fox, 2001). The present study suggests that religion can provide a meaning system that may facilitate tolerance and understanding between members of conflict groups. Thus, a religion-based peace encounter for Israeli Jews and Arab-Muslims was studied and its contribution measured.

The findings of this study suggest that the contribution of the interfaith encounters was related only to the enhancement of positive feelings and perceptions towards members of the conflict group, but not to a greater willingness for social interaction. Thus, after their participation in the interfaith dialog, students showed more positive feelings and less stereotypes towards their counterparts, but did not show higher willingness, for example, to live in the same building and interact more closely with members of their conflict group.

It, therefore, seems that religion can serve as a base for intergroup dialog and that religious reasoning may serve as a moderator for positive intergroup relations. Although the religious meaning system (e.g., Silberman et al., 2005) was not experimentally studied, the results of this study emphasize that religious values and religious thinking may be used as a base for intergroup encounters and may lead to positive relations between individuals and conflict groups.

The finding that participants had more positive feelings and perceptions after their participation in the interfaith dialog, but did not positively change their willingness for social interactions, joins many other studies that point to the weakness of peace programs, in general, and of contact intervention programs in particular (Bar-Tal, 2004). Thus, it was already suggested that a more meaningful change that includes all aspects of social interaction, including behavioral ones, requires more time and more personal relationships than could have developed through the process

enabled in this study. It is suggested that while cognitive processes, as were mainly used in this study, have positive contributions to the enhancement of tolerance and understanding between conflict groups, it is the affective aspects that are much more influential (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). As a result, instead of short-term intergroup cognitive-based contact intervention programs, it is suggested that in order to bring about meaningful change, long-term emotion-based contact interventions are required (Pettigrew, 1998).

It is, therefore, suggested that in addition to the cognitive aspects of the interfaith dialog, affective religious aspects should also be stressed, and that the contact itself should last longer. This includes, for example, reduction of anxiety and enhancement of empathy, love, and forgiveness which can all be seen as religious values. It should be noted, however, that both emotional and cognitive modification must precede any behavioral change and that such modification can usually be achieved more easily than the behavioral change itself (Yablon, 2006). Furthermore, the participants themselves recognized that such behavioral modification is subject to a more general social change and to a change of social perceptions which currently do not support such behavioral modification. It is, therefore, suggested that the different aspects that are chosen to be included in such interfaith dialog will take into account both short-term and long-term goals of the encounters, and also consider the current stage and characteristics of the conflict. Such a perspective was found to be a fundamental factor for the decision whether to stress mostly affective or cognitive aspects in the peace programs (Yablon, 2007b).

In sum, following the discussion of the findings of the study, it is suggested that educators can stress certain religious messages that support peaceful relationships with others. It seems that religion may serve as a powerful tool for bringing students together. Religion may also enhance dialog between groups which may result in a positive change of at least some aspects of the social relations. In the harsh reality of the Middle East, any religious dialog which may lessen the hate and enhance cooperation and understanding should be further supported, especially when such dialog itself may be seen as a part of a religious belief in a better world.

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Learn Young, Learn Fair. Interreligious Encounter and Learning in Dutch Kindergarten

K. H. Ina ter Avest and Siebren Miedema

Introduction

The intercultural and interreligious formation in processes of participation and imagination of young children in Kindergarten is highly interesting. The first reason for using this characterization is that it is quite common to deal with intercultural and interreligious education with children above the age of six, among which the book of the British theologian Goldman has had a great effect in the field of the pedagogy of religious education in primary education (Goldman, 1964). In the same way the Flemish researcher Hutsebaut (1995) influenced the field of religious education with a focus on youngsters, pointing at the critical age of 14 till 16 in religious identity development. The second reason to identify the formation years of young children in Kindergarten, which is a highly interesting field of research, has to do with the presupposition that as soon as children learn to live culturally and religiously together and really do practice this, the better they will be able to do that later in life. To put it bluntly, intercultural and interreligious education should start as soon as possible and can be adequately interpreted as the start of citizenship education (Miedema & Bertram-Troost, 2008). In this contribution we are focusing in particular on the cultural and religious components or aspects of interreligious education as a form of religious citizenship education in Kindergarten.

Dealing with this notion of “Kindergarten,” as Dutch researchers we will restrict ourselves to what was named in the Netherlands in earlier days as “kleuterschool.” Nowadays in the Netherlands this is the first phase of the elementary school that starts at the age of four and lasts till the age of six. So, we focus on the first part of the full age-span of the elementary school in toto, that is, from 4 to 12. When the children are five they are of school age and are obliged to attend the school lessons.

In this chapter we will first briefly outline the current cultural and religious context in our country, that is, the development from being a pillarized society into a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. We especially deal with the impact of

K.H. Ina ter Avest (✉)
VU University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
e-mail: kh.ter.avelst@psy.vu.nl

these societal changes on the variety of schools in the dual Dutch educational system of state and denominational schools (Section “Changing Dutch Society”). In Section “Interreligious Education” we pay attention to interreligious schooling by highlighting the example of a school in Ede, against the background of the broader concept of interreligious learning. We then focus in Section “‘My God’ and ‘Your God’ in Primary Education” on the Kindergarten (age 4–6) of, respectively, an Islamic school and a Protestant school. In Section “Learning Tradition in a Multi-religious Society” we compare these two Kindergartens. In the final section “Fostering Ways of Guided Openness” we introduce the notion “learning from the heart” to characterize our preferred approach in respect to intercultural and interreligious education.

Changing Dutch Society

In the second half of the 20th century the Netherlands changed from a homogeneous mono-cultural society into a heterogeneous multi-cultural and multi-religious society (see De Ruyter & Miedema, 2000; Ter Avest, Bakker, Bertram-Troost, & Miedema, 2007). In the homogenous society it was decided to set up separate Roman Catholic and Protestant schools, in line with the religious convictions of the parents, and non-denominational schools for those with other or no explicit ideologies or world views. This was all part of the “pillarization” process that played such an important role in the Netherlands till the middle of the 20th century. In what was coined as “the pillarized society” the country was divided into a number of segments, the so-called “pillars,” according to religion or ideology, and with each pillar having its own social institutions. Not only schools, but also newspapers, broadcasting organizations, political parties, hospitals, universities, sports clubs, etc. were divided along denominational lines. This “pillarization” permitted religious and ideological diversity in a homogeneous society because, seen from an ethnic perspective, the Netherlands seemed to be such a homogenous society. This, however, turned out to be a situation of “unity in diversity.” Unity was notable in the aspect of ethnicity, diversity in religious organizations. The socializing function of this pillarized education was predominant till the midst of the 20th century.

The changes in the context of the pillarized educational system in the Netherlands, in terms of the secularization and pluralization, led to the creation of a variety of different types of schools:

- traditional schools for the individual “pillars”;
- schools designed to promote a meeting of different cultures, including religious cultures;
- schools strongly focusing on “interreligious education.”

These three types of schools can easily be combined with reference to what Grimmitt (2000, p. 15) has coined as three approaches in the combination of

learning and religion, that is, *learning in religion*, *learning about religion*, and *learning from religion*. From a theological point of view these various types of schools differ in the attitudinal truth claim they hold, respectively, exclusive or inclusive. So, they may regard Christianity as the only true religion and the only way to live in accordance with God's will, or they might see it as "one of the many roads that lead to Rome" (cf. Wardekker & Miedema, 2001).

Some Muslim parents do not regard education based on the third category of "a meeting of faiths" in interreligious education as providing the kind of religious education they want to have for their children. A small group of parents is making use of the freedom of education laid down in Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution ("Public education is regulated by law, with respect for everyone's religious or ideological convictions") and has set up Islamic schools – a typical Dutch solution! The first Islamic primary school was founded in 1988, and by the end of 2006 there were about 40 such schools throughout the country. Together they account for less than 1% of all primary schools in the Netherlands (cf. Ter Avest et al., 2007).

Interreligious Education

One of the first schools in the Netherlands where interreligious education was implemented was the former Juliana van Stolberg Christian primary school in Ede, a middle sized town in the center of the Netherlands. Until today, this school in Ede has been the one and only school in the Netherlands that characterized itself as an interreligious school. The school was officially recognized by the state as a school for interreligious education. The school has fully worked out the principles of interreligious education and put them concretely into practice. Two religions were engaged in this school's curriculum of interreligious education: Christianity and Islam.

The religious educational principles that governed this school can be described as follows:

- Socialization in one's own religious tradition; lessons focusing on knowing one's own familiar tradition ("lessons of conscientization").
- Learning about the other religious tradition: that is Islam from a Christian perspective, or Christianity from an Islamic perspective, lessons focusing on meeting the other and recognizing familiar as well as new and strange aspects in the other's tradition ("lessons meeting the other").
- Learning from both religious traditions while aiming at the development of the child's own authentic religious identity, lessons focusing on the differences, not to discuss or argument about them, but to learn from conflicting aspects ("lessons of encounter").

For more than 10 years, children as well as their parents and the teachers from this school were observed and interviewed in a longitudinal research study (Ter

Avest, 2003, 2009 in press). In her extensive research project Ter Avest focused on the religious development of Christian and Muslim children in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious context of this interreligious school.

One of the interesting findings in the study was the observation that at the start of the research period the wording of every child (irrespective from which religious background the child came) in group 6 (at the age of 9 or 10) showed the following characteristics:

God is everywhere and always present. He listens to everyone. He hears and answers prayers. Human beings cannot see nor hear God. At times, a person can experience God directly or indirectly. God makes rules. He punishes and rewards. God is almighty. He can do everything.

A common understanding of the wording of “Our God” appears, although every child phrased these generalities in her or his own cultural and religious manner. An example of the wording of “My God” of one of the children is

God is present amongst people. When you pray, you just know He will listen. God answers prayers: “If the weather is good the following day, you just know”. Yet sometimes He does not answer prayers “perhaps He is not present right then”. Human beings cannot see God. God exists, but you cannot see Him. People cannot hear God. A person can experience God: “If you do bad things, if you steal, you say: I don’t dare to, you’re afraid you’ll be punished or something. You’ll feel it.” God makes rules, for example that you should go to church. God is a kind and good man, who listens to everyone, helps people and heals everyone. “God can hear all the people, I do not know how, but He just can.”

The study showed that not only the concept of “My God” changed as a consequence of cognitive and affective development during the period of puberty and adolescence, but also generalities changed into particularities, resulting in an individual’s own authentic religious identity. Yusuf, one of the Muslim pupils of the interreligious Juliana van Stolberg School, speaks of God as a friend, being there when you need Him. Nearness surely is an aspect of the Islamic God-concept, though not so clearly stated in terms of friendship. It seems as if Yusuf borrows this term, which he has found in the process of critical observation, reflection, and interpretation (*cf.* for an extensive elaboration on these three terms, Jackson, 1997), stimulated in interreligious education at the Juliana van Stolberg school. As a result Yusuf’s “My God” shows hybrid characteristics which he shares with his Christian schoolmates. For the social cohesion of Dutch society, this is seen as an important contribution. This may point to, until now, an unobserved aspect of interreligious education, namely not only stimulating the interreligious dialogue, but also social cohesion. What may be even more important is the effect which interreligious education has on the intra-religious dialogue. The confrontation in the classroom with the other religion and corresponding “My God”-concepts, is stimulating the reflection on what is familiar in one’s own tradition, being the Islamic or Christian God-concept, resulting in an “our God”-concept. The external classroom dialogue might be a predecessor of the internal intra-religious dialogue (*cf.* Roebben, 2000, p. 91), resulting in adolescents with a clearly distinguishable “My God”-concept and a “Your God”-concept. As stated above, the God-concepts of the Islamic and Christian children showing hybrid characteristics is an interesting notion.

Unfortunately the Juliana van Stolberg had to close its doors in July 2003 as a result of a declining number of pupils. Partly, this was the result of the sharp rise in the aging population of the neighborhood of the school, and partly it seemed that the time was not yet ripe for interreligious education. But, “times, they are a changing,” and by consequence today in the Netherlands the encounter of children with different ethnic and religious background is not any more only taking place in an interreligious school. Today, meeting “the other” is an issue in every school, that is, state schools, Christian schools (Protestant as well as Roman Catholic), or Islamic schools. In the Netherlands 47% of the Muslim children attend state schools and 53% go to denomination schools. From this latter 53%, we find 28% in Roman Catholic schools and 19% of the Muslim pupils in the protestant schools. Six percent of the Muslim pupils attend either an Islamic school or a type of school organized according to a particular pedagogical conception, like Montessori schools or Waldorf schools (*cf.* Bakker & Rigg, 2004, p. 66). The teachers of these schools have a (secularized) Christian or an Islamic upbringing. However, due to a lack of Islamic teachers, in Islamic schools very often a (secularized) Christian teacher is responsible for the religious education of her Islamic pupils. In Christian schools we quite often find secularized Christian teachers, or adherents of “whatever-ism” (Roebben, 2000), that is, believing in “something,” but not knowing how to name it more precisely.

“My God” and “Your God” in Primary Education

In the Netherlands children start their educational career at the age of four in primary school. Whereas Ter Avest carried out her research in an interreligious school, deliberately aiming at stimulating the religious development of its pupils by inducing the “conflict” in “lessons of encounter,” in this chapter we wish to elaborate on the challenges of denominational Christian and Islamic schools, in the religious education of their pupils. These children are from different religious backgrounds, as were the children of the interreligious Juliana van Stolberg school in Ede. We share with the reader the experiences of religious education of a mixed classroom population in an Islamic primary school and a Protestant primary school. In both classrooms the teacher was a young Dutch woman. The research methods used were: participative observation, interviewing, and stimulated recall.

Khalifa as a Contribution to Interreligious Education

We first take a closer look at the classroom of Wilma. Wilma is a secularized Christian young woman and teacher in an Islamic primary school. This school is located in the center of a nice Dutch town, in the middle of the country. The school is situated not far from the beautifully restored old center of the town. The school’s neighborhood is populated with people from the lowest social economic strata. In

this Islamic school religious education lessons take place during 1 hour a week with the aim to introduce the children to the Islamic tradition. During each lesson the children learn “the *Sura* of the week,” as well as knowledge about the Islamic tradition, for example, knowledge of the life of the prophet Mohammed. These lessons start for children in their third year of primary education, at the age of six.

In the subjective theory of this teacher (*cf.* for this concept Ter Avest, Bakker, & Miedema, 2008), religious education is not only related to the religious education lessons, but religious education is closely related to and finds consequences in the behavioral attitude toward others. The teacher, in particular, identifies two important aims: the ability of listening to the other, and the competence of understanding the perspective of the other. These aims are not only important for religious education to be taught during the religious education lessons, but also for education in general.

The teacher is well aware of the fact that for children at the age of four or five, religious education takes its starting point in the way the children are socialized at home. At home children participate in religious practices as in other practices in a very natural way, without asking questions, and with parents not giving any explanations as to why they behave in the way they do. Thus, appropriating the home culture which is imbued with Islamic culture, the children absorb it as with their mother’s milk, the practical behavioral aspects of culture as well as the abstract concepts of religion. Children are “learning by doing” (Dewey, 1915/1979, pp. 253, 255, 258, 261, 265, 286), and are also copying the example of the first caretaker with whom they have a strong bond. This bond is so strong that it takes a while before the child perceives him/herself as an independent person, separate from the mother, regarding her as someone “else.” Even then, during the first few years of his/her life, the child is still very much dependent on the mother, or first caretaker, in experiencing a sense of well-being, a sense of trust. The example of a child crying because the mother is crying is well-known. The child’s grief is not the result of the complex emotion of empathy, but more a question of the mother’s grief infecting the child, as if it was an infectious disease. This also applies if the mother is in a good mood: her happiness determines to a significant degree that of the child. It is not just her good mood, but also the orientation of her (religious) values that greatly influences the development of the child (*cf.* Harter, 2005, p. 387). So, children learn religion at their mothers knee.

It is at their teacher’s knee, sometimes even literally, children learn Islam including its main manifestations and how to behave. In the school as an “in between” of family life and the society as a whole, children learn to behave as a pupil and as a citizen in Dutch society, according to the Islamic tradition. Only children who feel safe are able to learn. For that reason, the teacher must first adjust to the family context. This applies even more to the growth of religiosity, which arises from trust: the relationship of trust is the “the cradle of belief.”

To allow children on the one hand to get acquainted with the main concepts of Islam, that is, to enlarge their religious literacy, for the youngest ones it is absolutely necessary to translate the main concepts into very concrete behavioral aspects. In primary school a space is created for the pupil where he can grow, a space where the child acquires the words to name the rituals that it mastered at home just by doing,

without asking questions. In school, the teachers make use of all the different home cultures to invite children to ask questions, and teaches children the different words and concepts underlying the variety of values and regulations. Dewey states: through the teacher, the school makes the world larger for the child. Dewey's central concept is "participation" when he talks about the development of ever-more complex habits and actions with which the child adjusts its interaction with and in relation to society. The school, particularly, is an important factor in this and not only as a preparation for becoming a citizen in the Dutch multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society at a later stage. School, however, is also important *sui generis*, as a form of society in itself. Where Dewey (1897/1972, p. 86–87) characterizes education as an embryonic space and the school as an embryonic society in which the children learn to live with each other and participate in the community of which they are members, Hermans uses the term "community of practice" (Hermans, 2003, pp. 228–230). In such a mini-society, the teacher is responsible for the intentional learning processes of the pupil. The teacher creates a space in which the child can participate in instructive experiences, that is, experiences that enable the child to grow in all the different areas in life, including in religion and citizenship, being an important part of life. The quality of the experience, and whether or not it can be identified as being a religious experience, can only be characterized in retrospect (Dewey, 1934, p. 42).

Let us give an example what this means in an every day classroom situation of teacher Wilma. In order to teach the children about the diversity of personal relationship and responsibility people can have toward Allah/God, the teacher refers to *Sura 57* where this relationship is explicitly described as one of *khalifa* toward its Creator. For children to learn the different ways to behave like *khalifa*, for the younger children this concept needs to be translated into very concrete behavioral aspects, related to the actual world the child lives in. Teacher Wilma of the Islamic primary school shows us how to adjust to the children's world and at the same time introduces them into the world of adults who live according to the Islamic tradition. This teacher makes use of very concrete material, not only in the sense of children's books she reads to the children, which they can look through, but also concrete in the sense that she invites the children to play the roles of the characters in the book. In this way the teacher encourages the practice of imagination, as well as a variety of senses which stimulate the learning process in different ways. In the Netherlands the children's books of Max Velthuys for this purpose are very popular among teachers in the lower grades of primary school, for example, *Kikker en de horizon* [Frog and the horizon] (1998), *Kikker is verliefd* [Frog in love] (1989), *Kikker is kikker* [Frog is a frog] (1996), *Kikker vindt een vriendje* [Frog meets his friend] (2001), and *Kikker is bang* [Frog is frightened] (1994).

Every morning, a Muslim assistant-teacher recites the morning prayer with the children, who sit either with folded arms or with open hands while reciting their *Sura*. Once the *Sura* has been recited, Wilma reads to her pupils a book on the theme of diversity. According to the interpretation of the teacher, in this book diversity is seen as challenging people to notice the qualities of others and an opportunity to ask for the assistance of each other. Exploring this concept with her pupils she asks the children to name their own strengths and to look around to find out which

classmate they might ask for assistance in something that is not really their own individual strength, something they are not good at. In the same lesson, elaborating on weaknesses and strengths, she offers the children the perspective of “growing in your strength.” For growth, Miss Wilma teaches her pupils that they need something from outside themselves and willpower from within. She illustrates this by singing with the children the “bulb”-song while at the same time she is “watering” the bulbs, and encouraging the germinating bulbs to stretch their peduncles, and blossom.

The reference to Allah/God who may be a source of growth, and the child who him/herself has to show his/her own power, is not explicitly mentioned, though tangibly present in the context of this lesson in which imagination and the common longing for growth is present in a moving way. The concept of “My God” of these children of the Islamic school is filled up with “help” from outside, going hand in hand with strength and willpower from inside, as well as with “complementarity”: what you are not able to do on your own, God will help you. “My God” becomes “Our God,” a shared religious concept.

The “Protective Wrap” as a Contribution to Interreligious Education

In Dutch secularized society, the context is no longer, by definition, religious. Even in denominational schools most of the time the majority of pupils have either a secularized background or – as is the case in the bigger cities in the western part of the country – an Islamic background. This is the case in our second example of religious education. This Protestant school is situated in a seaport of the Netherlands, in an old part of the city. In the beginning of the last century families of dockworkers lived in this area. For the past 30 years families of so-called guest workers and immigrants have been its inhabitants. The parents of the children of this school came from more than 60 different countries. Being aware of the diversity of backgrounds the children bring into the classroom, the school has decided to use the religious education lessons to stress the universal religious concepts, like loving one’s neighbor which are translated into developing feelings of empathy and sympathy for one’s fellow men. As stated above, Dewey saw the teacher as an example and he believed the teacher to be “the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God” (Dewey, 1897/1972, p. 95). According to Dewey, the teacher is not only prophesying, but also exemplifying “the true kingdom of God,” that is, practicing peace and justice. After all, each teacher does this in her or his own unique way, since every person constructs through processes of interpretation and transformation, his or her own and unique approach to this ideal of “the kingdom of God.” The growth of empathy relies to a significant degree on feelings of *reward* and *attachment* in the earliest years of childhood. This young Dutch teacher, Djamella, in the Protestant school practises this by literally having the children at her knee. For her the emphasis is on “feeling at home,” a “home” in which “the other” feels at home as well.

Teacher Djamella works with the 5-year-old children. She is well aware of the fact that for some pupils in her class the Islamic tradition is a “foreign” tradition, differing from the tradition they are socialized in at home, and “strange” for many Dutch people. That’s why she thinks it is very important that her pupils experience the tradition their family life is imbued with, as a “protective wrap” (cf. Tjin a Djie, 2003). At the same time the children should learn that the “differing” aspects of the culture they live in, are included in the feelings of familiarity. Being different is the standard!

At the return from the summer holidays Djamella says “hello” to her pupils, and asks them: “Which of you went to Morocco or to Turkey to meet his or her family?” Many hands are raised. The pupils share their experiences of being at home with their families of origin. This teacher has shown an example of “guided openness.”¹ She opens up the space for her pupils to tell about their impressions of the encounter with the members of their father’s or mother’s family; to express their feelings about the long journey by car, passing many borders; to tell about the strange rules of familiar games they played with nephews and nieces; to share the experience of commitment and feeling at home. Teacher Djamella invites her pupils to tell their shared stories, and by doing so she creates a unique history, so familiar for migrant children, being at home in and feeling committed to more than one culture. It is in particular the story of Emmina that attracts the attention of the whole group

We stayed with my uncle and my aunt. My nephews and nieces, are the same age as my brothers and sisters. We always played together, the whole day. Outside we created a kind of marble alley, or rather a bowling lawn, but it is different, there are no marbles of balls, but we use little stones instead. You have to catch the stones. Our father joined us, and he made everyone laughing; we could not stop laughing. He behaved like one of us. At home, here, he is different, he is a strict person, but now we had such a laughter together! I wished he was more like that at home, here in the Netherlands.

Like the classmates, Djamella notices that Emmina’s voice lowered at the end of her story, when she states, “I wished he was more like that at home, here in the Netherlands.” She invites Emmina to tell in more detail what made this game with the little stones so special. Also the other children are invited by Djamella to reflect upon the question about what was so special during their summer holidays. So very special, that even now back at home in the Netherlands they feel a kind of homesickness. This is not a difficult question to answer for the pupils. It is far more complex to find an answer to Djamella’s next question “What can you do here at home in the Netherlands to equal the experience of the summer holidays?” The children take their time, but then Mounir starts to talk

When there is a program on the television, music playing, then my mother starts dancing. I grip my mother’s arm, and then we both are dancing. The moment my father enters the

¹ The concept of “guided openness” was coined by Ter Avest in the discussion of her PhD theses “Children and God” (2003).

room, he is astonished. But then, when he notices my mother giggling and dancing with me, then we all start laughing, and my father joins us dancing. That is so funny, to see my father dancing, we all cannot stop laughing.

Mehmet joins Mounir by telling

I was very happy at home in Morocco, when I went with my father to the mosque. I kneeled next to my father. The mosque was filled with men. I looked at my father and copied the kneeling as the others knelt. They prayed in silence and I kept silent. Last year, one day I was in the living room, very early in the morning. I went to my father and we both assisted my brother who had to fold the newspaper he had to deliver. My brother has to deliver the newspapers every morning. At that moment it was just like in the mosque, so quiet and silent, just my father and me.

The morning circle is filled with unique stories of being at home and experiencing homesickness at the same time. Teacher Djamella notices the strong commitment of the pupils to each other's stories of *golden moments*. She encourages her pupils to nourish these moments. She concludes the morning circle in the following way

By telling about the "*golden moments*" of your summer holiday, and recognizing the feelings of such "*golden moments*" here in the Netherlands, you bring together what is "there" and what is "here". We transformed the feeling of "homesickness" into "feeling at home!"

Similarities in the Approach of the Two Teachers

It is striking that in developing the religious sensitivity and feelings of belonging that are at the heart of interreligious education both Wilma and Djamella practice the psychological necessity with four and 5-year-old children, to create a learning environment in which the children literally "feel" some of the basic principles of living together. Sensibility to what is different and at the same time part of your own identity is a core competency of living together in society full of "strange"-ness of people who adhere to different (religious) traditions.

Both teachers, Wilma and Djamella, create a learning environment that enables the growth of the pupils' sensibility for the experience of interdependency of living together. Wilma articulates the awareness of "something greater than our hearts" named God in the Christian tradition and Allah in the Islamic tradition. She stimulates the flourishing of the articulation of what is "surprisingly new" of each child and her or his family life. Djamella articulates the feeling of belonging and commitment to the family culture, functioning as a "protective wrap" in another culture, that is, the culture of the multi-ethnic Dutch society.

Remarkable in our empirical data is that both teachers in their subjective educational theories and independent of the denominational religious identity of the school, emphasize the need of a safe learning environment in order to learn to live together in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. They both practice this among others by close physical contact with their pupils. They introduce the children to the world of religion and citizenship, sitting at their teacher's knee.

Learning Tradition in a Multi-religious Society

Let us have a closer look at these two ways of learning religious concepts, two different ways of intercultural religious education, two ways that contribute to religious citizenship.

The word “tradition” comes from the Latin *tradere*, to transmit. Thus, tradition is an active process. The teacher works hard to pass on what is of essential importance in her or his life, according to her subjective interpretation of the religious tradition she adheres to. The pupil works equally hard to appropriate it. The relationship between teacher and pupil, instructor and instructee, is crucial. The child learns tradition first by word of mouth and then by participation, and acceptance. Attentive listening and repetition, memorizing, and imitative practising, are key elements in the learning of tradition, both in Christianity and in Islam (cf. Meijer, 2006). That is how the child learns prayers, verses from the Psalms, passages of the Gospels for the Christmas liturgy, or the introductory *Sura* for the *salat* (daily prayers), and parts of the Koran to be recited on special occasions. This is sometimes called the *closed fist* approach, with its concentration on memorization. In this approach, everything is aimed at preparing the child for participation in a life in faith: the transfer of knowledge, the teaching of the children about their tradition, it all serves the aim of socialization into the community of faith.

Both the Christian and the Islamic traditions recognize a phase after that in which the emphasis is on memorization and repetition, namely one in which the pupil reflects on what has been learned. It may be noted, however, that this second phase is not always realized in practice. Asking questions is an integral part of learning tradition. Tradition generates images. The child transforms what he has learned into visual and acoustic images. These images are not always reflected in the world around the child. What the child sees does not always correspond with his imagined idealistic images. The unruly reality leads to questions needing to be answered. The child is impelled to ask questions, on the basis of what he has learnt, in order to explore what he meets in reality. With reference to this, Gadamer speaks of the *negativity of experience* (cf. Meijer, 2006, p. 229): things are not the same as what was passed on by the tradition passed, reality escapes from the cultural impregnated concepts and prejudices. Imbued with these cultural and religious impregnated concepts, the child approaches reality. The difference is emphasized. The child is encouraged by the teacher to notice unexpected elements, things he did not expect and does not understand. The differences throw light on what one knows. Characteristic of this approach is not the avoidance of conflict, but to the contrary, it emphasizes the power of conflict in order to stimulate development.

The *Commitment* to the cultural and traditional background, allows teacher and pupil to explore the recalcitrant reality and to articulate differences. If the child does not come up with questions itself, the teacher will point out things that are different from what might be expected. This process gives the verb *tradere* the color of “guided openness.” The teacher introduces the child to a variety of sources and experiences. The child not only gets to know other texts, but also learns through discussion with the teacher and acquires the art of questioning, debating, and engaging

in dialogue. This is known as the hermeneutic-communicative teaching concept in educational theory, or sometimes more simply as the *open hand* approach. The emphasis is on giving meaning to the elements of culture and tradition, stored in the memory. Old and familiar concepts get new content. The child transforms the tradition passed on to him into his own identity as a citizen in the multi-ethnic society. Confrontation with the differences stimulates the development of one's own authentic religiosity on the basis of the memorized tradition.

Learning Tradition from the Heart

The hermeneutic-communicative teaching concept we have just sketched is, in our opinion, a very promising way of learning about the tradition and being educated as a citizen in a multi-ethnic and interreligious context. It bears a close resemblance to the *interpretative approach* developed and described a decade ago in the United Kingdom by Robert Jackson and his Warwick team, a group of outstanding scholars who figure in international debates on religions and education in Europe and beyond (Jackson, 1997). It is also strongly related to the “Religion für alle”- [“Religious Education for All”] approach developed and practised by the German professor in religious education, Wolfram Weiße, and his colleagues in Hamburg (Doedens & Weisse, 1997; Knauth, 2007).

However, rather than using the dry theoretical term “hermeneutic-communicative teaching concept,” we prefer to use a more down-to-earth and at the same time more inspiring description and coin our approach “learning from the heart.” The main reason for this is that such a vignette really emphasizes the affective component that plays such an important role in learning culture and religious tradition. The pedagogy underpinning such an approach can also be found in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Heart* (cf. Freire, 1997). Freire has so convincingly articulated that reflection and conscientization are of great importance and for a pedagogy of transformation and change, the pedagogy of the heart is indispensable. The heart is directly related to love, and, according to Freire, the power of love for the world and other people is the vital basis for dialogue (Miedema, 2005, p. 45).

Encountering the other, in our view, is the only way to do justice to the affective aspects of the interreligious learning process (cf. Ter Avest & Bakker, 2009b). The encounter with real live people makes communication – especially its affective and emotional dimension – complete. For young children, non-verbal communication precedes, sometimes even replaces, verbal communication. Non-verbal communication very often expresses people's feeling better than the most eloquent words. A passage from a textbook lacks this essential dimension of communication. The shining eyes of a boy when he speaks about acquiring the kneeling behavior of his praying father and his uncles, or the happy look of the girls speaking about her dancing with her mother and her father joining in, tells us much more about the characteristic emanations of feelings of homesickness and belonging in different contexts, than the lengthiest written explanation in a textbook. Texts remain distant from reality, while the impression of a glance gives room for the encounter between

the story-teller and his audience (*cf.* Ter Avest, 2008; Ter Avest & Bakker, 2009a). Children “show” their stories, share their experiences and what they mean to them, and ask each other questions about unexpected aspects. The question “When are you allowed to pray with your father in the mosque?,” or “How did you feel as a ‘bulb’, when the teacher was pouring water on you?,” reveals a living interest in a world the child does not know yet, or a world differing from the stereotyped image the child constructed. Questions invite the story-teller to expand on (the role of tradition in) her own life. “Learning from the heart” opens people’s eyes for the mutuality and interdependency of their relationships in a multi-ethnic and interreligious society. It may be denoted as a promising model of (religious) citizenship education.

Fostering Ways of Guided Openness

The concept of “learning from the heart” as we have outlined above, is characterized by three phases that can be named by the notions of “*acquisition/articulation* (of tacit knowledge),” “*exploration* (of knowledge)” and “*creating* new knowledge together.” In the first phase, the phase of *acquisition/articulation* of tacit knowledge, the child gets to know his own environment and will name it by means of using concepts. Tacit experiences change in worded knowledge. By looking and listening carefully, the child learns at school how to make explicit the many matters that are implicit at home.

In the morning circles, teachers can stimulate their pupils to tell about their sports activities, the celebration of religious festivals or about outings with their parents. Narrations of one child evoke stories from others, thus, pupils invite each other to explain in more articulated wording what happened until they imagine what is represented in the story. In the end the children can agree upon each other’s story as an “Aha”-experience. Both the teachers, in the Protestant school as well as in the Islamic school take care of the identity formation of their pupils, by means of practices that encourage imagination. Imagination as a playful activity which encourages children to imagine each other’s life world, and by consequence enlarges the child’s own life world – which in our view is an important task of school education. Armed with all the tacit knowledge the child has learned to articulate and the new knowledge the child has acquired in the first phase, in the second phase of *exploration* s/he enters the world of the other and is – metaphorically speaking – spying out the new land. The child’s glasses are tinted by her/his newly developed literacy, which determines the view s/he takes on reality. His teachers guide her/him in this meeting with “the other,” and encourage her/him to ask open questions. What the child acquired in first phase, by using an approach that showed similarities with the “closed fist” approach, is now transformed into an “open hand” approach by being questioned and by questioning her/himself.

In our view, the teacher Djamella shows in her classroom conversation in the morning circle an “example of good practice,” in questioning her pupils about their holiday experiences, urging them to go into detail, and inviting them to look for similarities and commonalities in every day life in the Netherlands. The attitude of

“guided openness” which the teacher creates, paves the way for the real dialogical encounter in the third phase of *creating* new knowledge, where the pupils work together to build up a new form of knowledge about living together in a culture characterized by diversity. We have seen how Djamella stimulates her children’s imagination and creativity to construct a “protective wrap,” that is, the new knowledge that helps them face being back home after holidays. Individual feelings of homesickness are changed in a shared “feeling at home.” In future multi-cultural and multi-religious societies, pupils need to develop the competency to create social cohesion and a “dignity of difference” (Sacks, 2007). This newly developed competence includes the art of conversation in its cognitive and affective aspects. It reflects a different attitude toward “the other” as well as the consequence of reflective processes and changed insights into one’s own religious or secular world view and tradition.

In transforming societies and cultures, enduring relationships between people of different cultures and religious or non-religious world views do not just happen. Much of the energy of our societies and school communities ought to be dedicated to fostering the development of the art of conversation and the competency of “dignity of difference,” because “difference does not diminish; it enlarges the sphere of human possibilities. Only when we realize the danger of wishing that everyone should be the same – the same faith on the one hand, the same McWorld on the other – will we prevent the clash of civilizations, born of the sense of threat and fear. We will learn to live with diversity once we understand the God-given, world-enhancing dignity of difference” (Sacks, 2007, p. 209). Interreligious learning as “learning from the heart” encourages people to meet as individuals and as citizens “in dignity,” to encounter each other “from heart to heart.” Such interreligious processes of encounter are part of necessary societal practices that already should start in every Kindergarten through the processes of imagination and participation in the embryonic society of the school. Their aim should be: learning to celebrate religious differences together!

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Using Contextual Approach for Preparation of the Syllabus for Inter-religious Learning

Pille Valk[†]

Introduction

There was a long period in history when religious institutions and schools developed hand in hand, and learning religion formed the main core of education. For centuries religious institutions ran the majority of schools. This is no longer the case. Although the role of religiously affiliated schools is still there, secular schools dominate the educational landscape in many countries. The context of education has also changed tremendously – instead of a quite homogeneous environment we face increasing cultural and religious diversity. These changes challenge RE, demanding re-thinking of its aims and foundations.

In examining developments in RE during recent decades, one can observe a great variety of different models of and approaches to the subject. Among this diversity some unity can be found by looking at one of the general aims of RE in the contemporary pluralistic and multi-faith world – RE is more and more seen as a sphere in which dialogue and understanding may be developed between different worldviews, and fundamentalism, discrimination and intolerance may be resisted. ‘Incarnation’ of these ideas into the actual learning process and classroom action is a challenge that has to be faced by all religious educators in different countries. How to find a dynamic model of RE, suitable for changing societies, and for implementing new elements like inter-religious learning? How to create bases and frames for syllabus design? How to determine the guiding principles for teaching RE in pluralistic contexts? These are some of the complex questions waiting for the answers when developing RE and inter-religious learning in today’s school.

Working on the concept of RE which is adjusted to a concrete situation with certain foci, I have suggested a contextual approach that offers a complex model on how to determine the basis for RE in different societies and contexts. The model of

P. Valk (✉)
University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

[†] Pille Valk died in late 2009, and this chapter is one of her last contributions to the field of interreligious education.

the contextual approach is developed on the basis of my work on the concept and syllabus of RE for Estonian schools (Valk, 2002).

Estonia is a small Baltic country with 1.3 million inhabitants that has an interesting position regarding religious issues. After belonging to the western Christian heritage for more than 700 years, more than 95% of Estonians belonged to the Christian Church. The majority of them (85%) were members of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Peoples' Church. After 50 years of Soviet atheistic regime (1940–1991), when everything pertaining to religion was abolished or strongly censored in the society, and especially in education, Estonia is characterised today as one of the most secularised countries in Europe (Eurobarometer 225, 2005; Halman et al., 2005). Estonia has a long tradition of public debates around RE and also today it is one of the most debated issues in educational developments (Valk, 2006). On the other hand, Estonia has a tradition of non-confessional RE since the 1920s (Valk, 2007). From my point of view, Estonia could serve as a small 'laboratory' to elaborate several specific issues regarding RE. Problems and challenges related to the subject that could be hidden or ignored in the societies, where RE has been taught continuously, occur in Estonian transition society like through the looking glass. So, I hope that the experiences, drawn from the analysis of this particular context could be useful for religious educators in other countries as well.

Main Theoretical Foundations

The wider background of the contextual approach in RE is drawn from the humanistic tradition in curriculum studies. This foundation became inspiring due to the following principles presented by Ivonna S. Lincoln (1992):

1. The importance is placed on openness, plurality, and social justice achieved by co-operation among persons.
2. Attention is given to how knowledge is produced, by whom, and for what purposes. It is also open to the questions about the nature of knowledge itself; suggesting that knowledge may come in many types or forms.
3. Attention is given to the interaction of *context* – cultural, social, and historical – with the process of curriculum development. According to this understanding, pedagogy is connected with the social context.

The second initial point came from the methodology of Formative Curriculum Research. Decker F. Walker (1992) exemplifies it in the following way:

For Formative Curriculum Research it is important to learn about such matters as the readiness and needs of the audience, the value of the content to society and to the audience, the appeal of the planned program to the audience, the receptivity of teachers to it, and its utility and appeal for both students and teachers. Such an approach is usually eclectic in its choice of techniques for selecting data. Formative Curriculum research frequently employs a strategy called triangulation, which uses a variety of simple methods to compensate for their separate weakness instead of using one method that is more controlled and sophisticated but requires more time and resources. (pp. 110–111)

The third theoretical cornerstone falls back on Tyler's rationale for a model of curriculum development presented in the 1940s (Tyler, 1949). The main principle I have drawn from this model is to start the syllabus design from the objectives, and then to determine the educational purposes that are appropriate for the school. The contextual approach, presented here, deals also with the question how to determine these objectives? Next to stating the objectives one has to pay attention on what educational experiences can be provided which are likely to attain such purposes? And next, how can these educational experiences be effectively organised?

To work with the last questions I draw on the ideas of the interpretive approach in RE presented by Robert Jackson (1997). The key concepts in the approach are:

Representation: Religions should be presented not as homogeneous and bounded systems, but in ways that recognise the diversity within religions and the uniqueness of each member, as well as the fact that each member is subject to many influences.

Interpretation: Students should not be expected to set aside their own presuppositions, but should compare their own concepts with those of others: 'the students' own perspective is an essential part of the learning process.

Reflexivity: Students should re-assess their own ways of life; they should be constructively critical of the material they study; and they should maintain an awareness of the development of the interpretive process, reflecting on the nature of their learning.

Next, after introducing the theoretical background of the contextual approach, I will turn to the presentation of the model itself.

Model of Contextual Analyses

To be meaningful, RE must be targeted. It has to address learners' specific needs and expectations, deal with pupils' questions and problems and take into consideration the particular society in which it is taught. This constitutes the context of the instruction. Thus, I argue that context should be an important ingredient of RE. In developing the concept of the contextuality of RE, I draw on the ideas presented by Finnish colleague K. Tamminen (1982).

Contextuality in RE could be understood in two ways. In the narrow sense it points to RE where local material – religious sights, local history events, etc. are included in the learning content (Leganger-Krogstad, 2000). In the broader sense, it refers to the whole social and cultural environment in which RE is conducted. In the following presentation I use the terms 'context' and 'contextuality' in this broader sense.

For analytical purposes, it is possible to distinguish between different aspects of this context, each contributing to the issues one has to take into consideration when developing RE.

1. The historical and cultural background – provides a balanced view of the impact of religions on the historical and cultural development of society, and particular community.

2. The religious landscape and legislative framework – charts the role and influence of various denominations and religions represented in society, community and also in the classroom. Legislation related to religious issues must also be taken into consideration.
3. Attitudes towards and expectations for RE – acknowledges peoples’ expectations, fears, prejudices, etc.; helps to look for the ‘common ground’ for different parties involved into development of RE.
4. The traditions of RE in a particular country – helps to learn from one’s own positive and, especially, from negative and critical experiences; helps to look for the balance between the continuity and innovation.
5. The developments in and experiences of RE in other countries – emphasises the importance of creative contemplation of the experiences of others, and to find new ideas – is there something that could be used in other contexts?
6. RE, the national curriculum and the challenges that education must face in today’s world – acknowledges the confluences and aims of education in general and RE in particular, and helps to integrate RE with other educational activities going on in the school.

These aspects are not the ‘canonised’ ones. As contexts themselves are different, as well the aspects one has to take into account in developing RE may differ. The main point is to determine the aspects that relate to RE and inter-religious learning in particular.

The outcomes of the analyses of the various aspects help to identify the emphasis of, and the main problems related to RE, and choose suitable objectives, learning content, teaching methods, etc. – to create the research-based foundation for RE syllabus (Valk, 2002).

Next I turn to a closer look at the different aspects, and illustrate how the model of contextual analysis may work in developing the foundations for inter-religious RE.

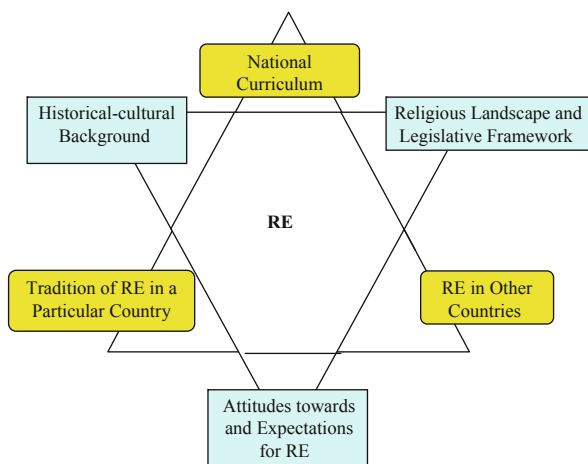


Fig. 1 Model for contextual approach to determine the bases for RE

Cultural–Historical Background: Acknowledging the Roots and Heritage

Historical–Cultural background is related to the context of RE in different ways. First, it is important to identify the religions that have played a role in the history and culture of the particular country, what speciality has been their role in historical events, and how they have contributed to the cultural developments in the past and in the present.

To give a concrete example, let us turn to one specific episode from Estonian history.

The normal development of the Church and RE was broken by the Soviet occupation that began in 1940. Religious Education was banned in schools. (Riigi Teataja, 1940/102, Art. 1011) Under Soviet occupation, atheistic ideology was enforced in Estonia. By means of repressive measures, the Church and Christian faith were banned from social life, Church property was confiscated, and the Theological Faculty at Tartu University was closed. In the 1970s, fewer than 10% of the population openly admitted to being Christians. Official communist ideology saw religion as, ‘the opium of the people’, serving the interests of exploiters and meant to coerce working people to obedience. Everything connected with religion was sentenced to be abolished from Soviet society. All youth organisations were forbidden as well all children’s and youth work performed by churches (Raid, 1978, p. 136). A notable increase in the organization of atheistic propaganda began in the end of 1950s. Courses in atheism became a compulsory part of university education in the 1960s (Valk, 2000, pp. 78–93). Atheist education at schools explained religion as being a relic, something old-fashioned and stupid, meant only for old women and having no place in the modern and scientific world. Careful censorship withdrew all the positive influences of Christianity, Church, and other religions from the discourses on culture and history. Almost all people over 35 (the generation of the pupils’ parents and also teachers!) have experienced the influence of such strong atheistic education.

Developing RE in such a context has to take into consideration the almost missing pre-knowledge on religious issues not only among the students but also evident in the wider society. There is a need to re-discover the role of religion in the country’s history and help pupils to reconstruct the widespread misconceptions in religious issues. Such situation could be characterised as a ‘missing file’ phenomenon – lack of even basic knowledge about religion in general and in its impact in the history and culture, and absence of skills to recognise the appearance of religion in surrounding lifeworld.

The next set of issues emerging from the historical–cultural background is related to the relationships between different religions which have been the relationships in the history and how these relations reveal themselves in the contemporary context? Inter-religious education has to deal with both positive and critical and negative experiences in this field. Again an illustration from our history:

Estonia was baptized in the beginning of the 13th century after almost a 20 year crusade by Germans and Danes. Romantic interpretation of the loss of independence due to violent Christianization became a popular paradigm in the days of national awakening movement in the second half of the 19th century. These emotional interpretations were very skilfully used also by Soviet atheistic propaganda as testimony of the ‘real nature’ of religion. The

slogan ‘So they came with sword and fire’ is a strong part of common knowledge about religion up to present times. (Valk, 2006)

It is obvious that RE has to deal with such topics, give space and time for analysis of these events, to work with historical sources and different interpretations from different perspectives. And always to reflect upon, what there is to learn from history and how this knowledge could be used by today’s students.

The third group of items related to the historical–cultural background of the context where RE is conducted and its relationship to the heritage. What are the religious sites in the neighbourhood one can use as stimulus for learning and getting acquainted with local cultural life? To which religions do they belong? These are just some example questions providing rich material for inter-religious learning.

Importance of relating learning about religion to historical–cultural issues is emphasised also in ‘Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religion and beliefs in public schools’ (2008) worked out by the advisory council of experts on freedom of religion or belief by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The principles state:

Curricula focusing on teaching about religions and beliefs should give attention to key historical and contemporary developments pertaining to religion and belief, and reflect global and local issues. They should be sensitive to different local manifestations of religious and secular plurality found in schools and the communities they serve. (p. 17)

Consequences for IRE – Historical–Cultural Background

1. Historical–cultural dimension in inter-religious learning helps to discover the heritage and its historical roots, to learn about the religious dimension in history and culture. It is important to pay attention to different religions and worldviews, and their impact upon the heritage under study. The aim should be the balanced presentation of the role of religions.
2. Complicated context and critical issues demand RE to be open for discussion in order to help pupils discover and reconstruct the cases of simplified stereotyping and prejudices, and to develop the skills of critical thinking and analysis.
3. The question of how RE can contribute to the growth of mutual understanding between different religious and cultural groups in the communities has to be worked through. These aspects need to be reflected also in the RE syllabus. Hereby, I would like to point to two sides of the coin – pupils have to have a chance to learn about their own tradition as well as to get acquainted with the traditions of other groups living side by side with them.
4. Objects related to the historical–cultural heritage provide teaching–learning resources for inter-religious learning.

Religious Landscape: Facing Growing Plurality

All countries have unique religious landscapes – composition of different religions and worldviews followed by the people. This dimension influences RE at several levels.

First, there are global trends and developments. According to the general overview presented by the Adherents.com database¹ Christians make up 33% of world population with 2.1 billion people. The second largest religion regarding the number of followers is Islam with 21% of world population. The third largest group is made up of agnostics, atheists, secular humanists and people, who answered ‘none’ or ‘no religious preferences’ and it has grown to 16% (1.1 billion people). Around half of them are considered to be theistic, but non-religious. When comparing the numbers from the year 2000, one can see the growth of Muslim and non-religious groups.

When moving down from the global level to the country level, the picture might change. Some countries are more homogenous (e.g. Poland with more than 90% of the population belonging to the Catholic Church), the others have a wide spectrum of representatives to different religions and worldviews. To describe one example in more detail, let us take the case of Estonia that holds in the area of religion a very specific place among the other European countries. It is probably one of the most secularised countries in Europe. The investigation of European values, performed in 1999/2000 (Halman et al., 2005) indicated that people in Estonia are most conspicuous with regard to their alienation from traditional religion. Here the percentage of non-members of the church was the highest – at about 75% (p. 72).

The Eurobarometer survey, ‘Social Values, Science and Technology’, conducted at the beginning of 2005 adds some eloquent details to the mosaic. One of the questions in the query dealt with the nature of religious beliefs. In Estonia, less than one in five declares that they believe in God (16%). By contrast, more than one in two Estonians (54%) believes there is some sort of spirit or life force. At the same time, more than half of all EU citizens believe there is a God (52%) and more than a quarter (27%) believe there is some sort of spirit or life force (Eurobarometer 225, p. 9).

It is obvious that RE in different countries has to take into consideration which denominations are represented in the country. These groups have to be kept in mind when composing the syllabus for inter-religious learning.

In addition to the above-mentioned perspectives, I would like to add one more – it is the school and classroom level. Plurality at this level could serve as a starting point for learning.

According to the principles of the Interpretive Approach (Jackson, 1997), one has to pay attention to the representation of the different religions and worldviews. In addition to the demand to present traditions in their heterogeneity, voice has to be

¹<http://www.adherents.com> (accessed 20 November 2008).

given also to the representatives of the particular tradition. Schools may build up the contacts with local religious communities, to invite them to introduce their religion and culture (not proselytising!). And, in the other hand their places of worship might be visited during the inter-religious learning sessions.

When it comes to teaching learning resources it might be recommended that the representatives of religious communities could be invited to co-operate in the process of working out materials related to them.

Consequences for IRE – Religious Landscape

Regarding the religious landscape the development of IRE has to take into consideration:

1. Which religious communities are presented in the particular society and in the particular community? How religious diversity is present in the school and classroom? Learning about religions and worldviews presented in the community and in the classroom could be a starting point to inter-religious learning.
2. Being informed about the local religious diversity helps find possible parties of cooperation, to get acquainted with.
3. One recommendation could be to involve the representative religious communities into IRE syllabi and resources design.
4. RE can provide possibilities to learn to know local religious traditions, and thus, to contribute to the sensitivity regarding the roots of the local culture.

Legislative Framework: Foundation of Fair Play

There are different ways how the issues related to religion are regulated by the law in different countries. There are countries where some denominations may have a special status – e.g. Anglican Church as an established church in the United Kingdom, or Orthodox church as a state church in Greece. These regulations may have different impact upon RE issues. So, RE in UK state-maintained schools is famous for its inter-religious model, when in Greece for example, RE is taught as a confessional subject. There are other countries where relationships between the state and religious institutions are kept strictly apart – e.g. *laïcité* in France. As a consequence of this paradigm any RE is not allowed in state schools. In addition to this formal level of regulations, one has to look also at the religious landscape, as described above – what role religious communities play in the country's everyday life and how their participation in the public life – educational issues included – is organised?

Legislation particularly related to Religious Education has to be taken into consideration as well – does it state the confessional or non-confessional nature of the subject? Both models provide opportunities for inter-religious learning, but the perspectives may differ. In the first case, a concrete denomination is taken as a starting point (and sometimes even at the end) of studies, in the other case the more or less 'normative' standpoint is not related to any particular religion.

Moving forward to the international level, the documents like Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention of Children's Rights have to be mentioned first, both emphasising the principles of the freedom of religion and thought and the right for education. In the light of these principles one could ask – is it possible to guarantee the principle of religious freedom in the society where people are almost illiterate in religious issues and in inter-religious issues in particular? This strong apologetic argument has to be worked through especially in the countries where there is almost no RE in schools or it is a marginal optional subject available only to a small number of pupils as it is the case, for example, in Estonia (Valk, 2006).

The growing attention to the impact of religions in the public discourse has provided ground for several international documents dealing also with the issues of RE and Inter-Religions learning. The most influential among them is probably 'Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools' (2007). The Guiding Principles offer guidance for preparing curricula for teaching about religions and beliefs, preferred procedures for assuring fairness in the development of curricula, and standards for how they could be implemented.

Consequences for RE – Legislative Framework

1. There is no question, contemporary RE has to correspond to the principles of religious freedom, freedom of thought, and follow the principles of non-discrimination. Toledo principles state that students should learn about religions and beliefs in an environment respectful of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and civic values. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should have a commitment to religious freedom that contributes to a school environment and practice that fosters protection of the rights of others in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding among members of the school community (p. 16).
2. Secular state and secular school principal do not have to exclude the possibilities for constructive cooperation between the state and religious communities on the issues of RE. It is important to set the clear format for such cooperation, with reasoned division of responsibilities regarding e.g. the syllabus design, teacher training and teaching-learning resources.
3. The childrens' rights perspective needs much more attention in the development of the RE program. This topic has several levels – at philosophical as well as political ones. For instance, who has and on what basis does the authority make decisions about the curriculum. And for whom is the RE syllabus designed?

Attitudes Towards and Expectations for RE: Looking for a Meeting Point

As it was said above, RE has to meet learners' questions and interests. In a context like Estonia, where RE is an optional subject, there is also the attitudes and

expectations of other members of the school teaching staff, as well as parents who may have an impact on RE.

Choosing learning content in RE has to take into consideration different interests. On the one hand, there are traditional ‘body of issues and topics’ in RE, but in the other hand, one cannot ignore current developments and challenges, that require reflection in RE. The question about the learning content becomes especially sharp in the context of broken tradition and secularism, as we can see it in Estonia. Probably, revisiting RE learning content with fresh eyes and critical mind is always useful.

Let us turn for a concrete example again to the Estonian context. In looking for the common ground regarding the topic to be taught in RE, I turned to teachers and school headmasters, asking them to evaluate the traditional topics treated in RE classes. The results are presented in Table 1, where ‘T’ indicates teachers’ answers and ‘H’ those of headmasters.

Table 1 Evaluation of different topics in RE by teachers and school headmasters (%) (Valk, 2003)

	Very important + important		Don't know		Not important + unnecessary	
	T	H	T	H	T	H
Bible studies	75.5	54	18	18	6.5	28
Church history	58	53	25.5	22	16.5	25
World religions	92	91	5	3	3	6
Ethics	95	95	4	3	1	2
Religion and science	62	76	20	10	18	14
New religions	50	55	30	18	20	27
Religion and culture	92	81	5	11	3	8
Dogmatics	41	30	25.5	28	33.5	42

Thus the topics Ethics, World religions and Religion and culture were most highly evaluated. Among teachers they earned positive evaluations from more than 90% of respondents. Preferences among the headmasters were similar. The highest place, given to Ethics, indicates the recognised concern about moral developments in the school and society. Here lies the ‘common ground’ for cooperation between religious educators and the school. It is clear that the aspect of Moral Education has to find a central place in the entire RE curriculum.

The most unpopular topic was Dogmatics. It is noteworthy that this topic also obtained the greatest number of ‘Don’t know’ answers. These attitudes most likely indicate an objection to clearly church-related content in RE. The notable difference between attitudes towards Bible studies among teachers and headmasters is remarkable. The reasons for this need to be more closely examined in future surveys.

In choosing the learning content it is also important to ask pupils about their preferences. In the survey among the upper secondary students, carried out in 2005, youngsters were asked to evaluate different topics for RE classes on the Likert scale (1 = not interested at all, . . . 5 = very interested) (Valk, 2007). The following Tables 2 and 3 present the Top 10 and Bottom 10 of these interests.

Table 2 Top 10 of students favourite topics for RE

Topics	Average evaluation
Love	4.18
Different ways to interpret the world	4.05
Meaning of life	4.0
Sexuality	3.99
World Religions	3.95
Happiness	3.94
Destiny	3.94
Natural and supernatural	3.88
Relationships between religions	3.85
Is there afterlife?	3.84

Table 3 Bottom 10 of topics for RE

Topics	Average evaluation
Church and congregational life	2.32
Mission	2.34
Christian churches in the world	2.44
Jesus and his life	2.47
Estonian Church History	2.49
Bible stories	2.51
General Church History	2.54
Bible studies	2.58
Christian festivals	2.61
Prayer and praying	2.62

These outcomes show the students as ‘real children of the secularised society’ where the attraction to traditional religious institutions is almost missing. It is quite obvious that the model of classical confessional RE will not match this context, especially for the optional subject. I do not want to say that traditional objectives and topics of RE are totally out of time, but it is quite clear that if we want students to discover the richness of the religious traditions, we have to find a starting point, where we will meet the interests and questions of our pupils. It also demands creativity to find suitable teaching methods and re-thinking of learning objectives from the perspective of students.

Consequences for RE – attitudes towards and expectations for RE

1. Inter-religious learning has to take into consideration the attitudes towards and expectations for RE in the society. It does not mean that religious educators have

to forget about their intentions, but following the developments in the society, offer hints for ‘updating’ the subject and choosing the topics to deal with and find suitable teaching methods to make learning happen.

2. *Learning about Religion(s)* approach seems to be the most appropriate as well as the best suited for the public schools in the societies like Estonia. Perhaps, an evaluation of a *Learning from religion* approach can reveal the positive learning experiences. This approach to RE should find its place mostly, in parish education, in Sunday Schools and youth work.
3. The sphere of joint interests regarding the RE content seems to lie with the teams related to *World Religions*, *Ethics*, and *Religion and Culture*.
4. Evaluation of RE topics by students (especially in the upper secondary school) highlights that youngsters look forward to the lessons where they can deal with the issues relevant to their everyday life and personal development. This creates some didactical tension for the teachers who have to be able to build bridges between the religious traditions and the contemporary world of young people.

RE in Europe: looking for trends and inspiring experiences

Different Approaches Among the Growing Plurality

I am quite convinced that no model of RE could be *copy-pasted* from one context into some other. But it does not mean that the analysis of the development of RE in other countries and following the current political debates cannot inspire religious educators in all countries to find new perspectives for RE and to learn from each other.

A closer look across Europe reveals that most countries have some sort of RE in schools, be it compulsory or optional. At the same time most countries are experiencing an increase in plurality of beliefs, values, and lifestyles among their population, which is giving rise to questions about whether and what kind of RE policies are appropriate. Following John Hull (2001), existing models of RE can promote education *into* religion, education *about* religion or education *from* religion. The first one introduces pupils into one specific faith tradition. This form of RE could be found mostly in some central and eastern European countries. In a majority of countries this is no longer seen as a task of state-maintained schools, but of families and religious communities.

Education *about* religion refers to religious knowledge and religious studies. Pupils learn what a religion means to an adherent of a particular faith tradition: it involves learning about the beliefs, values, and practices of a religion, seeking to understand the way in which they may influence behaviour of individuals and how religion shapes communities and is reflected in the culture.

Education *from* religion gives pupils the opportunity to consider different answers to major religious and moral issues, so that they may develop their own

views in a reflective way. This approach puts the experiences of the pupils at the centre of the teaching.

Of course, this distinction is somehow artificial, but could be used to identify the main aims and emphases in the different concepts of RE.

But what are the reasons for these differences? P. Schreiner points to the following factors: the religious landscape in the country; the role and value of religion in society; the relation between state and religion; the structure of the education system, history, and politics. Each approach to RE is shaped by a specific composition of different factors (Schreiner, 2007, p. 9).

Schreiner differentiates between two main models of RE in Europe: the *Religious Studies approach* and the *Denominational or Confessional approach* (p. 11). This differentiation refers to the fact that the content of RE, the training and facilitating process of teachers, the development of curricula and teaching materials are mainly the responsibility of the religious communities, or they are involved in this work in cooperation with the state. Where churches and religious communities have a legal say in public education, they see their involvement in education and RE in state-maintained schools, mainly as a service to society and as a field of cooperation with the state rather than primarily as an active nurturing of church members. When RE is denominationally oriented, schools offer different kinds of RE – e.g. pupils can choose between Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim RE. In many cases there is an opportunity for pupils to opt out and to choose alternative subjects as ethics or philosophy. Most of the countries with a Religious Studies approach (e.g. Denmark, Sweden, Norway) do not have a general right to opt out. The general aims in a Religious Studies model of RE are to transmit religious knowledge and understanding, as well as dealing with human experiences. The neutrality of the state and the right of religious freedom are reflected in this approach differently from the way that it is expressed in denominational RE. The Religious Studies approach is carried out under the authority of the state. Instruction is not to be neutral in respect to values but should be neutral in respect to worldviews, including religion, a demand which corresponds to the religious neutrality of the state. From this perspective, this neutrality guarantees that this kind of RE is equally acceptable to all denominations and religions (p. 11).

Schreiner offers a schematic overview of the place of RE in the school system and the different responsibilities:

Responsibility: religious communities	In cooperation between religious communities and the state	Responsibility; schools (state agencies)
Denominational		Religious studies
Voluntary subject	Voluntary/compulsory subject	Compulsory/subject subject

A comparison of the aims of RE from different national contexts reveals similarities. Schreiner points out that many aims of RE include:

- To encourage pupils to be sensitive to religion and the religious dimension of life;
- To provide orientation of the variety of existing religious opportunities and ethical understandings, which are rooted in religious experiences; and
- To give knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and experiences.

Reasons for this convergence may include a central awareness of RE as a pedagogical enterprise and an increasing awareness of the attitudes and day-to-day experiences of the pupil (Schreiner, 1999).

Growing Attention

Policy issues, solutions, and practices in religion and schooling vary in Europe and throughout the world. UNESCO findings published in 2003 showed that out of 142 countries surveyed, RE appears as a compulsory subject in around half – 73 of them – on at least one occasion during a pupil’s first 9 years of schooling (UNESCO Prospects, 2003). In 54 of these countries, the time devoted to RE during the first 6 years of education amounts to approximately 8.1% of the total intended teaching time. Figures for selected European countries are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Number of hours and percentage of teaching time allocated to RE during the six first years of formal education (UNESCO Prospects 2003, 214)

Country	Total amount of hours	Average % of school time
Poland	456	10.3
Norway	332	8.7
Austria	380	8.2
Finland	228	6.1
Denmark	240	5.6
UK (England)	243	5.0
Greece	210	4.8
Romania	170	4.3
Lithuania	143	3.8
Turkey	144	3.3
Slovakia	59	1.4

In the UNESCO survey, the researchers cite a trend of ‘visible increase’ in the proportion of time dedicated to RE as a subject, compared with previous research published a decade ago. As well there has been a reversal of the decline in religious teaching which had marked the past century. They also point out that in the other 69 countries, in which RE does not appear as a distinct subject, it cannot be assumed that there is no religious content in what is taught (Kodelja & Bassler, 2004).

Growing attention regarding the issues related to Religion and RE in particular can be seen in different levels, especially after the 9/11 event. In European politics, one major influence on educational developments is the Council of Europe. The Council is currently taking a strong interest in both the study of religious diversity

in schools and education for democratic citizenship. RE issues are coming up also in connection to intercultural education where special attention is paid to its religious dimension (Jackson, 2007).

European consensus about the need to strengthen the role of religious knowledge in public school education is reflected in several recommendations and recent forums.² In the last Recommendation 1720, adopted on 4 October 2005, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe declared:

‘6. Education is essential to combat ignorance, stereotyping, and incomprehension of religions. Governments must also do more to guarantee freedom of conscience and religious expression, to encourage religious instruction, to promote dialogue with and between religions, and to further the cultural and social expression of religions’,

‘7. The school is an important element in the education and the formation of the critical faculties of future citizens, and also in intercultural dialogue. It shall lay the foundation of tolerant conduct based on respect for the dignity of every human being. It shall teach its students the history and philosophy of all major religions in a measured and objective fashion, respecting the values of the European Convention of Human Rights, and it shall fight fanaticism, effectively. It is essential to understand the history of political conflicts in the name of religion’.

‘8. The understanding of religion is an integral part of understanding the history of humanity and its civilisations. It is entirely different from belief in one particular religion or its practice. Even the countries in which one confession largely predominates must teach the origins of all religions rather than privilege one or promote proselytising’.³

There is a debate among scholars of RE about international agreement on the basic criteria for what should be considered good quality RE, especially in terms of the countries within the European Union. Any such criteria can only be achieved by the way of mutually critical dialogue (Schreiner, 2007, p. 15). It also means that thought needs to be given to the minimum requirements or basic standards for RE that should be guaranteed in all countries irrespective of their special situation. Schweitzer (2002; 2004) has suggested five examples for such standards in respect to RE in schools:

1. Religion must and can be taught in line with the criteria of general education (educational quality).
2. RE is of relevance to the public and must be taught in line with this relevance (contribution to general education).
3. RE must include some aspects of interdenominational and inter-religious learning which are in line with the increasing pluralist situation in many countries (dialogical quality, contribution to peace and tolerance).
4. RE must be based on the children’s right to religion and religious education (child-centred approach based on children’s rights).
5. RE teachers must be professionals in the sense that they have reached a level of self-understanding and professional reflection based on academic work which

²For comprehensive overview, look Jackson (2007).

³Parliamentary Assembly, 4 October 2005 Recommendation 1720 (2005) <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/EREC1720.htm> (accessed 9 June 2006).

allows for a critical appropriation of their religious backgrounds and biographies (professional teaching).

The twenty-first century has brought along several comparative researches in the field of RE. One of them is the special targeted research project ‘Religion in Education – A contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in transforming Societies of European Countries (REDCo).’ The project, financed by the European Commission brings together religious educators and sociologists from eight European countries and nine Universities.⁴

Consequences for RE – international developments in RE

1. There is a developmental trend in several countries from educating into religion towards educating about and from Religion.
2. Recent decades have shown a growing interest about RE is different levels. The subject gains more attention also from the perspectives of politics.
3. RE is often seen as a valuable dimension related to civic education and intercultural education.
4. Documents of the Council of Europe highlight the need for religious literacy as one of the objectives schools have to keep in mind in preparing pupils for the life in multi-cultural world.
5. There is a discussion about the common standards for RE in Europe emphasizing that RE has to be understood as general educational activity, taught by professional teachers, meeting children’s rights and interests, contributing to peace and tolerance.

National Curriculum and RE: Shared Aims and Common Principles

Common Challenges

RE cannot be an island neither in the school nor in the general educational landscape. It has to be integrated into the educational and curricular whole, to be a part of the process with common targets and glimmering goals.

Looking for the intersections between RE and the general objectives and challenges educators have to face in nowadays world; it is possible to look upon this issue at several levels. Let us take, first, a more general level. Jackson (2006) has identified several spheres where the societal needs and general targets of education meet RE:

1. Common values and: e.g. tolerance, respect, recognition, solidarity.
2. Common skills: ability to listen, positive acceptance of difference and diversity.

⁴URL: <http://www.redco.uni-hamburg.de> (accessed 1 November 2008).

3. Common policy principles: endorse democratic/human rights, inclusive for young people of different faiths and philosophies.
4. Common Pedagogical principles:
 - a. Giving young people a voice;
 - b. Addressing issues of representation and stereotyping;
 - c. Developing skills of interpretation: sympathetic understanding and constructive criticism;
 - d. Developing skills of dialogue;
 - e. Reflexivity: personal (identity) issues should be linked with social issues – relevance and motivation.

These are the principles, relevant also for RE. They could be assessed first, by choosing suitable learning content or thinking through the existing teaching materials from this perspective. Second, determine the role in ‘incarnating’ these principles within teaching methods, and creating an atmosphere in the classroom. It is obvious that teacher-centred lecturing methods are not suitable in achieving above-mentioned qualities. Instead, pupil-centred and active learning methods have to be developed for RE.

National Curriculum and RE – Common Aims

Concrete example of how to link RE and inter-religious learning to the National Curriculum presented below comes from Estonia.

When looking at the general aims of education as determined by the National Curriculum for Estonian Schools, one can mention the clear emphasis on moral qualities and educating the whole person (Põhikooli ja gümnaasiumi riiklik õppekava). General targets for school education are stated in the following way:

The aim of schooling is to support the development of the personality who:

1. Has a well-intentioned attitude towards other people, respects their freedom and dignity;
2. Is capable of constructive cooperation;
3. Supports democratic developments in society;
4. Follows the law;
5. Has national identity, acts like a citizen, feels connectedness to Europe and all humankind;
6. Knows and favours own national culture, is acquainted with different world cultures, and has respect towards them;
7. Takes care of Nature;
8. Has trust in him/herself, is upstanding and self-critical;
9. Feels responsibility regarding one's life;
10. Is guided by ethical principles, respects human dignity, non-violence, freedom, justice, honesty, and responsibility;

11. Is sensitive regarding esthetical issues;
12. Evaluates a healthy way of life;
13. Thinks systematically, creatively and critically, is open to self-development;
14. Tries to understand the meaning of the issues, reasons and relations, is motivated to and able to learn;
15. Responsive changing contexts;
16. Understands the necessity of work at the personal and social level; is able to find suitable work.

Several of my students of Religious Pedagogy have mentioned after deeper analysis of these aims that this set of goals seems to belong to the introduction of the good RE syllabus. Anyhow, it seems to be clear that RE has a lot of potential to support the development of the pupils in the direction stated by the National Curriculum. RE's role which supports the achievement of general aims of education deserves much more attention and needs more explanatory work to bring it into peoples' consciousness.

In addition, RE has a role in the integration of different subjects.

It is a didactical truism, known to every teacher that knowledge which is separate and fragmented will be forgotten quite soon. If the learning content of different subjects is separated and isolated into different 'commode compartments', it is hard for pupils to develop a systematic integrated set of knowledge and skills. Thus, it is recommended to the teachers of RE to work through possible links and connections of RE with other subjects. This work will benefit from the good cooperation between the teachers of different subjects.

Consequenses for RE – National Curriculum

1. RE has a potential to contribute to the several challenges education faces in general in today's world; through creative elaboration of the learning content and especially by using active learning methods.
2. General aims of education, stated by National Curriculum, have to be elaborated also from the perspective of RE, if we want RE to be an organic part of school life.
3. There are wide expectations and recognised needs for moral education in Estonian school. It might be a good chance for RE.
4. RE teachers have to pay attention for the possible integrative links between RE and other subjects taught in school.

Conclusion

Contextual analysis has provided a research-based foundation for the RE syllabus in Estonia. However, the benefits of such analysis are not restricted to the syllabus design in a small Baltic country alone. Instead religious educators can use the model

of analysis presented above in their different contexts. The outcomes of this analysis helps to set the aims for RE and inter-religious learning, find suitable learning contents, teaching methods for the classes, and provide firmer positions in the vivid debates around this little subject with great aims. Contextual analysis as an analytical working tool for many purposes. Hopefully, its creative usages can contribute to the development of inter-religious learning in different countries and contexts.

Acknowledgment This research was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Center of Excellence CECT).

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Multifaith Multicultural Youth Mentoring: Young People Creating a New Agenda for a Diverse Australia

Nadine Liddy

Introduction

The *Multifaith Multicultural Youth Mentoring (MMYM)* is an innovative group mentoring programme developed and delivered by the Centre for Multicultural Youth, with the support of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, in Victoria, Australia. The programme is designed to strengthen dialogue between young people from multicultural, multifaith backgrounds and mentors from the corporate, community, faith and government sectors, and increase young people's participation and engagement in the wider community. In doing so, the *MMYM* builds the social capital of young people from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds, educates and enriches the adult participants, and facilitates social inclusion and cohesion.

By facilitating dialogue and engagement with others from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds, the programme provides a safe space for multicultural young people to explore their complex and multiple identities; the interaction between culture, faith and belonging; and for mentors to engage with diverse young people – beyond stereotypes and essentialised notions of culture, religion and ethnicity. This in turn builds young people's confidence and skills to participate in social change at the local and broader community levels, and claim their place in Australia's national community. The programme is a youth-led initiative, delivered within a youth participation framework and evaluated using an Action Research methodology.

This chapter begins with an outline of CMY, including its philosophical underpinnings, followed by an exploration of the broader global and Australian socio-political context within which the *MMYM* programme was developed. While CMY has delivered multifaith programmes and activities from time to time since its

N. Liddy (✉)
Centre for Multicultural Youth, Carlton, VIC, Australia
e-mail: nliddy@cmy.net.au

inception in 1988, the *MMYM* programme emerged in response to a particular socio-political climate of fear and misinformation about cultural and faith diversity and a subsequent increase in government funding for multifaith and interfaith activities to strengthen harmony and social cohesion.

The chapter then provides details of the *Multifaith Multicultural Youth* programme including background, frameworks that have informed its design and delivery, the programme model and structure, and evaluation findings. While the programme has been delivered three times over a period of 12 months, the case study for this chapter focuses on the first programme, which was delivered in early 2007 at RMIT University and was externally evaluated.

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)

The Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) is an Australian community-based, non-government organisation that advocates for the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. While young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds demonstrate high levels of strength, resilience and resourcefulness, some young people within this group also face particular barriers to accessing services and opportunities, including language, culture, religious affiliation, unfamiliarity with Australian systems and processes, racism and discrimination. These factors can place this group of young people at social and economic disadvantage within Australian society, which in turn can increase their risk of social isolation and marginalisation. A targeted response at both the policy and service delivery levels is critical to support young people's sustained participation and engagement in Australian society, and CMY undertakes a range of programmes, projects and policy initiatives to achieve this – of which the *MMYM* programme is one.

In supporting young people, CMY combines policy development and direct service delivery within a community development framework. It considers community development as the most effective model for addressing structural disadvantage and building strong, resilient¹ and inclusive communities. Fundamental to programme and policy responses is a recognition that young people have unique experiences and knowledge, and are best placed to articulate the issues impacting on their lives and identify appropriate solutions. Programmes like the *MMYM* are designed to harness young people's experience and knowledge, resource them to engage in debates about issues that affect them and contribute to social change at the local and broader community level.

¹See Coventry, Guerra, MacKenzie, and Pinkney (2002), p. 42.

Youth Participation

The *Multifaith Multicultural Youth Mentoring* programme is delivered by CMY's Youth Participation team. This team delivers a range of innovative leadership and mentoring programmes within the arts, environment and education sectors. These programmes aim to build the confidence and resilience of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to become active citizens in their local communities and take leadership roles in influencing services and structures. CMY also provides opportunities for young people to develop skills through volunteer work, traineeships, student placements and paid employment.

Socio-political Context

Global and National Socio-political Context

The *MMYM* programme has developed in a global context of increasing interfaith or multifaith initiatives over the last decade. While interfaith activities have long occurred internationally between different faith communities, their role in facilitating social cohesion and addressing the causes of racism and intolerance have become particularly pertinent in the contemporary world. Changing demographics and cultural and religious diversity; globalisation and its impact on the nation-state; the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington in 2001, Bali in 2002 and London in 2004 and the emergent fears around a perceived 'clash of civilisations' between Islam and the West (Cahill, Bouma, Dellal, & Leahy, 2004; Huntington, 1993) have prompted a rise in (and Government support for) multifaith or interfaith initiatives in Western countries with diverse populations, including Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom.

While it is important to note that the Australian (and arguably the global) socio-political environment has changed since the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the recent proliferation of interfaith and multifaith initiatives has occurred in a (much broader) context of race and cultural diversity as an ever-present and complex part of Australia's national identity and nation building,² as well as the election of a socially conservative Liberal Government in 1996 and a number of global and domestic events.

²The Australian nation has long had an uneasy relationship with people from non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds, as is evident in its treatment of Indigenous Australians (the foundations of racism in Australia's history originate in the dispossession of Indigenous Australians from their land) and its complex relationship with immigration. In relation to immigration, successive governments have moved between exclusionary policies, based on a fear of the (non-Anglo-Saxon) 'other', and more inclusive ones – tempered always by the pre-eminent requirement that immigration be controlled by the state in the national interest – that promote tolerance and understanding of cultural, religious, ethnic and racial diversity.

The election of the Howard Government in 1996 marked a move away from bipartisan commitment to Multiculturalism³ and the beginning of a period where race became a more acceptable part of mainstream political discourse, moving from the periphery of Australian political discourse to the centre. This period saw the emergence of a more exclusionary nationalism increasingly centered on race, where the Federal Government and many media and political commentators, generated and utilised a politics of fear (of the ‘other’) in the conception of the Australian nation.⁴ This was evident in the Government’s response to a number of key (and sometimes coinciding) events of this period – including the Wik Native Title decision in late 1996, gang rapes committed by Australians from Lebanese backgrounds in 2000, the terrorist attacks in the US in 2001, the subsequent ‘war on terror’, increasing numbers of Middle Eastern asylum seekers arriving in boats between 1999 and 2001,⁵ the *MVTampa* incident in 2001, the Bali bombings in 2002 and the race riots in Cronulla, Sydney in 2005.

With a shift away from Multiculturalism and the emergence of a more exclusionary nationalism⁶ the place of cultural diversity in the construction of Australian national identity was undermined significantly. In place of valuing and celebrating cultural diversity, the dominant political discourse both reduced culture to essentialised or homogenous constructions [Poynting and Noble (2004) describe this as ‘racist imagining’ (p. 4)] – e.g. Arabs, Muslims, Africans, Asians, Middle Easterners – and instilled a fear of the ‘other’. National identity and belonging had become grounded in the marginalisation of the ‘other’ – in particular, but not exclusively, asylum seekers, those from Arab or Middle Eastern backgrounds, Muslims and Indigenous Australians, who had become ‘the folk devils of our time’ (Poynting & Noble, 2004, p. 3).

³Multiculturalism was articulated in the 1970s as formal policy with bi-partisan support represented an acceptance of cultural diversity within the bounds of commitment to national institutions and reciprocal responsibilities (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 1989) and was considered a progressive way of imagining the Australian nation.

⁴Poynting, Noble, Tabar, and Collins (2004) describe this as ‘an adroitly managed fear campaign in which national integrity and well-being became entwined with issues around border security, crime and policing, and cultural harmony’. As anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment increased, criticism of multiculturalism was a way of managing cultural diversity and social cohesion (Poynting, Noble, Tabar, & Collins, 2004, p. 3).

⁵The Government’s response to asylum seekers arriving by boat, including the 2001 development of the so-called ‘Pacific Solution’, epitomised this new politics of fear and race. The ‘Pacific Solution’ comprised of legislative and military components, as well as the establishment of detention centres, offshore in the pacific region.

⁶This period also saw the introduction of a Citizenship Test based on “Australian values” and the removal of “multicultural” in the name of the federal department responsible for immigration affairs – the *Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs* became the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Citizenship. Further, in response to a number of violent incidents involving Australians from Sudanese backgrounds in 2007, the then Immigration Minister, Kevin Andrews, proposed a reduction in the immigration intake from African countries.

Rise of Racism/Discrimination

This climate of marginalisation and fear had specific implications for migrants, refugees and Muslims in Australia. Not only had culture and cultural background become politically loaded, but this had become enmeshed, in popular discourse, with faith identity. In particular, being Muslim and overtly identifying as such (e.g. wearing the *hijab*) had become highly politicised. Wearing the *hijab* was now a statement about belonging and difference (Mirza, Senthilkumaran, & Ja'far, 2007, p. 42) and many people from Muslim, Arab or Asian backgrounds, including young people, experienced unprecedented racism and discrimination.⁷ Many were targeted because they were perceived to be Muslim (through their name, dress or physical appearance), and this included those from Middle Eastern, Arab or Asian backgrounds, regardless of religious affiliation. Those who were most at risk of being targeted were those more easily identifiable as Muslim or Arab – e.g. by name or dress.⁸

For young people from culturally diverse backgrounds, the experience of racism and discrimination threatens personal and cultural identity (Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004, p. 79) and can have a detrimental impact on young people's mental health, psychological development and capacity to negotiate the transition to adulthood (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2007, p. 11; Western Young People's Independent Network (WYPIN), 2003). WYPIN considers racism to be a key barrier to social inclusion, as it can impact on young people's participation in education, employment or recreational activities, diminish young people's sense of connection and belonging to their community and broader society and can create a sense of marginalisation and isolation. It can 'reinforce young people's feelings of insecurity and discomfort and emphasises the differences between them and "other" Australians' (WYPIN, website, accessed 20/8/08).

It is within this context that Australia has seen the rise of a more organised and structured interfaith or multifaith movement.

⁷For example, see Poynting, and Noble (2004) and the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2004) *Isma* report. While young people from culturally and faith diverse backgrounds experience racism and discrimination, both explicit and implicit, as an ever-present reality, these reports document the increased incidents of racism and discrimination in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 and other global and domestic events.

⁸Women wearing hijabs were particular targets, with many women reporting verbal abuse and some reporting having their hijabs physically torn off (Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004).

Multifaith Dialogue – a Response to Global and National Socio-political Context

Government Policy Context for Multifaith Dialogue Initiatives

Although a multifaith or interfaith movement has existed at the local level in Australia for some time (both pre and since 2001⁹), a number of initiatives at the federal and state government levels have supported the rise of this movement in Australia since 2001 – as a specific contribution to addressing marginalisation and discrimination, building respect and understanding for cultural diversity and strengthening social cohesion. Further, these initiatives have occurred in and are supported by a legislative framework at both the state and federal level that protects human rights and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity and religion.¹⁰

At the national level, the *National Action Plan to build on social cohesion, harmony and security* (NAP) was developed in 2005–2006 in order to respond to pressures faced by the Australian communities ‘as a result of increased intolerance and the promotion of violence arising from events around the world and in Australia since 2001’ (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) website, accessed 20/9/08). The NAP was designed to address marginalisation, promote understanding and dialogue among all Australians and build on existing government programmes (DIAC website, accessed 20/9/08). Implementation of the NAP has occurred through a number of activities supported by federal and state governments. These include the *Living in Harmony* grants programme which provides funding to non-government agencies to ‘promote social cohesion and address issues of racial, religious and cultural intolerance’ (DIAC website, accessed 20/9/08).

⁹There has been a proliferation of multifaith or interfaith initiatives since 2001, including, Australian Partnership of Ethnic and Religious Organizations (APER0); Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews and the Jewish–Christian–Muslim Association; Centre of Melbourne Multi-faith and Others Network (COMMON); the Interfaith Centre of Melbourne; Home Encounters; Darebin Interfaith Council; Griffith University Multifaith Centre and LaTrobe University’s Centre for Dialogue has convened a series of dialogues between Christians and Muslims (Cahill, & Leahy, 2004, p. 11).

¹⁰Including: the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, the Racial Hatred Act 1995 (RHA), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (EOA), Racial and Religious Tolerance Act of Victoria 2001 (RRTA), the Multicultural Victoria Act (MVA) 2004 and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In the context of the multifaith movement, it is interesting to note that the first ruling on the RRTA was the case of the Islamic Council of Victoria against Catch the Fire Ministries in 2004, where the Islamic Council of Victoria claimed that the intention of a seminar held by Catch the Fire Ministries was to vilify Muslims rather than to discuss Islam. This case generated widespread public attention, both locally and internationally, and was considered by many to have initiated multifaith dialogue about how faith is viewed and expressed and the definition of acceptable limits or parameters to exploring faith.

Living in Harmony has directly funded projects that promote interfaith dialogue and understanding.

At the state level, the Victorian government, in particular through the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), has played an important role in supporting interfaith and multifaith activities and programmes as part of its broader policy framework of Multiculturalism¹¹ and goal of promoting community harmony and social cohesion. The *Promoting Harmony Initiative* is designed to ‘encourage greater understanding and dialogue between all cultural and religious groups’ and promote Victoria’s multifaith and multicultural diversity¹² (VMC website, accessed 20/9/08).

It is within this policy context that the *MMYM* programme was designed and received funding from the Victorian State Government.

Multifaith Multicultural Youth Mentoring Programme (MMYM)

The following section provides details of the *MMYM* programme, including background, rationale, programme model and evaluation. While the programme has been delivered three times over a 12-month period, this case study focuses on the first of these. Each programme has been delivered with flexibility, according to the number and diversity of participants (e.g. age, religious affiliation, gender, cultural background), and availability of mentors. The *MMYM* programme has developed and is delivered within a youth-led, youth participation framework, informed by young people’s experiences and perspectives and enacting young people’s desire for safe, facilitated opportunities to meaningfully discuss their faith identity and spirituality.

CMY intentionally used the term ‘Multifaith’ in preference to “Interfaith” in the programme title, as acknowledgement of the often complex interaction between faith and multicultural young people’s identity. It was felt that ‘multifaith’ is a more inclusive term, encompassing young people who identify as having multiple faiths and/or spirituality/spiritualities that may sit outside defined religion. In this way, it allows for flexibility and more accurately reflects multicultural young people’s diverse and dynamic interaction with faith and faith identities.¹³

¹¹The Victorian government understands diversity as a defining feature for the State and one that delivers social, cultural and economic benefits. This is achieved through equal citizenship, a sense of belonging and tackling material disadvantage among people from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background (VMC, 2008, p. 3).

¹²This initiative supports formal dialogue between community leaders, young people and government and a range of community-led projects, including: Multifaith Multicultural Youth Forums and Network, a Multifaith Leaders Forum and Advisory Group and a grants programme to support interfaith networks and multifaith projects.

¹³As such, the term ‘Multifaith’ includes young people who identify as having a particular religious affiliation, e.g. Islam, Christianity, Buddhist, Hindu Sikh, as well as those who identify as agnostic or spiritual, positioning themselves outside traditional religions or faith communities.

Programme Background and Rationale

In July 2006, the Victorian Office for Multicultural Affairs¹⁴ hosted a Multifaith Multicultural Youth Forum in partnership with the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) and the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY),¹⁵ as part of its *Promoting Harmony Initiative*. At this forum, youth participants identified a need for greater opportunities for young people to participate in leadership and mentoring opportunities in the government, community, faith and corporate sectors. It was felt that young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, with often limited networks due to the migration experience, commonly experienced difficulty accessing opportunities in these areas. They often do not have access to the information and networks through their families and communities necessary to explore the different pathways for professional and personal development in these sectors.

Youth participants recommended a group mentoring programme be established to provide an opportunity for dialogue between young people and workers in these sectors.

Programme Model

In response, CMY, with support (including funding) from the Victorian Multicultural Commission, developed the *MMYM* – a group-mentoring programme to both facilitate connections and strengthen understanding between community leaders and young people from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds. The *MMYM*, through weekly meetings, allows both young people to gain a greater understanding about opportunities for participation in organisations, and staff in these sectors to develop a greater understanding of the issues facing and strengths offered by young people from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds.

In this way, the programme would also address the need for initiatives that promote learning about other cultures and address misinformation and stereotypes as a response to multicultural young people's experience of racism and discrimination¹⁶ (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2007). More broadly, the programme

¹⁴Merged into the VMC in May 2007.

¹⁵The forum was attended by over 150 young people from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds who discussed various issues of concern, including; education about diversity, racial and religious discrimination, interfaith/intercultural dialogue and youth participation.

¹⁶The Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) *Isma* Report noted that participants in this project identified a lack of knowledge and misinformation about history, culture and faith as the major underlying cause for the rise in prejudice against them and that this lack of knowledge and misinformation has been exacerbated by a number of domestic and international events, including terrorist attacks in New York, London and Bali between 2001 and 2002 (HREOC, 2004, p. 4).

would also support the process of integration,¹⁷ settlement and acculturation,¹⁸ and strengthen social inclusion and cohesion.¹⁹

Design and development of the programme (i.e. incorporating multifaith dialogue into a group mentoring, youth participation model) was based on the following input from young people and good practice in this area:²⁰

- Faith is an important part of the complex and multiple identities negotiated by refugee and migrant young people,²¹ as well as their search for meaning and a sense of belonging (both because and regardless of the broader political context) – despite the perception of Australia as a strongly secular nation.²² Faith, however, as one component of identity (e.g. alongside culture, peer, ethnic, socio-economic, political or geographical), may not be a young person's primary identifying feature. As such, multifaith dialogue initiatives with young people require recognition of their multiple and sometimes fluid identities. While faith has a focus, this must be understood in the context of respect for diversity more generally, e.g. culture, gender, life experiences, migration, education and employment.

¹⁷Integration, as defined by Valtonen (2004), is 'the ability to participate fully in economic, social, cultural, and political activities without having to relinquish one's own distinct ethno cultural identity and culture' (p. 74). This is distinct from assimilation, which requires the relinquishment of cultural identity. (This definition is also distinct from the policy of Integration that followed 'Assimilation' and preceded Multiculturalism as a government policy to manage culturally diverse populations.) A preferred definition would be that of Castles, who refers to a pluralist approach to integration, where culturally diverse societies recognise diversity while encouraging equal and full participation without relinquishing cultural identity or being absorbed into the mainstream (O'Sullivan & Olliff, 2006).

¹⁸Berry (2003) defines acculturation as a process of cultural and psychological change that follows intercultural contact and an inevitable component of adapting to living 'interculturally'. This suggests that this process is two-way, where responsibility to learn, change and adapt is shared by the 'host' country (and dominant culture) as well as migrants and/or new arrivals.

¹⁹There are three key components of social cohesion particularly pertinent to the MMYM programme: tolerance and respect for diversity; support for positive interactions, exchanges and networks between people and social inclusion or participation in various aspects of civil society and a sense of belonging.

²⁰In particular, good practice in this area was explored and documented in a CMY forum held in 2007, exploring interfaith dialogue and its role in promoting social harmony Refer to Olliff (2007).

²¹For this group of young people, identity formation is influenced by a sense of belonging in terms of nationality (and government agendas around nation-building), cultural identity and family, and by the response from the broader society to themselves and to their community (Francis & Cornfoot, 2007, p. 24). This means that these young people often develop and negotiate complex notions of identity that are flexible and dynamic – juggling the intersection between family, cultural and faith communities, peers and the broader society (Poyniting, Noble, Tabar, & Collins, 2004).

²²While Australia is perceived to be a strongly secular nation, secularity is not necessarily synonymous with an irreligious or non-spiritual nation (Cahill, Bouma, Dellal, & Leahy, 2004). And, as Mirza, Senthilkumaran, and Ja'far, (2007) found, there is an increasing spirituality among young people in general, whether they affiliate with a particular religion or not, and this is partly a response to the fragmentation and insecurity felt in contemporary societies (characterised by globalisation, terrorism, widening gaps between rich and poor, etc) (p. 5).

- Sharing one's faith and culture can have positive health and well-being benefits. Further, a strong faith identity can be a significant protective factor for many multicultural young people in negotiating the challenges of integration and resettlement and, for those who come to Australia as refugees or humanitarian entrants, the trauma of the refugee experience. Some young people from refugee backgrounds may have been forced to flee their country of origin due to human rights violations that included persecution based on faith/religious affiliation or expression. Engaging in dialogue about faith identity and sharing faith perspectives in a trusting environment can be particularly important for these young people in integrating their traumatic past – including restoring a sense of safety and trust, identity and meaning, dignity and value (Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, 1996, p. 34).
- Group mentoring²³ as an appropriate mentoring model for refugee and migrant young people. CMY has implemented both a group mentoring programme, and, as a pilot programme, a combined one-to-one mentoring and peer support programme. While there are times when a 'one-to-one' mentoring model would be promoted, particularly with young people in transition or those more 'at risk', the evaluations conducted on both mentoring projects identified that a group mentoring model is often more appropriate model for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. It is more consistent with a collectivist cultural context, where young people can take time, in a relaxed group environment, to develop relationships with mentors and peers of their choice – as trust is built and without the pressure of a prescribed one-to-one relationship. It also allows for a larger number of young people to participate and benefit from the learning and development opportunities offered by the programme.

The programme has also been informed by principles of dialogue. Camilleri (2004) describes the interfaith dialogue process as needing to 'break through the material and psychological walls that have been painstakingly built to protect institutional interests and the politics of fear (and) encourage and draw sustenance from an emerging conception of citizenship that understands the value of both commonality and difference, and enables them to co-exist, illuminate and reinforce each other' (p. 9).

Principles of dialogue include: listening as well as speaking; journey – discovery of the 'other' and the 'self' (through engagement with and not simply recognition

²³Group mentoring involves group activities where one person mentors a number of young people. These activities are implemented regularly in a series that enables relationships between the mentor and young people to develop organically and the nature of the relationship between the mentor and young people will vary depending on their individual connection. (Victorian Youth Mentoring Association website, accessed 2/9/08). Group mentoring may also involve a number of mentors meeting regularly with a group of young people, or may be based around a peer mentoring model, where young people mentor, often slightly younger, peers.

of the ‘other’); nurturing compassion through telling and listening to stories; and sharing the memory of the past (LaTrobe University, Centre for Dialogue, Education Dialogue Project, Centre for Dialogue website, accessed 20/8/08 and Camilleri as cited in CMYI, 2007, p. 3). Formal and informal dialogue opportunities can make a significant contribution to tackling discrimination, marginalisation and intolerance and building social cohesion²⁴ and building understanding and respect – values that are fundamental to responsible social and civic relations.

Consistent with these principles, the *MMYM* provides an opportunity for young people to engage with adults in an open, respectful exchange of ideas, exploring difference and similarity as shaped by faith, gender, life experiences, education, faith, etc.

Programme Objectives

With these frameworks in mind, the *MMYM* programme seeks to

- Develop the confidence, decision-making and leadership capabilities through group mentoring for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds;
- Increase the understanding of diversity among young people and volunteer mentors from different faith and cultural backgrounds through information sharing;
- Promote avenues for ongoing dialogue between young people and representatives from the corporate, government, community and faith sectors in Victoria;
- Explore barriers and develop strategies to increase the participation of migrant and refugee young people within the corporate, government, community and faith sectors and;
- Increase the awareness and understanding of issues facing refugee and migrant young people by representatives from the corporate, government, community and faith sectors.

Target Group

The programme targets young people who are aged between 18 and 25 from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds, and who are interested in exploring opportunities for

²⁴Social cohesion for young people from multicultural backgrounds would consist of an environment where they feel welcomed, have trusting relationships, participate in community activities, have social connections that support well-being and a sense of belonging have strong relationships with peers and family, have goals for their life and are active participants in the various institutions and benefits of their society (e.g. education, employment, housing, income, decision making and community support) (O’Sullivan & Olliff, 2006; Social Exclusion Unit, United Kingdom, 2000; Wyn & White, 1997)

further study, work and/or participation in activities within the government, faith, sport and business sectors. A partnership was developed with RMIT University²⁵ to facilitate youth participation, recruitment and delivery.

The term 'multicultural' encompasses young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including those born overseas (refugees or migrants) and second (or later) generations.²⁶ While the term 'multicultural' is useful for categorising young people from cultural and faith diverse backgrounds, CMY acknowledges the multiplicity and diversity of experiences of young people encompassed within this term. In some cases the term 'multicultural' includes Indigenous Australians, and in the context of the *MMYM* programme, it also includes young people from 'Anglo-Saxon' Australian backgrounds.

While there currently exists a variety of mentoring and leadership programmes for young people, there is a need for group mentoring opportunities that target young people from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds and provide opportunities to engage with adults from a range of employment sectors.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee for the programme was established at the initial stages of the programme to provide expert advice, direction and support to the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project. The committee is comprised of young people from the Multifaith Multicultural Youth Network, as well as representatives from CMY, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, RMIT University, Victoria University, and meets bi-monthly. Members also attend the *MMYM* Graduation Celebration.

Structure

The programme is structured to create a safe environment for young people to explore their complex identities, share the place of faith in their lives and foster an appreciation and understanding between all participants, young people and mentors, of faith in the context of (cultural) diversity more broadly. This results in gaining skills in cross-cultural interaction that are essential for living in a cohesive multicultural society.

²⁵RMIT University is a large university centrally located in metropolitan Melbourne, with a significant proportion of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. It has a history of delivering a range of programmes, including mentoring, to address the needs of this diverse student population.

²⁶Within this category, young people may have come to Australia as refugees, humanitarian entrants or as migrants, or may be second-generation migrants where at least one parent is born overseas.

This dialogue process is facilitated by a group mentoring model, where 20–25 young people and 6–8 mentors meet weekly for 2 hours, over 8 weeks (consistent with the university semester), to explore different topics. A Project Officer was employed to develop and deliver the sessions, and a Youth Facilitator (a 25-year-old Sudanese young man from a refugee background) was employed to co-facilitate the sessions and contribute to programme planning and evaluation.

The programme was delivered in the middle of the day, over ‘lunchtime’, agreed on according to mentor and mentee availability. The 2-hourly sessions were structured with a 20-minute break for lunch. This lunch break is an important part of the programme. As unstructured time where food is shared, participants could engage in informal conversations and further build relationships.

The sessions were structured around weekly themes, with introductions, short reflection on the previous session, icebreaker activity and small and large group discussions. Combining small and large group discussion was designed to support young people to develop confidence and skills in sharing and discussing their perspectives with others. A small group setting also facilitates relationship building among participants. Each session was structured to make links between macro and micro, or more personal, discussion in order to contextualise young people’s experiences and build skills in critical thinking. Sharing personal stories in a trusting and respectful environment, where others listen and affirm, can also be a powerful dynamic in building confidence and connections with others.

A ‘graduation’ ceremony is held at the end of the programme, giving participants an opportunity to share with a broader audience, their reflections on the programme and aspirations for the future. A number of facilitated meetings were also convened over several months following the conclusion of the group. The need for these opportunities was identified both by participants and through the Action Research evaluation process. Evaluation findings highlighted the importance of providing ongoing opportunities for contact between all participants.

Recruitment of Young People

While the programme developed partnerships with RMIT, participation in the programme was not limited to young people studying at the university. The key selection criteria for mentees included:

- Aged between 18 and 25.
- Diverse backgrounds (culture and faith).
- Geographic location.
- Confidence in and engagement in a group dynamic.
- Demonstrated leadership or involvement in faith or community activities.
- Willingness to commit to life of the programme.

Methods for recruitment of young people included: advertising in the CMY 'e-news' (quarterly electronic newsletter), website and Youth Participation Register, emails circulated by RMIT, providing information sessions at RMIT, attendance at youth groups and forums, and distribution of flyers through various networks – including specific faith communities and ethno-specific services and programmes. Emails and information sessions were also followed up with phone contact where appropriate.

The application process consisted of completing and submitting an application form, and attending a group interview. The interview was designed to provide an opportunity for young people to articulate their expectations and learn about programme expectations, including time commitment and level of interest in engaging with the community, government, faith and corporate sectors. It also provided the Project Worker with greater knowledge of participants (i.e. their skills and knowledge), as individuals and in a group setting to assist in session planning.

Applications were received from a diverse group of young people and 24 young people attended a group interview. Their expectations for the programme included developing communication skills and networks, an opportunity to share personal stories, discussion of issues including discrimination and multiculturalism and exploration of employment and educational pathways.

Participants came from a range of cultural backgrounds, with diverse faith identities, including Indian Sikh, Chinese Buddhist-Christian, Lebanese Muslim, Sudanese Christian, Chinese Australian Catholic, Japanese Atheist, Cambodian Chinese-Christian, Indonesian Catholic, Hindu and Jewish. Some participants had come to Australia in the last 5 years as refugees or migrants, others were third or fourth generation migrants, and a small proportion was international students. Levels of English language proficiency varied among participants. While the majority of participants were university students, some had deferred their studies and combined part-time employment with caring for family.

Recruitment of Mentors

Mentors were approached individually, through personal/collegial contacts, according to their leadership and management skills and experience, and were targeted to ensure representation from the government, community, corporate, sport and faith sectors. All those contacted were enthusiastic about being involved in the programme, considering it an important and refreshing component of their work, an opportunity to engage directly with young people and develop young people's skills as part of broad succession planning. The mentors attended an induction²⁷ evening which provided them with an opportunity to meet each other, gain an understanding of the programme and discuss roles, responsibilities and expectations. Mentors' expectations included development of ongoing relationships between mentors and

²⁷All mentors underwent a police check.

young people, support for young people in developing their leadership skills and an increased understanding and awareness of young peoples' concerns. A number of mentors stayed on for the second and third programmes.

Weekly Sessions

The section below provides an overview of the weekly sessions, including overall content and outcomes, based on worker observation logs, participant evaluation forms and informal discussions with young people and mentors after the sessions.

Session 1: Young People, Diversity and Values

The first session was designed for young people only, to provide an opportunity to get to know each other and develop group expectations. Providing the young people with this time together before meeting the mentors was important in developing the group dynamics, confidence levels and relationships. A team charter was developed and an activity facilitated reflection on the concept of values and how values are developed and shaped by culture.

Outcomes of the session included celebrating diversity within the group, exploring ideas of difference and similarity, and acknowledging the importance of listening to and engaging with diverse perspectives. This session also established a safe group dynamic, fostered a deeper connection between young people and facilitated confidence in participating in a large group setting.

Session 2: Concepts of Home and Citizenship

This session focused on exploring concepts and sharing perspectives on home and citizenship. It included a group discussion about the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen and participants were asked to draft a citizenship test for an imaginary country.

Outcomes of this session focused on exploring difference and similarity, and young people particularly enjoyed the opportunity to engage in a controversial issue. Mentor contributions were important as they provided valuable insights into the issues – e.g. offering a government perspective in relation to citizenship and citizenship tests.

Session 3: Multifaith Awareness

This session explored similarities and differences between faiths and the intersection of faith and culture. A panel of guest speakers from the Jewish Christian Muslim

Association (JCMA) spoke personally about their faith and its place and value in their lives, as well as providing background to the JCMA, and the significance of the JCMA in a pluralist society such as Australia. This was followed by some vibrant group discussion which focused on specific faith-related conflicts such as Israel and Palestine.

Outcomes of the session included more critical engagement from young people, who valued the opportunity to engage in discussion and debate about complex issues. A challenge for the facilitators of this session was ensuring inclusive participation throughout the discussions.

Session 4: Sustainability

This session explored environmental sustainability and strategies to achieve this. A mentor working at the Victorian organisation, Environment Victoria, led the discussion, allowing participants to explore definitions and understandings of sustainability. Participants shared personal stories, experiences and ideas relating to water, transport, waste and energy. The session concluded with a group discussion about the ability to implement change, where this might begin and how it might be achieved.

Outcomes of this session included learning about how different faiths and cultures use resources, the differences between generations in terms of perceptions and use of resources and practical strategies for achieving sustainability.

Session 5: Civic and Government Engagement

This session was structured as a mini ‘2020 Summit Forum’ with young people participating in roundtable discussions on Indigenous Australia, Australian Governance, Communities and Families. The questions and background papers were drawn from the Federal Government’s 2020 Summit held in April, 2008, with small groups discussing each topic and developing strategies to address identified issues.

Outcomes of this session included exploring definitions and concepts of ‘community’, the place of ethnic and religious identity in creating community and a need for the programme to engage with indigenous Australians to facilitate greater knowledge and understanding of the issues facing this group of Australians.

Session 6: Multifaith Awareness

The session provided an opportunity for personal reflections on faith, with individual young people giving a brief talk on the significance of their faith in Australia. The session also considered the place of religion in Australia – exploring the current role

religion does and should play in a range of settings, including politics, the workplace and the broader community.

The key outcome of this session was the value all participants placed on sharing personal stories with others in an environment of respect and celebration of diversity.

Session 7: Media and Communication

This session focused on exploring the role and functioning of the media (what and how reports are developed), with presentations from a mentor and a guest speaker from the media sector. Outcomes of this session included an increased awareness and understanding of how the media works and the importance of critical analysis of and engagement with the media to address stereotypes.

Session 8: Graduation

The final session is a graduation ceremony held on campus at RMIT and attended by all participants as well as key stakeholders – including programme-related and family members. Young people and mentors were invited to talk individually about their experience of the programme and how they might build on these experiences and new skills. Participants are given certificates acknowledging their participation, food is provided and this session was videotaped. This is an important opportunity for recognition and celebration of participants' achievements, skills and knowledge and important relationships that have been developed among all participants.

Programme Evaluation

Methodology

An external evaluator was contracted to conduct an evaluation of the *MMYM* programme using an Action Research framework. Applying some of the general principles of Action Research (e.g. participation, collaboration, flexibility), quantitative data collection included a weekly Participant Feedback Form (provided at the end of each sessions to both mentors and mentees), and qualitative measures included: audio-visual feedback (using 'vox pop' style documentation conducted by youth participants) that was 'published' and accessible, filmed graduation speeches, structured phone consultation interviews with mentors and mentees and structured interviews with both the Project Worker and Youth Facilitator. The Action Research cycle of 'Plan', 'Act', 'Observe' and 'Reflect' was incorporated at all stages of the programme (e.g. reflections and observations were recorded in an 'Observation Log')

at the end of each session by the Project Worker and Youth Facilitator and opportunities for reflection with participants were provided at the beginning of each session) and findings have informed the development of each new programme.

Findings

The evaluation concluded that the programme was overwhelmingly successful in meeting its objectives. There were numerous referrals from both young people and mentors for the programme delivered in second semester, and four mentors continued to volunteer their time.

Evaluation findings in relation to the programme objectives, include:

- Mentees learnt new skills, including public speaking and leadership skills, and felt more confident in sharing and discussing their perspectives on faith and diversity. Young people developed their understanding of a range of contemporary issues, and the complexities inherent within these issues. They felt more confident and motivated to engage with local and broader community structures to effect social change, including being a bridge between their local faith/cultural communities and the broader community. In this way, they are supporting the process of integration and facilitating social cohesion beyond the parameters of the programme. A number of mentees and mentors commented that ‘What has begun here will continue to grow afterwards ... meeting people, sharing and learning from others will support our future endeavours both personally and professionally.’
- While a lack of time was frequently identified as a frustration, the session structure (with small and large group work, informal sharing of food and combining micro- and macro-discussions), based around the group mentoring model was central to facilitating a trusting, respectful, non-judgmental environment. A number of mentors and mentees also commented that this model was dependent on the combined skills of both the Project Worker and Youth Facilitator. Participants engaged in a two-way learning process, exploring complex and sensitive issues, and sharing personal perspectives, while suspending judgment of others. As one young person commented, ‘there wasn’t necessarily agreement, but it was a place where we were accepting of everyone else’s opinion’. This led to an increase in the confidence and leadership skills (e.g. critical thinking, decision-making, public speaking) of young people, as well as increasing mentors’ awareness and understanding of the experiences of multicultural young people. Young people valued highly the opportunity to engage with adults from the corporate, government, sport and community sectors and learn from mentors’ experiences and knowledge. Many young people had not previously had such opportunities.
- The opportunity to share personal stories (including faith, spirituality, migration and settlement journeys) and perspectives, and build confidence and trust

to do so in a safe group setting, was considered a profound experience for both mentors and mentees. One mentee stated that the programme provided him with an “unparalleled experience . . . engaging with diversity in a trusting and dynamic environment has been a significant time of (personal and professional) growth.”

- This exchange increased participants’ understanding of diversity and fostered the development of friendships. One young person commented that the programme “was more than just a group. It was about friendships and friendships are what break barriers down”.
 - It also allowed some young people to make a link between, and feel some resolution about, their past, present and future. For some, this meant better incorporating their life experiences before arrival in Australia, with the present, and plans for the future.
 - Exploring concepts of diversity in terms of similarity and difference, unity and disparity was a highly valued outcome for participants and one they considered essential for living in a multicultural society. Participant reflections revealed that young people are comfortable not only conceptualising these dichotomies, but accept and value them as an integral part of the Australia in which they live. Young people identified that the value of multifaith discussions was learning about and respecting other faith and cultural perspectives as well as participating in genuine dialogue. They also identified the challenges of engaging in multifaith dialogue as finding areas of connection or similarity rather than focusing on difference, seeing beyond stereotypes and negotiating the intersection of politics and religion.
 - Providing a safe space to discuss faith also allowed some young people to strengthen their faith identity and resulted in an increased confidence to express this. For some young people, where they may not have overtly identified with a particular faith prior to the programme commencing, a faith or spiritual identity, nevertheless, emerged and they felt more confident to express this.
 - Young people’s confidence in critiquing issues and expressing their opinions was strengthened as the programme provided a legitimate and safe space to discuss and explore a range of important issues, including faith. Some young people commented that this was the first time they had felt the confidence to share and explore their opinions in a group setting, with both adults and peers.
- Understanding of diversity among young people and volunteer mentors from different faith and cultural backgrounds was increased and stereotypes were challenged.
 - All participants increased their understanding of faith and cultural practices/expression, and the value of faith and culture to individuals, communities and broader society. Many young people reflected on the environments in which they had grown up, feeling that they had limited or no exposure

to or engagement with other faiths. Through personal encounters with others from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds, the programme challenged stereotypes and misperceptions of other faiths and cultures. One participant commented that ‘the program has allowed us to break through the barriers of our stereotypes (that the media often perpetuate) and make human connections through friendships. We talked about things that matter, explored what makes us diverse and celebrated this.’ Another participant articulated their learning as ‘Although we have different faith and cultural backgrounds, we all share the values of acceptance, love, faith, respect, trust – we just express them in different ways’.

- Mentors developed a greater awareness of the issues and concerns of multicultural young people, and how young people would like these addressed. They have a greater awareness of the personal and professional assets and strengths that diverse young people bring to different situations. Mentors commented that they had gained more than anticipated from involvement in the programme – listening and learning from diverse young people, gaining a stronger appreciation of faith and cultural diversity, and feeling energised and invigorated by the perspectives and potential of the young people. One mentor commented that she was encouraged and hopeful about the future, knowing that these young people would shape and lead the future of our multicultural, multifaith community and nation. Another commented that he ‘had been inspired to take young people seriously’, and another, that it had been ‘an extraordinary honour to listen, learn and be inspired by the stories, experiences and ideas shared by the mentees’.
 - Some mentors, however, would have liked more opportunity to develop relationships with individual young people, based on previous involvement in one-to-one mentoring programmes.
- Barriers to participation of multicultural young people in the corporate, government, community and faith sectors were explored and avenues for ongoing dialogue between young people and representatives from these sectors in Victoria have been established.
 - Some young people have undertaken paid and volunteer work with professional organisations through their interaction with the mentors, while others have become more engaged in activities within their communities.
 - Young people have gained more knowledge about vocations and career pathways and increased confidence to interact with prospective employers, decision makers and leaders, who will facilitate greater access to these sectors.
 - Mentors have an increased understanding and awareness of the skills and assets that young people can bring to the workplace. For example, participation in the programme has allowed them to see how language barriers can be overcome, to appreciate the determination and ability of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and the insight and understanding that comes from bridging cultures and languages.

Conclusion and Future Directions

CMY recently secured funding from the Victorian Multicultural Commission for the delivery of Phase 2 of the *MMYM* programme. Phase 2 will build on the evaluation findings of Phase 1 and recommendations for future programmes. Accordingly, it will continue to use a group-mentoring model, supported by a Project Worker and Youth Facilitator. Such a model is perceived to be fundamental to good practice in multifaith dialogue with young people from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds. Key components of Phase 2, as informed by Phase 1, include

1. The programme will be restructured into two parts and be delivered over two semesters. Young people and mentors will be required to commit to the programme for the duration of two semesters. This will address participant feedback about lack of time for in-depth discussion and continuity between sessions/across the programme; provide opportunities for dialogue on particular areas of interest (e.g. faith); support the development of youth-led initiatives; allow for more in-depth discussion and application of leadership concepts; and provide a range of methods for exploring issues and topics. It will also facilitate the development of deeper and longer-term relationships between young people and mentors in accordance with best practice mentoring principles with culturally diverse young people.
 - a. Part 1 will involve a total of nine, weekly, 2-hour sessions covering a range of topics such as Multifaith awareness, Australian values, Indigenous Australia and sustainability.
 - b. Part 2 will involve young people working with mentors in small groups for support with the development of youth-led initiatives, participation in other networks/programmes or further dialogue about issues of shared interest or concern. This will address participant's desire for more in-depth discussion and application of leadership concepts – as they apply to family, faith and the local community context. It is hoped that the small group work will facilitate greater connections between participants with other young people and/or organisations. There is also potential for additional young people to be recruited for participation in any youth-led initiative – e.g. a forum or event. While undertaking the small group work there will be two opportunities (after an initial meeting to organise small groups) for all programme participants to meet, provide updates and share lessons learnt.
2. The provision of opportunities for one-to-one mentoring opportunities and/or brief mentors more thoroughly on the structure, goals and expectations of the programme, explaining the group mentoring model.
3. The programme will target a smaller number of young people – e.g. 15–20 (rather than 20–25 in Phase 1), and will extend the age range to include young

people aged between 18 and 28 years.²⁸ This will also allow for more in-depth discussion about leadership concepts.

4. The programme will support two young people from the pilot *MMYM* to develop a documentary about the programme. Consistent with an Action Research approach to evaluation, they will film the *MMYM* and activities as well as conduct individual interviews with participants and mentors. The documentary will provide an important record of the programme which may be utilised to showcase the programme – including highlights, and issues explored through the dialogue and small group work. This will address a desire to embed the evaluation process more comprehensively into programme delivery.
5. Conclusion of the programme will be marked by a celebration at the end of the academic year to recognise the contributions and acknowledge the lessons learnt from mentors and young people.
6. The programme will also explore possibilities for further engagement with research opportunities, in order to capture and situate the programme in good practice in this area.

Through the delivery of Phase 2, the *MMYM* programme will continue to be an innovative contribution to the dialogue project, empowering young people to celebrate diversity and shape the future of cohesive, multicultural, multifaith communities.

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²⁸In order to support ‘older’ young people who, through the course of migration, have previously missed out on leadership training opportunities.

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Balancing the Particular and the Universal in Inter-religious Education

Afroza M. Nanji

Introduction

At an Interfaith Youth Council meeting in Calgary, Canada, in 2008, participants were seated together sharing stories from each of their traditions. The stories were related to the shared virtue of compassion. A Jewish participant spoke of the Shiva ritual from his tradition. He relayed a recent experience he had with Shiva in which family and community members gathered to unite in the mourning of a dear friend's tragic death. The community supported each other in this time of need by transferring the focus from the individual self to the collective. A Sikh participant shared that in her tradition the first way of helping someone is by ensuring they have had something to eat. That is, once the community has met a needy person's physical needs they can offer support to alleviate a person's other problems. A Christian participant tells us of how sacrifice of time, treasure and talent comes from her faith in Jesus Christ and the sacrifice she made. She recently expressed this by inviting someone in her cafeteria who was eating alone to join herself and her friends. A Bahá'í participant shared a teaching of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í tradition. If a person who has helped another expects to be helped because he has been generous, then the help he provided in the past has no value. And, if a person helps another only because he was once helped, then what he is about to do has no value. Helping others should be for the sake of helping in of itself, without any expectation of a return.

Perhaps, the participants did not know offhand what to share when they were asked to bring a story, symbol or ritual of this shared virtue: compassion. However, it was in the process of asking their Rabbi or Priest or Imam and/or their religious education teacher and parent, and by developing a response that they became educated in the depth of their own tradition. By sharing their stories they articulated their faith and became confident in the identity and depth of their own traditions

A.M. Nanji (✉)
IDEA Youth Initiative Calgary, AB, Canada
e-mail: afroza.nanji@gmail.com

and in those of their neighbours. The shared virtue of compassion was then put into action by the multi-faith group through the development and implementation of a service project in the community.

In a time of increasing contact between people of the world, it is important to consider what will shape the personal and collective identity of young people and the communities they form. This chapter will consider the forces involved in shaping global and local youth identity and the increasingly obscure line between them. It will then discuss the inception, development and impact of an inter-religious youth initiative that contributes to a deepened individual religious identity, increased understanding between diverse religious communities and coming together to work for the common good.

A Discourse on Identity

Globalization: A Contemporary Force on Identity

An understanding of identity must start with an exploration of the context within which identity is being formed and re-formed. Since “globalization will define the world our children inherit” (Ross-Holst, 2004, ix) one is compelled to understand the implications of globalization on a young person’s sense of identity. Interestingly enough, what will define the world is itself multidimensional in nature (Hebron & Stack, 2009) and difficult to understand in its entirety. There are various perspectives on its cause, effect and expressions. Of these, Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hillard (2004) describe four domains that are at the heart of new global impulses affecting youth. They are “globalization of economy and capital; globalization of media, information and communication technologies; large scale immigration; and globalization of cultural production and consumption” (p. 14). Although each domain can be examined in isolation of the other, they are in fact inter-related and together are reshaping the experiences of youth. Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hillard (2004) go on to describe two resulting spheres: Difference and Complexity. As the boundaries between people fade, difference becomes normative. When young people study, work and live amongst others they are no longer doing so with others who are similar to themselves but rather in a heterogeneous environment. This environment of people stems from different national, linguistic, religious and racial backgrounds. As individuals from diverse backgrounds come together in new political, economic and cultural ways, Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hillard (2004) describe a resulting sphere of complexity. Hermans (2003) narrows this down to cultural complexity.

What is the result over time, of diverse people encountering difference and complexity? Hebron and Stack (2009) share the positive result of a unifying global culture where increased understanding results from open communication and interaction. They also highlight an alternate perspective pointing to the fear that a proliferation of global practices, symbols and outlook will result in homogeneity and lack of authentic cultural identity. The erosion of one’s cultural identity stemming from the blending of identities will result in hybridization according to

Groff (2006), whereby new communities will form which have taken components of others' identities and adopted these as their own. Yet Groff (2006) acknowledges those that believe local and indigenous cultural practices cannot be engulfed into a unified global culture due to beliefs and practices that will insulate communities from being entirely blended with others.

Others claim the result of diverse people coming into contact is not homogenization but rather a resulting emphasis on cultural difference (Meyer & Geschiere, 2003). The spheres of difference and complexity must therefore create a desire to delve deep into one's traditions with a corresponding sense of closure and purposeful contact with others. This creates reinforced heterogeneity and new oppositions through "fixed orientation pts and action frames" (Meyer & Geschiere, 2003, p. 2). According to the authors, the result is individual self-interest taking priority over the common or social good through the affirmation of old and newly constructed boundaries.

These perspectives on globalization and its effect on aggregate identity pertain to various segments of the population, for no one can entirely and forever be untouched by these forces. It is of particular interest to explore the impact of globalization on youth identity as the stories that open this chapter suggest. "Youth are active players in making of new globalizing spaces" (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 8), yet scholars of globalization have not engaged enough with questions of youth culture (Maira, 2004) along with why and how they create globalizing spaces. Maira (2004) has developed the notion of youthscape to offer an approach that would link youth culture and globalizing processes and continues to work in developing this concept. Having explored the broader force of globalization on identity, it would be of interest to narrow in on localized forces exerted by religious communities on young people.

Localization: Youth and the Continuity of Religious Traditions

A significant concern of religious communities is whether their youth will develop a secure sense of religious identity. Religious identity is connected to belonging to and feeling solidarity with a particular group (Phan, 2006). In order to engage youth communities have developed youth programmes, committees and support groups. Youth are encouraged to get involved in religious education classes, partake in religious rituals and festivals and many times are encouraged to assume leadership and mentoring roles (Hermans, 2003). In the post-modern world, boundaries between religious groups have become blurred, so religious identity and religious belonging have been seriously weakened (Phan, 2006, p. 166). Whether religious communities share this perception or whether they have an innate need to pass on their traditions, the prevalence of youth programming is indicative of their desire to successfully engage their youth. According to Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard (2004), it is important that religious communities differentiate between ascribed or imposed identity and that which is achieved. Sense of belonging is superficial when

identity is ascribed or imposed. It is, however, authentic upon acquiring *achieved* identity. It is when a young person has developed a sense of achieved identity that he or she truly feels “I am a member of this group”; thereby decisively incorporating elements of religious faith and practice into one’s sense of self. It is more than official membership in a religious organization and regular participation in its life and activities (Phan, 2006). Ideally, it is a profound sense of commitment and vocation. This is the hope of religious communities. That even in the face of difference and complexity that globalization presents, young people are rooted in their traditions, have a secure sense of belonging that informs their outlook and conduct.

According to Ammerman (2006), there are two trends which pose the greatest challenge to passing on religious faith to young people: Diversity and Scepticism. The first challenge has been examined earlier in the chapter as the resulting sphere of difference posed by forces of globalization. Diversity is more apparent due to the increased contact and interaction that exists between individuals. The interaction may result in a person taking components of diverse traditions and adopting them as their own. Ammerman (2006) describes how exposure to diverse religious traditions and expressions results in a dislodging of youth from traditional communities and a tendency towards individualism in religious matters. This occurs and is mainly due to faith becoming “a personally internalized meaning system that may combine elements from the variety of traditions one encounters, yet not being accountable to any of them” (p. 40). Therefore, one can no longer be clearly identified as belonging to one religious community. This leads to a young person turning inwards, to make a solo journey since it is challenging to find others who have adopted similar traditions and expressions. The second challenge of scepticism is gaining strength due to the continual rise of the scientific method as relayed by Ammerman (2006). With time, questioning has become an increasing right and commendable practice amongst young people. An increase in systematic, rational inquiry as led theologians to try and make religion believable to the rational and scientifically attuned mind. For example, there is an increased focus on moral precepts rather than on mythological appropriation. A focus on morality has resulted in a growing tolerance and indifference to particularities with a resulting “we’re all the same aren’t we?” attitude. An opposing reaction to the scepticism young people may experience is the development of sectarian communities. They would encompass strict rules that emanate from the idea that identity would be strengthened through unwavering beliefs and clear guidelines for behaviour. Thus one reaction to scepticism is the merging of faith with modern sensibility and tolerance. The resulting risk would be indifference. Alternatively is the reaction to retreat into “anti-modern communities” (Ammerman, 2006, p. 43) with the resulting risk of mutual fear.

The question of how faith can be effectively passed on to the next generation so that “religion is a source of moral and sacred grounding?” (Ammerman, 2006, p. 37) is the ultimate question of religious communities. However, do the challenges of diversity and scepticism have to possess negative overtones and appear insurmountable? Do they have to result in dilution of one’s religious identity or belonging to an insular community that is afraid of its young people being exposed to the “other”?

The next section of the chapter encourages a simultaneous possession of a global and local identity that is engaged with diverse others whilst being sustained by an achieved sense of belonging in one's religious community.

Traversing the Blurring Boundary of Global and Local Identity

Amidst the context of difference and complexity that is resulting from increased contact and interaction amongst people, amidst the tension between flow resulting in homogeneity and closure resulting in new boundaries and amidst the desire of religious communities to engage youth, is a young person developing an identity. Our identities are multilayered and multivocal (Eck, 2007). In fact, the external diversity one is exposed to many times will mirror an inner diversity that stems from one's ethnicity, country of birth, country of residence and religious affiliation.

What skills if developed will support a young person living in a global society and yet co-existing with local identity and culture (Hebron & Stack, 2009, p. 97)? The skills stem from being able to manage difference. The ability to adapt when necessary and consider multiple perspectives will serve young people well (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hillard, 2004). Not only will this encourage youth to live peacefully amongst diverse others, it will serve as a trampoline off which synergies can be created. By encountering difference and embracing it, young people are setting themselves up for growth. Managing multiple perspectives requires strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hillard, 2004). Ultimately, youth need a form of human intelligence that enables them to problem solve and freely, fully and respectfully argue within a framework of difference. That is they need intellectual humility (Aga Khan, 2008). That is the awareness that there is always something to learn from diverse others.

Who Am I?

Balancing a global and local identity must start with personal search. As Taylor (1994) eloquently shares, the background to the modern ideal of authenticity and to the goals of self-fulfilment and self-realization requires a search. Being true to one-self means being true to one's own originality, which is something only an individual him or herself can articulate and discover (Taylor, 1994 p. 31). However, the process of discovery and the formation of one's identity cannot be developed in isolation from others. This stage where identity is negotiated is an important one for young people to spend time in. It is a testing phase whereby interaction with others exposes an individual to similar and different perspectives and outlooks. According to Taylor (1994), "identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by misrecognition of others" (p. 25). With this exposure one's identity matures and becomes one that is truly their own. Thus, movement from an ascribed identity to one that is negotiated and then ultimately achieved requires interaction and exchange with

others. It is this achieved identity recall that enables a sense of belonging on the part of a young person to a religious community. To take it a step further, one's identity formation is enriched not only by interacting with others but with others who are different from oneself. Interacting with diverse others that globalization has brought a young person in contact with, develops necessary cognitive and communication skills and contributes to one's identity formation. It is the exposure to diverse backgrounds and viewpoints that encourage a young person to reflect on their own. Therefore, as Taylor (1994) mentions, discerning one's identity does not mean that he or she works it out in isolation, but that one negotiates it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal with oneself.

Who Are You?

The transmission of knowledge from the perspective of religious education can be approached through mono-religious, multi-religious and inter-religious mediums. For the purposes of coming to know the other, this section will examine inter-religious education which Hermans (2003) claims is not a neutral description of religions but a dialogue between adherents of different religions. Hermans (2006) continues on with four defining characteristics of inter-religious education. First, it is development-oriented. It contributes to development of the self. This is in part due to the need to acquire knowledge to share in the process of dialogue. A learner needs to research, question and form an opinion or response to share with other learners. This process contributes to developing the self. Second, it is social-oriented. It involves interaction with others through articulation and listening. Although self-reflection and independent study are key components, ultimately these are shared in a setting where learners share a social space.

Third, inter-religious education is mediated. That is, it requires methodology and tools to enable the interaction to be captured in a social framework. For example, the tool of storytelling mediates the learning. Lastly, inter-religious education is meaning-oriented. Hermans (2003) does not elaborate, but one can determine ways in which the learning can be meaningful for learners. For example, incorporating reflection, artistic expression and action are ways in which to add meaning to the learning experience.

Lum (2006) suggests that inter-religious education results in a creative blending of traditions. Perhaps one does acquire new perspectives and interpretations. However, the result is not a hybridization of identities but rather an understanding of other religions in a "lived" context. For youth, religion seems most appealing when it is learned about by seeing how it is lived. In daily life, amongst all the challenges that daily life brings with it, how is one's religion lived? What aspects of one's religious practice infiltrate into daily life and what do other young people hold sacred? This is inter-religious education that best answers: Who are You?

Lived religion situates religion within culture and "examines how we are shaped by religious idioms, how we use them and what we make of ourselves and our

world” (Orsi, 2003, p. 172). When an individual wants to ask “who are you?” it is in order to understand another’s religion in the circle of friends and family amongst who they live, the memories they hold, be they their own or inherited, and how religion informs their sense of place in the world within which they live. Religion matters but not as authoritative texts or doctrines but rather as it was discussed and practiced amongst bonds of friendship and family. The question arises: Is this knowledge useful? According to Orsi (2003), this approach makes studying religions socially relevant. That is “it directs attention to institutions *and* persons, texts *and* rituals, practice *and* theology, things *and* ideas” (Orsi, 2003, p. 172) Jackson (2004a) suggests that students should be exposed to religion that reflects real lives of others with personal interaction with them. So, religion should be presented in terms of relationships between individuals, groups and wider traditions.

At this point it is of interest to examine the nature with which we ask Who are You? Guttman (1994) highlights the difference between tolerating another and respecting another. When someone is tolerated, it is felt there is no threat or discernable harm to individuals. When someone is respected there is agreement that there needs to be an attempt to understand them. Diana Eck stretches her audience to consider going beyond tolerance and respect to engagement. Eck (2007) reminds her audience that there is a tendency to focus on religious extremism when in actual fact the focus should be on pluralism which are practices and movements that knit communities together. Pluralism, Eck goes on to say is neither enumeration of difference nor celebration of diversity in a spirit of good will. It is the engagement of difference in often difficult and creative ways.

One such creative way is suggested by Groff (2006) when he presents an alternative to the worldviews of homogeneity and segmentation. He recommends exploring a worldview of unity in diversity. That is, a unity around a collective commitment to preserve one’s particular identity and a simultaneous commitment to learn about others in a mutually enriching and intentional way. It is this form of education that enables youth to have thoughtful and clarified identifications with specific communities and with a global community as well. Gardner (2004) argues that youth need knowledge of other cultures and traditions as an end in and of itself as well as a means of acting civilly and productively. Thus, to promote plurality, society needs a new public space for religious dialogue (Gupt, 2006). Upon asking “Who am I and Who are You”, one needs to ask “What can we do together?” It is this action component that creates a new public space for religious dialogue and as Patel (2007) claims allows religiously diverse young people to come together for the common good.

IDEA Youth Initiative: A Canadian Story of Inter-religious Education

The IDEA Youth Initiative a national not-for-profit organization in Canada was conceived to respond to the increased diversity and interaction brought on by globalization and the strong desire on the part of local religious communities to instil religious values and a sense of belonging in their young people. The IDEA Youth

Initiative was developed to create a new space for young people to come together and be comfortable with religious discourse. One of its programmes is the Interfaith Youth Council.

The Interfaith Youth Council brings religiously diverse young people together to dialogue on the diverse expression of shared virtues. The virtues are then put into action through service projects in the community. The programme aims to contribute to raising global citizens who are confident and rooted in their own religious identity but who realize that in order to live amongst one another in mutual trust and loyalty, and to positively work for the common good, they need to insightfully and profoundly come to know the other. Thus, the programme encourages young people to ask: Who am I? Who are You? What can we do together? The action component is a very important one in the triad of questioning. Acting on what has been learned through self-reflection, articulation and listening transfers learning into measurable outcomes. It is empowering for young people when they see they can come together as diverse individuals and be guided by their beliefs in creating positive social change in the community.

Development

Over the last 5 years, inter-religious programmes have spread in Calgary, Canada. The Interfaith Network, a grassroots initiative, brings Calgarians together once a month to various places of worship for a tour and dialogue. The Muslim Christian Dialogue group brings Christians and Muslims from diverse traditions once a month to dialogue on set topics. The Canadian Council of Christians and Jews which has been meeting for over 5 years has a chapter in Calgary that explores concepts in Christian and Jewish theology and religious practice. Various initiatives of change and organization that have taken a multi-religious perspective recently have brought religiously diverse communities to watch and discuss a movie: *Imam and the Pastor*. Presently, a multi faith committee has started to meet to explore diverse religious communities coming together for a Peace Walk and a Trilateral Committee is working together to form a declaration of peace and peaceful resolution of conflict. These are but a few of the dozen or so programmes that now exist in the city. Historical participation in these initiatives was by clergy, staff of religious organizations or volunteers appointed in organizations in a leadership capacity. Over the last 3 years the participation has broadened to include interested Calgarians. However, upon looking around, it had been a rare occurrence to see youth present at these events. Has there not been a space created for youth, have they not been adequately encouraged or are they generally apathetic about inter-religious dialogue?

Upon researching what inter-religious youth initiatives exist in North America, the Interfaith Youth Core in Chicago, USA, founded by Dr. Eboo Patel was discovered. Attending the organization's National Conference in May 2006 motivated the development of an interfaith youth initiative in Canada. However, there was one pressing question. If an Ipsos Reid public opinion research poll in 2004 showed that 74% of Canadians believe that interfaith dialogue would have a "positive impact"

on their community, where and how should this dialogue occur for young people? Although an innate realization of the value of an inter-religious youth programme for Calgaryans existed, the need and value of this in the city was determined by meeting with individuals. These meetings occurred with Priests, Pastors, Rabbis, Imams, other leaders of congregations and diverse council or board members of different religious communities. One-on-one interviews communicated general excitement and support for an inter-religious youth programme in Calgary. One caution that was communicated was that in more conservative traditions parents may fear dilution of their children's religious identities. It was the communication of this fear that encouraged a broader needs analysis. An extensive concept testing exercise was undertaken in August 2006 to answer whether an interfaith youth initiative would be valued and supported in Calgary. This entailed circulating a concept statement describing the initiative and requesting feedback in the form of an electronic survey. There were 100 Canadians from varying age groups who were surveyed. Both genders and diverse religious traditions were represented. The participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire and circulate it to three others. There were 81 individuals who participated in the survey. Based on the assumption that each person circulated the survey to three others, as was requested, the response rate was 27%. Of the 81 survey respondents, 71 felt there was a need for IDEA and 4 were unsure. No one claimed there was not a need for IDEA. Some of the comments received were:

Yes. What is most exciting about this project is that it is intentional dialogue. Many young people of various faiths are in contexts today where they interact, but the intentionality of education and action is rare.

Absolutely. Bringing a cross section of young people together to work on issues is always a great idea. Today, more than ever, we need to begin to develop relationships with people different from ourselves so we can see the "person" in them, instead of simply associating them with a group who we may have learned stereotypes about.

Absolutely! It can begin in Canada, a country with a history of tolerance for diversity then we can continue to countries willing to look towards creating a culture that values pluralism.

Pragmatically, yes. A more pressing need is for objective, non-confessional education about religion.

Yes . . . but one that moves beyond simply discussion of ideological differences to practical action and social change . . . without understanding the lived cultural experience, a discussion would not have much appeal or success beyond a mainstream audience.

When survey participants were asked to suggest service projects for the group to engage in, they responded in three ways:

Firstly, specific examples of organizations and initiatives that would benefit from interfaith youth involvement were provided. Examples included: United Way, CUPS, Food Bank Mustard Seed, projects related to the cultural and religious based conflicts taking place in the world today, clean-up projects, working with the homeless and immigrant aid societies. It was mentioned that it was important that connections should be made between the projects and the deeper issues they represent.

Secondly it was communicated that "the project should be generated by the group". One respondent claimed: "The focus needs to be on facilitating a process where the participants figure out what's actually meaningful to them and carry out action in the world around that.

It's important to have them identify real issues in their lives, and then to foster a sense of agency and the sense that they can indeed do something to create the world as they would like to see it."

Lastly examples of advocacy were given such as: "Drafting an amendment or bill to have the city of Calgary recognize the ethnic diversity within this city, creating a directory of religious groups across the city, creating one big map tracing the ancestry of the diverse religious groups , producing a film/documentary on the religious diversity and how it is perceived by the youth today" and suggesting "a curriculum about 'religions of the world' to be discussed with national education bodies as a way to reduce this clash of ignorance at the outset at school."

A further question which asked if participants had any concerns with the IDEA concept generated answers in two categories. One related to participants and the other related to facilitation. With respect to recruitment of participants concerns were expressed regarding inviting participants "based on merit, not who you know". It was also suggested that "inward looking groups", "groups new to the community", and "language barriers" might be obstacles to the formation and free participation of members of a variety of faith groups. In addition, it was noted that within certain religions, "there is great diversity of traditions" and "limiting the participation to two individuals each may reinforce the perception that these (religions) are monoliths." Another concern regarding participation was related to how one was to ensure inclusiveness of all traditions/religions.

Lastly, once participants were selected it was questioned whether they would have adequate knowledge and articulation abilities to share their religious backgrounds. The last question in the concept testing survey asked participants if they were interested in participating in IDEA. Traditional standard methods of concept testing find value in the extreme responses. As is evident in the table below, 24% of respondents claimed they would definitely be interested in participating and 11% noted they would definitely not be interested in participating. This 2:1 ratio reinforces that respondents saw value in this initiative. It is of value to note that 54% in total communicated they were definitely or probably interested in participating. The results of the concept testing phase confirmed the need and value for an interfaith youth initiative and along with an environmental scan and previous research greatly shaped further development of the Interfaith Youth Council project

Interfaith Youth Council: Methodology

A central theme that permeates the philosophy that underpins the Interfaith Youth Council is unity in diversity. Participants are diverse in cultural background, religious affiliation and represent both genders. They are, however, bound as Canadians who are aged between 16 and 24 year olds. They are diverse in how virtues are expressed by their traditions; however, they are common in possessing these virtues and wanting to put them into action. The diversity in unity theme extends beyond demographics to also infiltrating the curriculum and its pedagogical approach.

Participants meet twice a month on Sunday afternoons from September to April. This meeting day was chosen as it did not conflict with anyone's time of worship. The process of finding a mutually workable time sent a message that the group is united in finding a mutually convenient meeting time that does not impinge on diverse times of worship. Each meeting starts with an opening blessing delivered by a participant. The opening blessing serves two purposes. First, it encourages a participant to bring a personal voice to a prayer in any language that the participant chooses to use. Second, it brings the rest of the group into this participant's sacred space be it as an observer or as a participant. At an Interfaith Youth Core national conference in Chicago, I remember poignantly a story shared by a conference attendee. She was Jewish by background and along with some friends was in South America on a Habitat for Humanity build. On the first day their group leader started the day with a Christian prayer. She turned to her friends with the unspoken question: Did not their leader know there were Jewish youth present? This continued for 3 days. However, with time, the group leader began to realize there were youth from diverse religious traditions building together and so on the fourth day he did not precede his morning announcements with a prayer. Interestingly enough, this made the storyteller even more uncomfortable. Even though she chose not to fully participate in the Christian prayer she had uttered a Jewish one simultaneously and this had brought special meaning to the important work they were doing. Thus the opening blessing that begins each Interfaith Youth Council meeting seeks to reinforce that each individual is encouraged to engage in constant personal search of their religious identity.

Over the course of 8 months, three shared virtues are explored in depth. For each, participants are encouraged to bring stories, rituals, festivals, scripture and other expressions that communicate the diverse expressions of these shared virtues. These are shared with participants through dialogue and through artistic expression. The virtues are then put into action through service projects in the community. The methodology of service learning requires that learners take ownership of the learning experience derived from serving. They first conduct some research and subsequently present to the group service providers and organizations with whom they work, a specific shared virtue into action. Once a group decides on a service project, a plan is created to implement the service. An important question that is addressed is how the Council will bring their multi-faith identity to their service and how they will empower the recipients of their service. Upon completion of the service project, the impact is assessed and discussed.

The first virtue that is explored is hospitality. Hospitality indicates openness, an invitation to enter into one's home, space and conversation. It is extending beyond oneself and reaching out to others. It may start with a family being hospitable to another family. It might be expressed by a community being hospitable to its members. Hopefully, it will extend to reaching out more broadly than that. Ultimately, the group needs to explore how to be hospitable to each other regardless of their diverse religious backgrounds. Interfaith Youth Council participants are asked to bring a symbol of hospitality from their tradition. Here are some expressions of hospitality shared by a Sikh, Hindu and Jewish participant:

A Sikh participant removed his Kara at one meeting and explained its personal significance to the group. In the Sikh tradition a Kara is a bracelet worn on the right hand to remind oneself of the vows taken to the master or Guru. In particular the Kara is worn as a symbol of restraint from evil deeds such as hurting someone's feelings, anger, lying and cheating. When someone is being hospitable, he or she needs to characterize the hospitality with goodness and kindness. For what is the use of being hospitable to another if your character is indulging in wrongdoing?

A Hindu participant brought in a small oil lamp which is lit by her family in their home and garden during the festival of Diwali or the New Year. During the 5 day festival Hindus pray for good fortune in the upcoming year. The small oil lamps are lit to symbolize the oil lamps that were lit to guide Prince Rama and his wife Sita back home. During Diwali a Hindu family will open their home to others to share sweets and forgive misdeeds of the past.

A Jewish participant recited a prayer as a sign of hospitality to the group. The following prayer, she explained to us, is said whenever something pleasant that has not happened for a while is encountered. The translation that was given after reciting the blessing in Hebrew was: Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this season. The participant felt this was a symbol of hospitality as the prayer pertained to all that were partaking in the prayer and not just the individual reciting it.

In 2007 the Interfaith Youth Council decided to serve a meal at the Calgary Drop In Centre as a sign of hospitality to those less fortunate. The preparation was intensive and participant driven. It included the design of a welcome banner and a presentation by the participants. It also included creating a space so that Drop-In Centre clients could reciprocate the hospitality that was shown to them. This was made possible through "captured" clients' stories and dreams for the future through individual interviews after serving the meal.

The second virtue that is explored is the shared value of compassion. Upon having heard from others how their diverse traditions expressed hospitality, participants are encouraged to reflect in their journals and through artistic expression on the value of compassion. What does compassion mean to you? How was the value expressed through ritual, festival, worship and action?

A Christian participant recited this quote from the Bible:

And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. – Romans 5:2–5 (NIV)

She then went on to say: "This verse provides a lot of encouragement to me in my life as a young person. Whilst it seems ironic to rejoice in personal suffering or in the sufferings of the world, this paradox makes sense only in light of the full context of the message and in the context of faith in a God who is in control and has a plan and purpose for things."

A Muslim participant shared the following story. Once Prophet Muhammad and a companion were walking along and came to a pond. They were thirsty so bent down to drink some water. As the Prophet was scooping up a handful of water to drink he noticed a scorpion was drowning in the water. He picked it up and placed it on land. The scorpion proceeded to crawl over to the Prophet's hand and bite it.

He then found himself on a slope and tumbled back into the water and once again found himself drowning. Again the Prophet picked him up and placed him on land and once again the scorpion bit the Prophet's hand and fell into the water. This reaction on the part of Prophet Muhammad continued three more times. It was then that his companion advised him: Oh Prophet, leave the scorpion to drown, for he will only keep biting you!. To which Prophet Muhammad is said to have replied: God has given this animal an instinct to bite. He has given me the instinct to help others and even if the scorpion bites me 300 times, I will continue to help him. If he is being true to his nature, I need to be true to mine. The Muslim participant then went on to say how the story inspires him to help others regardless whether they show gratitude or not and the ability to help others is a grace of God and responsibility on his followers.

In 2007 the Interfaith Youth Council put compassion into action by working with youth from a local housing project of Habitat for Humanity. This low income town home complex was recently experiencing challenges with their youth. There were instances of vandalism occurring. Participants of the Interfaith Youth Council planned interactive games for young residents and enabled them to come together in friendship. They also helped with plans to develop a youth council so that when children were waiting for parents to get home from work they could be involved in constructive projects such as clean-up efforts, the development of a sports area and a gardening project.

The third virtue explored by the Interfaith Youth Council is learning from our elders. In order to promote inter-generational learning and respect for our elders, participants are encouraged to share how their diverse traditions espouse to this value.

A Bahá'í participant shared a law written in a letter by Shogil Effendi that expresses respect for elders. The letter shares that Bahá'u'lláh has clearly stated the consent of all living parents is required for a Bahá'í marriage. This applies whether the parents are Bahá'ís or non-Bahá'ís, divorced for years or not. This great law has been laid down to strengthen the social fabric, to knit closer the ties of the home, to place a certain gratitude and respect in the hearts of the children for those who have given them life and sent their souls out on the eternal journey towards their Creator.

A First Nations participant shared that in his tradition elders reinforce our respect for, and understanding of, the Creator's role in our lives. Consultation with elders takes place in an atmosphere of trust and respect. This tradition helps restore an individual's self-confidence and peace of mind which, in turn, helps the learning process. There are many stories shared utilizing the oral tradition such as ones that are to do with sacredness of nature. It is the responsibility of all members of the community to hear and learn from the stories their elders share.

A Jewish participant shared how important it is to learn from her elders. In most Jewish traditions, when a child reaches the age of Mitzvot (about 12 or 13 years old), they are considered an adult. They are given a prayer shawl, or talit, which symbolizes the covenant with God. She went on to say: "personally, my talit is very special because the atarah (or collar) was designed and embroidered by my mother, and the case was made by my aunt. The physical shawl is from the land of Israel, and every time I wear it I feel the connection from my religion, my family and my homeland. When I pray, I finger the fringes (which equal to 613, the number of commandments) and remember how much significance my religion has in my life".

In order to put the shared virtue of learning from our elders into action, the Interfaith Youth Council invited elders from diverse religious traditions to one of its meetings. Guests were asked to share their perspective and personal reflections on hospitality and compassion. Participants also visited seniors at Carewest Seniors Home. They developed a musical presentation and spent time interacting and getting to know residents.

The Interfaith Youth Council concludes annually with a celebration that captures the participants' experience, learning and hopes for the future. Four participants are invited to come back as lead participants for the following year, thereby giving them an opportunity to mentor others, play a leadership role and develop skills in interfaith youth facilitation.

Lessons Learned

Assessing the impact of the Interfaith Youth Council experience is ongoing and involves obtaining feedback from participants, service organizations, religious community leaders and families whose children have participated. The goal of an evaluation strategy is to assess the achievement of the following desired outcomes: A strengthened religious identity and comfort articulating religious identity, an increased understanding of diverse religious traditions, increased incidence of religious communities working together and improved condition for less fortunate Calgarians. Three overall observations have been made to date and will contribute to further development of the Interfaith Youth Council initiative:

First, young people remain energetic and excited about youth initiatives when they are encouraged to play a leadership role. For example, youth who have participated in the Interfaith Youth Council do not find it intellectually stimulating to walk in and walk out of a service project and check off the project as done. Young people internalize learning and mentally become engaged when the action, the service is a formal part of the learning. Examining needs (met and unmet), organizations that attempt to meet needs and the situation of potential service recipients is empowering to young people. Assessing the impact of their efforts and making recommendations for improvement reinforces that they are "owners" of the project. Participants also need to be stretched in their intellectual and emotional development through various outreach opportunities. These include media interaction, brochure development, presentations to organizations and communities. For example, one Interfaith Youth Council delivered a multi-faith invocation before a Canadian Race Relations Foundation dinner event.

Second, interfaith youth programming is highly effective when an environment conducive for story telling is created. Young people need to be encouraged to tell stories. It is one way in which to ensure that the knowledge and lessons become relevant, inspiring and timeless to tellers and listeners. For instance, the following canoe story was shared with participants upon their graduation:

There are three travellers striving to reach their destination. Each is equipped with a canoe to cross a river. The first traveller crosses the river with his canoe and upon realizing there

are no more rivers to cross, breaks the canoe apart and tosses it aside. The second traveller crosses the river and although he realizes that the canoe is no longer needed, he hoists the canoe over his head and shoulders and continues onwards. The third traveller crosses the river with his canoe. He too realizes that the canoe is no longer needed for the journey, however sends it back to bring others across.

Third, a proactive approach to connecting with religious communities is needed. In order to broaden the impact of the Interfaith Youth Council experience periodic updates to religious communities and invitations to experience the Interfaith Youth Council methodology are important endeavours. Aligning diverse religious communities to the efforts of IDEA, Youth Initiative will result in increased commitment to creating public space for religious discourse. It was astonishing and moving that one participant of an Interfaith Youth Council shared that in addition to being bullied for his religious background he was bullied for simply being religious. Religious communities can work together to help write another Interfaith story, one that tells the confident yet humble integration of faith into daily life.

Conclusion: Sending Forth Stories of Strengthening Local and Global Identity

IDEA – the Youth Initiative’s Interfaith Youth Council works at educating youth to function in what Banks (2004, p. 3) says is “a world that is being transformed”. Its contribution will hopefully contribute to the attachment of youth to their religious communities and to the multiple places they belong in (Castles, 2004). This is evident in the following stories:

From Faaria Kherani, raised in Canada, studying in USA, presently living in China:

I am currently living and studying in China, and every day I meet people from Spain, Australia, Korea, the United States of America, Canada, Germany and of course, China itself. There is a whirlpool of ethnic, cultural and religious differences, but the feeling of mutual respect, recognition and cooperation is transparent. I only wish that I had a stronger idea of how my own religious background displays through my character and personality as I interact with, for example, a Spanish Christian woman who moved to Beijing in order to help lift regulations against public, religious expression in China. I have often reflected: How did her Christian background and Spanish cultural heritage affect her decision in coming to China? How does she manage to display such a unique identity and stand out amongst the masses? I have similar goals, but can I connect to her experience with such a different cultural background? This interaction itself sparked the recognition that I, too, possess a religious identity that, when joined with others, can result in enormous strength for cooperation and change. We are not all that different and, if our goals are mutual, we can pool resources and ideas in order to achieve these goals more effectively. We are not merely tolerating and respecting each other’s religious identity; we are actively displaying teamwork through learning and service.

From Amanda Achtman an Interfaith Youth Council participant:

And what does it mean to share of one’s treasure? For me, my treasure does not only consist of sharing of my monetary wealth, which can be done by giving to charity or by tithing a

percentage of income, but has also included the treasure that my faith is for me. For example, as a member of this inter-faith youth council called IDEA, I have been blessed by the opportunity to share the treasure of my faith with others and to learn from them too. What is so hope-filled and beautiful about this youth council comprised of six different faiths is how we extend beyond breaking stereotypes to building friendships with one another. In coming together, we have come to acknowledge to a greater extent our shared humanity. We have realized that we all stand for something and that we can; in fact, stand together, despite our differences.

From Matt Ponak, an Interfaith Youth Council participant:

In my own life I have seen how the belief that every person has divinity in them can elevate and unite people. Through the interfaith youth council of Calgary I have met young leaders from the Bahá'í, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish faiths. Meeting these people, sharing stories, cultural traditions, and ambitions with them, has allowed me to see that there is beauty in all traditions, and in people from all traditions. To meet people who are strong in their belief in God, though they may come from a different religion than I do, has done nothing but strengthened my own beliefs and resolve.

These stories serve to support the claim that contact and interaction with diverse others continues to increase in these interestingly challenging times. They also give voice to the preoccupations of young people: Their desire for identity, their desire to be heard, their desire to engage with others and to leave a mark as they work for the betterment of others. The question arises as to how best a young person can branch out in response to global impulses and simultaneously refer to one's traditional roots in order to be grounded in a distinct cultural identity. Inter-religious education provides opportunities to create thoughtful spaces that encourage personal search, mutual enrichment through learning and working together for the betterment of others. The triad of questioning "Who am I?", "Who are You?", and "What can we do together?" used by the Interfaith Youth Council aims to prepare youth to live distinctly and cohesively amongst each other in a future of hope and trust. However, in order for it to foster a pluralistic outlook in the broadest sense possible, it must be accompanied by as plethora of other initiatives in civil society. An Interfaith Youth Council striving towards inter-religious understanding and action in a broader context that may not necessarily be pluralistic can contribute to a sense of confusion and frustration in learners. A multi-prong approach to fostering pluralism requires the genuine participation of all individuals and groups in civic and community life and can be achieved through a diverse array of not-for-profit and educational programmes. The diverse array of initiatives must come together, however, in their understanding that developing a pluralistic outlook amongst learners requires consistent effort, creative pedagogy, action-oriented transfer of learning and ongoing individual and collective reflection. It is therefore presently the mandate of the IDEA Youth Initiative to determine what other programmes exist in civil society that contribute to a sense of pluralism and in what ways can they be supported. After all, developing and sustaining multiple approaches that every so often intersect is inherently pluralistic itself.

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Part III

An Overview of Part III: Inter-religious Education for Social Justice and Peace

Marian de Souza

The chapters included in this part of the Handbook are considered here in four sub-parts. The first six chapters, those of Afdal, Boschki, Altmeyer, Nipkow, Kamara and Cahill deal with issues and concepts general to inter-religious education and the promotion of justice and peace. The following five chapters, those of Engebretson, Lovat, Zwartz, Meijer and Albayrak, particularly focus on inter-religious education and Islam. The chapters of Filus, Kallarackal, Prinsloo and Puniyani are based on particular national contexts, while the final chapter by Bumbar analyses the role of inter-religious education in healing the differences between eastern and western Christianity.

In the first chapter Afdal analyses the notion of tolerance, showing that it may be considered first as a “thick” or “thin” and second as a positive or negative concept. He then presents theories of tolerance, these being pre-modern (group but not necessarily individual tolerance), liberal (political and moral tolerance), procedural liberal tolerance, which insists on just procedure, substantial tolerance, which allow individuals to make their own choices and curbs activities that limit autonomy of choice, critical tolerance, which is biased for truth, freedom and liberation, communitarian tolerance and post-modern tolerance, which observes that reality is characterised by plurality. Finally the chapter identifies three different conceptions of tolerance: tolerance as forbearance, tolerance as being unprejudiced and tolerance as openness. These understandings of tolerance have different implications for inter-religious education and dialogue, but the ultimate goal is openness.

Next Boschki highlights the role of memory in religious traditions and its essential role in inter-religious education. All religious traditions live from memory, he argues, and this is especially true of the monotheistic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. To tell the story of the past – the history of suffering as well as the history of salvation – forms a specific religious hermeneutic through which to understand the present and gives a vision for the future. It is particularly in the liturgy that we find forms of celebrated memory (e.g. in the Eucharist in Catholicism; in the Pessach Haggadah in Judaism). For this reason learning *from* another religious tradition and not only about it must mean learning from its collective memory. Teaching and learning memory helps learners to change their perspective, makes space for emotional learning besides historical facts and

establishes a relationship with one's own tradition as well as with the "other". To study the history of suffering of various religions from the victims' perspective (e.g. the Holocaust, the Crusades, inter-denominational wars from the perspective of suffering individuals and families) sensitises learners to situations of oppression and suffering in the present day and leads to their interest and involvement in work for social justice and peace in today's world.

Drawing on the concept of competence as a key term in pedagogy, Altmeyer suggests a competence model for religious education based on the analysis of Christian faith as communicative action. This model comprises spiritual sensitivity (the subjective dimension); religious knowledge and the ability of reasoning (objective-material dimension); ability in relationship (inter-subjective dimension); capacity for action (contextual dimension); and faculty of expression (aesthetic dimension). From these competences he extrapolates the competences required for inter-religious learning. These are perceiving, knowing and understanding the contents of other religions, their beliefs and their religious convictions; dealing with respect to the expressions of other religions, and communication and encounter and acting together for common goals.

Next Nipkow takes a global perspective on inter-religious education and dialogue, arguing that each country needs to consider the challenges and opportunities from within its own context. He proposes that the theoretical framework of such education and dialogue should be a hermeneutic of mutual recognition and truthfulness, based on open-minded respect for the other side, a clear account of one's own religious tradition and recognition of the existing differences. This education and dialogue affords the opportunity for learning through differences to greater communalities.

While the essence of religion is common to all humans, their interpretation and expression of this essence differs from context to context. These differences of interpretation and expression often lead to conflict, and even to loss of life and property. Kamara's chapter presents the role of religion in war and conflict at various levels – family, community, national and international. Drawing on historical events from various parts of the world, she presents religion as a source, basis and justification of initiation and perpetuation of violence, in particular gender violence, religious violence, ethnic violence, civil violence and international violence. The role of inter-religious education in fostering peace and development by identifying the common challenges to religion is proposed, especially its role in examining the challenges to inter-religious education, deepening religious faith and promoting inter-religious dialogue.

The final chapter in this section of the Handbook is provided by Cahill and is a reflection on the first Parliament of the World's Religions, which was held in Chicago in 1893, and at which the inter-faith movement was born. The need for this movement has become more apparent and focused around the characteristics of the city to which the Parliament it is awarded every 5 years. Cahill proposes three lessons from this first Parliament: (a) the centrality of the city in contemporary society as the encounters between the religions takes place principally in the streets, neighborhoods and suburbs of the city; (b) the centrality of education in

promoting understanding and collaboration between religions; and (c) the irrelevance of an exclusivist stance in relation to any religion and the necessity of a view of human beings as global citizens. Cahill's chapter looks towards the Parliament of the Worlds' Religions to be held in Melbourne, Australia, 2009.

In the second part of this section of the Handbook, Engebretson considers the common ground between Muslims and Catholics, arguing that they are united in their common monotheism, in the beliefs they share about God's attributes, in their common family relationship to Abraham, in the example of Muhammad and Jesus themselves, who advocated and practised peace, and in the Holy Books that guide the lives of Muslims and Christians. In this natural partnership Muslims and Catholics find themselves together in a world where the work for justice and peace is paramount. The chapter identifies four particular areas – human dignity, freedom of religion and conscience, the drive to eradicate poverty and the search for peace in which Muslims and Catholics are natural collaborators.

Lovat's chapter provides an insight into educational developments in Australia that address differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. Religious and Values Education syllabi are being utilised increasingly in Australia to deal with issues of social dissonance, and especially to provide means of improving communication and understanding between groups characterised by religious difference. The issue of enhancing understanding of Islam for Muslim and non-Muslim populations is regarded as a particularly urgent focus of such efforts. Drawing on Habermas's philosophy of communicative action and critical knowing, Lovat shows the directions taken by state-sponsored religious and values education syllabi and argues that they have the potential to challenge students to a transformation of attitudes to religions with which they were formerly unfamiliar.

Zwartz analyses the document *A Common Word Between Us and You*, which was promulgated on October 13, 2007. This initiative, coordinated by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute of Islamic Thought in Jordan, was an invitation signed by 138 Muslim leaders from across the theological and geographical spectrum to the Pope and other Christian leaders urging working together for peace, justice and harmony based on two foundational principles of both religions, love of God and of neighbour. After describing the content of the document, Zwartz evaluates responses to it from Yale, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Vatican. He also notes hostile responses to and analyses of the document from certain media outlets, Muslim converts to Christianity, and from some Christian quarters. However, Zwartz's view is hopeful and positive. He argues that the document has already achieved much and is an important step towards setting a future agenda for the Muslim-Christian collaboration.

In glaring contrast to all possible ideas and ideals of inter-religious dialogue and peace, the present world is confronted with many instances of religious fundamentalism, fanaticism and radicalism, Meijer argues in the next chapter. The chapter draws on Oz's reflections on fanaticism, and on Hull's ideas of fanaticism and 'religionism'. A further focus is Islamic fundamentalism, widespread among Muslim youth in western countries. The Dutch debate on 'Islam versus the West' is used

to illustrate the existence of an 'Enlightenment-fundamentalism', thus showing that fundamentalism is not a manifestation of religions only.

In regard to Islamic fundamentalism in western Muslim youth, the role of the internet is discussed in view of Roys's "virtual ummah". Religious education, seeking to keep the balance between historicity and reflexivity, tradition and enlightenment, is proposed as a possible antidote. As opposed to the fundamentalistic, Salafistic type of Islam found on the internet, education should further the critical re-reading, re-thinking and re-interpreting of Islamic tradition and its source texts from the present context, the western societies being a new historical context for Islam and Muslims.

Finally in this part of the third section of this Handbook, Albayrak analyses the philosophy of the Muslim philosopher, teacher and scholar Fetullah Gulen, describing the "Gülen movement" as unique in its approach to globalisation. It is open to change but also respects Muslim traditional values and identities. The Gülen movement promotes tolerance and dialogue, the development of self-control, virtue and responsibility, and the education of the "person of ideals". Gülen sees the realisation of the person of ideals as the ultimate aim of human existence. He calls them a 'golden generation' and sees their activities on a global level as a sign of hope for the salvation of all humanity. Because they equip themselves with values such as faith, love, a balanced view of science, free thought, freedom and consultation, Gülen believes that they will strive for the highest ideals, ultimately bringing about paradise. The means to the development of the person of ideals is education, and Albayrak describes the characteristics of Gulen's educational philosophy, which is already in practice in schools around the world, and which has much to offer to educational practitioners everywhere.

In the third subpart of Part III there is a particular focus on national contexts. Kallarackal addresses the need for peace education in the post-modern world of religious and ethnic pluralism. He uses as a successful model of peace education in a pluralistic setting the NESNIM programme (North-Eastern Students' National Integration Movement). Faced with the reality of violence in everyday life while working for the betterment of the people of northeast India, and having understood the importance of peace education among youth, the Congregation of Holy Cross in northeast India created NESNIM on September 29, 2001. The underlying belief was that peace and harmony could be achieved by bringing together youth representatives from various ethnic/religious groups in the region that seemed to be hostile to each other. The programme included classes, workshops, sports activities, cultural activities and a Peace March. An evaluative study has determined that NESNIM has been effective to a large extent as a peace education programme and has helped to break down prejudices between various ethnic/religious groups. The educational approach of NESNIM is grounded in spiritual, ethical and moral values and has broad implications for the life and work of various religious bodies, organisations and societies.

Writing from a Japanese context, Filus examines the current state of inter-religious dialogue and interaction among various religions in Japan. She investigates how these religions educate their followers about other religions, and how they

influence each other with regard to religious ideas, strategies for gaining new followers, educating the young and cooperation in social and political activism. The recent revisions to the Fundamental Law of Education (December 2006) open the door to the introduction of religious education in Japanese public schools. This chapter examines what elements of religious education, which is currently conducted in private religious schools in Japan and overseas, could be transplanted into the Japanese public school environment. Suggestions are given regarding how inter-religious education can contribute to the creation of a more democratic, egalitarian and altruistic society.

Prinsloo analyses the South African policy on religion and education as a sign of hope in the future of the nation. This policy is expected to play a crucial role in the creation and institutionalisation of new taxonomies of responsibility and hope. It takes a positive approach to the diversity of religious and non-religious belief systems represented in South Africa and argues for a free open space in which to study these systems. In this it promotes a multi-tradition approach to the compulsory study of religion in schools. It aims to use and promote religions and certain worldviews as vehicles in a vision of a more just and compassionate society; to affirm learners' own religious affiliations and develop their spirituality; to promote religion and certain worldviews in service of a common humanity and to be a unique South African response to the issues of religion, education and justice and peace.

In the final chapter in this part of section three, Puniyani discusses education for peace in a strife-ridden scenario, that of communal violence in India. After showing the extent and ramifications of this violence, he shows that communal violence is a part of communal politics. In India there are gross misunderstandings and a multitude of myths about Muslim and Christian minorities, and social violence is sustained by these misunderstandings. Education for peace needs to address these myths, to discover the truth about other communities, to broaden the reach of this understanding and to make it a part of 'social common sense'. The elements of this process have begun in India, and an effort to address misconceptions through multiple conduits of education is going on. This chapter deals with the prevalent myths and stereotypes, the truth behind them and the attempts by social action groups to deal with them through a process of formal and informal education.

The final chapter in section three of the Handbook is provided by Bumbar, and it explores the lack of appreciation and understanding between Eastern and Western Christian Churches. The chapter gives an overview of Eastern Christian Churches, Catholic and Orthodox: who they are, when and why they separated, salient issues impeding reunion and efforts in the ecumenical movement. The author argues that the theological issues usually given as the reasons for divisions do not carry the weight they once did. The main reasons for continued separation are ecclesiological – issues of jurisdiction and governance. There is a need for both sides to recognise, respect and accept the truth of the other. The failure in understanding limits the religious imagination of believers and hampers efforts at dialogue with other religions. Bumbar notes a number of issues that need to be addressed by both sides if greater unity between eastern and western Christianity is to prevail.

The Maze of Tolerance

Geir Afdal

Introduction

Inter-religious education should promote tolerance. This may seem like a politically correct, straightforward sentence. Certainly it is a statement with which one cannot disagree. But what does it really mean? Does it mean that intercultural education should aim at decreasing (someone's) prejudice? Should it promote certain norms or standards, such as human rights? Or is the goal to help students endure the practices or persons of which they disapprove? Maybe it means the opposite, that one should teach students to disapprove of less, that truth and good are dependent on perspective? Or perhaps it means that inter-religious education should enable students to learn from differences? This chapter concerns tolerance and inter-religious education. The question it asks is what tolerance is and what implications this may have for inter-religious education.

Tolerance may seem like an ideal most people can agree with, one that unites across differences, a universal core in a fragmented world. We may differ and disagree on much but we can at least agree to tolerate each other. However, when we start discussing what tolerance is, confusion and disagreement are often the result. Confusion arises because tolerance is a tricky, elusive concept. Digging into the meaning of tolerance is like going into a maze. Around the corner are three new alleys you never knew about, and it is impossible to see where they lead. You lose direction in the pursuit of the genuine sense of tolerance. This leads to confusion and disagreement. We may very well agree on the importance and value of tolerance, but when we try to explicate and operationalize it, we disagree on meaning and consequences.

One may argue that the reason for this is that people do not know what tolerance means. Implicit in this argument is the understanding that tolerance has a more or less given meaning and that the problem lies in the communication of this

G. Afdal (✉)
MF Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo, Norway
e-mail: geir.afdal@mf.no

proper understanding of the concept. People are simply not educated enough into the meaning of tolerance. The problem with this argument is that the disagreement also characterizes theories on tolerance (Heyd, 1996; Horton and Nicholson, 1992). Disagreement is a joint problem of both everyday language of tolerance and theories of tolerance. I argue that theories on tolerance can learn from the everyday language of tolerance (not only vice versa).

My aim in this chapter is to give a rough map of the maze of tolerance. The ambition is not to describe the maze in every detail and in full scale. The debate on tolerance is too vast to make such a project realistic. Nor is my aim to give a true answer as to what tolerance “really” is. My claim is that tolerance has a variety of valid meanings, which all have to be understood in some kind of conceptual or theoretical framework – and which all have their strengths and weaknesses. Tolerance is, however, important, and it is vital that we discuss what tolerance means and may mean. In a wide sense, tolerance concerns navigating in difference. Tolerance is therefore at the heart of inter-religious education. My second claim is that this can be understood in a number of ways, depending on the account of tolerance.

I will give three different, and overlapping, maps of tolerance. The first concerns tolerance as a concept. I find it fruitful to distinguish (but not separate) between tolerance as a concept and theories of tolerance. In this way one can disagree on theories of tolerance, but agree that one is discussing tolerance. The alternative, conceptualizing tolerance on more strict theoretical accounts, often results in the characterization of other theories as not dealing with “real” tolerance. However, conceptualizing tolerance is not a simple endeavor. I will divide the concept of tolerance into three dimensions. The second map concerns different theories of tolerance. Tolerance has often been understood as a distinct liberal ideal. I will give a liberal account of tolerance, but also three alternative ones these being a critical, a communitarian and a postmodern account. The third map is a typology of tolerance. Here I will conclude from the more detailed discussions in Parts I and II, with a rough outline of three versions of tolerance. After having discussed tolerance in three stages, I will briefly return to inter-religious education and sketch some implications of different understandings of tolerance.

Tolerance as a Concept

Introduction

First a note on etymological questions. The English word tolerance comes from the Latin “tolerantia,”¹ which comes from the verb “tolero.” The Latin word carries four meanings, which are relevant in this context. The first is to bear the weight of, to support; the second is to provide food or sustain for, that is to support something

¹To the following, see Oxford Latin Dictionary (1976: 1946–1947).

or to maintain a state of affairs; the third is to submit (or be prepared to submit) oneself to, undergo, bear, endure; while the fourth is to stand up to or resist successfully without difficulties and hardship. This means that according to its etymological history tolerance can mean active support, as well as passive endurance. In Webster’s Comprehensive Dictionary (2003: p. 1320) tolerance is defined as “1. The character, state, or quality of being tolerant. 2. Indulgence or forbearance in judging the opinions, customs, or acts of others; freedom from bigotry or from racial or religious prejudice. 3. The act of enduring, or the capacity for endurance.” Lexically tolerance means non-judgment and endurance.

In English the noun tolerance has a twin-word, toleration. There have been many attempts to make a clear conceptual distinction between these words, but none has been generally accepted. Some authors also go to great lengths to try to establish clear distinctions between tolerance and neighbor concepts, like respect, acceptance, solidarity, and liberty. Implicit in such endeavors is a conceptual fixation of tolerance that is, as we shall see, problematic. That is, the relationship to these other concepts will vary depending on how tolerance is conceptualized. The relationship to intolerance is also not without complications. Intolerance can be understood as a simple negation. The problem is that if tolerance is seen as a virtue, intolerance is a vice. Yet is intolerance always wrong and tolerance always right? What about the limits of tolerance – the things we cannot and ought not tolerate? Is there a second way of not tolerating, besides intolerance? Some authors suggest that the opposite of tolerance is not intolerance, but indifference (Crick 1971). Although this may solve some conceptual problems, new ones arise. I argue that there are cases where tolerance is right and good and cases where it is wrong and bad. The same goes for intolerance. There are cases where intolerance is right and cases where it is wrong. Put differently, no serious person or theory operates with absolute tolerance. Even the most tolerant person would admit that there are limits to tolerance and acceptance. This means that both tolerance and intolerance may be legitimate and illegitimate, according to the theory and the understanding of the situation in question (Table 1).

To talk about legitimate intolerance may be out of touch with everyday language and to legitimate intolerance and an intolerant attitude. Still, it may help to rethink the point that in some cases an intolerant attitude, in the sense of not accepting the unacceptable, may be in good and right.

Having discussed the relationship of tolerance to other concepts, it is time to return to the concept itself. I argue that the issue of conceptualizing tolerance is best discussed along three dimensions. The reason for this is that the dimensions represent three issues that are distinct and rather independent of each other. I use the

Table 1 Tolerance and intolerance as both legitimate and illegitimate

	Legitimate	Illegitimate
Tolerance	a	b
Intolerance	c	d

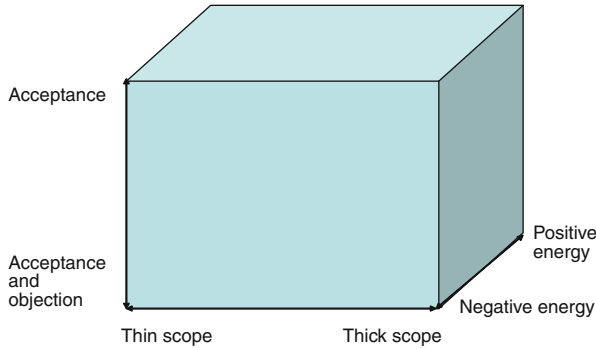


Fig. 1 A model of dimensions in conceptualizations of tolerance (Afdal, 2006: p. 91)

concept “dimension” to indicate that the conceptual answers can be put along different continuums rather than in dichotomies. Three key issues in the conceptualization of tolerance are (1) scope, (2) energy, and (3) conditions. The three dimensions can be illustrated as constituting a three-dimensional conceptual field of tolerance (Fig. 1).

Thin or Thick Tolerance

Tolerance may be constructed as a thin or narrow concept on the one hand or a thick or wide concept on the other. On the narrow side some argue that tolerance is a strictly moral concept (Raphael, 1988). It concerns issues where there are reasons for moral disapproval, that is, cases where we are certain that the behavior of others is morally wrong. They also restrict the use of tolerance to moral questions of some importance, not trivial disagreement. That is, tolerance in this account is where we refrain from what we normally consider a correct or valid response to a moral issue. Another requirement also helps to define and narrow the scope of tolerance. Since we can only properly talk about tolerance in moral issues, the object of tolerance must be actions based on a real moral choice. That is, the tolerated person must be in a position to choose between alternative actions. Where there is no choice, it is no longer a matter of morality, but necessity. On this account it does not make sense to talk about tolerating actions, characteristics, or other phenomena that the tolerated cannot choose, such as sex, race, and ethnicity. One cannot meaningfully speak of tolerating other races or ethnicities. One can respect and accept, but not tolerate them. On some accounts homosexuality, culture, and religion are in the same category, if one conceives these issues as more given than chosen. There are a number of other requirements that make tolerance a thinner concept. The tolerator must have the power to interfere (in order to make noninterference a real and moral alternative), the object of tolerance must be either behavior only or persons only, the reasons for moral disapproval must be generally or normatively acceptable – and so on (for details, see Churchill, 1997 and Afdal, 2006).

Tolerance may also be constructed as a thick concept. On such accounts it is not restricted to moral questions. It makes sense to talk about tolerating different expressions (aesthetics), understandings or theories of reality (epistemology), different cultures, ethnicities – even tolerating some peculiar habits of your spouse (Raz, 1988; Vogt, 1997). Tolerance as a wide concept can refer to actions or persons, and it is a relational concept. This means that it is always interesting to notice how the situation concerning tolerance is constructed. Who is the tolerator and who (or what) is tolerated? It is often morally superior to be the one tolerating than the one being tolerated. In most cases, however, the description of the situation of tolerance can be turned around. Is the religious majority tolerating the religious minority – or the minority tolerating the majority? Who are framing the issues of tolerance? And who are described as “tolerant” – as the moral and progressive elite? On a thick conception the issue of power in the framing of tolerance is vital.

Positive or Negative Tolerance

The second dimension concerns the issue of energy or means. One thing is to decide whether tolerance is right, another is what tolerance amounts to. What kind of actions or means are proper ways of being tolerant? This is a surprisingly neglected issue in tolerance theory. Much discussion has focused on the justification and limits of tolerance, less on the manner of being tolerant. Often it is not a question of whether to be tolerant or not, an either–or, but what kind of action repertoire is valid in a certain situation. This said, there are two extreme means of tolerance, negative and positive tolerance. The words negative and positive do not here refer to the value of tolerance, but whether the means of tolerance consist in refraining from action (negative) or in doing something active (positive). They could also be called passive and active tolerance.

In philosophy there has been a long tradition of understanding tolerance as refraining from action, not doing what one thinks is morally right because of some overriding reason. In fact, this has been one of the characteristics of tolerance, distinguishing it from other concepts. Tolerance means to endure, even suffer, blasphemy, perversion, or the unjust. The reason for this is given in a theory that gives freedom of expression priority over the right, good, and true. I will return to the question of theories on tolerance. Historically, Enlightenment and early modern tolerance were shaped as a minimalistic account, an account against intolerance more than an elaboration on tolerance. Negative tolerance can refer to states, groups, and individuals as actors. States were in cases of tolerance not to interfere with practices that were considered wrong. Tolerance did not mean that they had any obligation to actively support minorities.

Positive tolerance means doing something active toward the tolerated persons, actions, or phenomena. Tolerating other religions means actively supporting fair and good conditions for a variety of religious practices. This may also refer to the same actor levels as above. States may support minorities, in some cases at the expense

of others, because these groups are in special need of tolerance. A teacher may give special attention to one minority child, because tolerance in his case means care and recognition. The continuum between negative and positive tolerance leaves open a variety of the manner of tolerance. There are different degrees and forms of positive tolerance, from voting for minority rights to a Hindu helping Muslim neighbors building a mosque.

The Conditions of Tolerance

We would not normally consider a Muslim helping other Muslims building a mosque a deed of tolerance. But again, if it was a case of two rivaling or hostile Muslim groups, it would be a tolerant act. This means that there has to be a situation involving some kind of difference for there to be tolerance. The issue concerns the conditions of tolerance, the third conceptual dimension. On the other hand, there has to be some kind of acceptance for there to be tolerance. Difference and acceptance are conceptual conditions of tolerance. There has, however, been disagreement on the understanding of difference as a condition. On the one hand, some argue that difference must be understood as disapproval or dislike. One can only tolerate what one disagrees with or dislikes. On the other side of the continuum is the position that claims difference may be a variety of phenomena. Difference does not mean that I have to disagree or dislike something, it may be another way of living. I may not react to it at all. Or it may leave me in a state of not understanding, surprise, or disgust. Or it may be differences that are of a positive kind – they are not my way of life, but I can see, and may be impressed by, their value. There are other ways of relating to difference than to disagree or agree. On this account disapproval/dislike is no necessary condition of tolerance.

So far I have constructed a three-dimensional conceptual field or map of tolerance. I believe most conceptions of tolerance can be located within this map – the map enables us to analyze what is meant by tolerance in each particular case. Often we use the same word and think that we also use the same concept. However, as I have argued so far, there are a number of possible conceptualizations of tolerance.

Theories of Tolerance

Introduction

In this chapter so far I have distinguished between legitimate and illegitimate tolerance and intolerance. I also claimed that in order to tolerate what is wrong or untrue, we need a theory that overrides a theory of right and true. The understanding of tolerance – why we should tolerate, when, how, and the limits of tolerance – is not self-evident. Tolerance in philosophy and other kinds of theory is often not

treated as an independent topic; it is interwoven with larger accounts of society and morality. Different larger accounts, or frameworks, give different understandings of tolerance.

Premodern Tolerance

The main narrative of tolerance is the liberal one. Historically, liberal tolerance was developed during and after the great religious wars in Europe after the Reformation and into the Enlightenment. This does not however mean that the history of tolerance as such starts here. Admittedly, the word tolerance (and toleration) is more frequently used and theorized on from the Enlightenment on. But it is important to distinguish between the word tolerance and the concept tolerance. Although there is a relation between word and concept, the latter is broader. A concept always relates to something, some phenomena, tying them together. A concept is not the same as the phenomena, it describes the phenomena in a better or worse way. Concepts are changing, they are historical and social constructions. Different words may express the concept. This means that the concept of tolerance, ideas of how to navigate in difference, has existed as long as human and social difference. In a very interesting article Kymlicka (1996) describes traditional (premodern) plurality and tolerance. Tolerance on this account was – and is – largely group-based. The practices of Christian and Jewish groups in the Ottoman Empire were tolerated, but tolerance was not extended to the individual. Tolerance meant group autonomy within religious states.

Liberal Tolerance

In the aftermath of the Religious Wars and with the rise of modern Europe, a growing idea was the separating of government and religion. The idea of the liberal state was shaped. It was claimed that the endurance of religious minorities by religious governments was no longer enough. Increasing differences demanded more radical solutions. The individual ought to be at liberty to make autonomous choices, and the state should not discriminate any belief, value, or life form (within certain limits). The securing of the freedom of each individual and the absence of coercion were liberal demands upon the state. It took some time, however, before these ideas led to constitutional consequences.

In this political and philosophical climate the idea of liberal tolerance was formed. Among the more famous early modern authors on tolerance are John Locke (1689/1991) and Voltaire. One main, common idea of liberal tolerance is the public–private distinction (Mendus, 1989; Galeotti, 2002). The social world has two spheres or domains, one public and one private. Different sets of rules apply in these two spheres. In the public sphere we relate as citizens, all differences that are not constitutive of government are ignored. We have to speak and reason as if the differences

which separate us, mainly in religion and morality, are non-existent. We use the language and arguments that are common and available for all citizens. Religious, moral, and other differences belong to the private sphere or realm. This means that tolerance consists in the largest possible freedom for each individual to pursue her own, private good. The role of the tolerant state is to make arrangement for a society that does not interfere with this liberty. A tolerant citizen is the one who accepts other citizens' extensive private freedom, even though she might disagree in or dislike the practices and beliefs of the other.

Here we see that tolerance is operating with two different kinds of subjects and on two different levels. The first case is a matter of state or governmental tolerance. The second concerns tolerance on an individual level. These two contexts make a difference – governmental tolerance faces some other challenges than individual tolerance. Some authors use the terms political and moral tolerance to make this distinction. The idea is that state tolerance cannot be restricted to moral tolerance because vital political (and economical and judicial) factors may supply and override the moral. State tolerance is political tolerance, and individual tolerance is moral tolerance (Weissberg, 1998). This distinction is often made based on an assumption that morality primarily concerns the individual and his proximate relations, not the state. Such a delimitation of the moral leaves little or no room for societal moral questions and issues. I argue that, although tolerance admittedly has both a political and a moral side, those cannot be identified with the state level and the individual level.

Liberal tolerance is constructed in the tension between moral and political, state and individual, tolerance. Liberalism is as diverse as any religion, and there are numerous liberal theories of tolerance. Here I will make a rough distinction between procedural or neutral liberal tolerance on the one hand and substantial or perfectionist liberal tolerance on the other (Oberdiek, 2001; Galeotti 2002).

Procedural Liberal Tolerance

Procedural liberalism works on the idea that the state should be neutral on issues of the good. In a modern, pluralistic society there is no way a state can judge between different claims of the good, between different substantial conceptions of a good life and a good society. The state can, however, work out and work on just and fair procedures. These procedures are formed and operate on principles of the right. The most common principle of the right way to do things is justice. That is, the right procedure is the just procedure. The principles of right can be seen as a common framework of a plurality of conceptions of the good. The right does not substitute, but is prior to the good.

John Rawls is one prominent representative of procedural liberal tolerance. In his *Theory of Justice* (1971) he worked out the idea of the original position and the veil of ignorance. In working out justice as a procedural principle, one should imagine participants who know nothing about their actual social status and identity. They should work out the principles of justice behind a veil of ignorance. The participants

do not know whether they are rich, their nationality or group identity, their ethnicity, which religion they practice, their position in moral issues, and so on. From this original position such hypothetical participants would subscribe to justice as fairness, expressed in two principles, these being (1) each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others, and (2) social and economical inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all (Rawls, 1971, p. 60).

Justice as fairness means as much liberty as possible for each individual, as long as it does not decrease the liberty of others. It does not rule out inequalities, but they must be reasonable in the sense that they are to everyone's advantage. It is important to emphasize that justice as fairness concerns the public, not the private sphere. The principle regulates how people ought to act in the public, so to speak. The person addressed is the citizen, not any comprehensive theory of the person. This means that one gets two types of tolerance, one public, which operates on the principle of justice as fairness, and one private, which may operate on any conception of the good, as long as it does not exceed the limits of the principle of justice. Rawls (1996) later revised his theory of justice as fairness somewhat, making it less comprehensive ("thinner") and more political than moral. He argued that no one principle of justice as fairness could be established, but that a political and provincial principle could be formed as a result of an overlapping consensus. An overlapping consensus is reached when a common core of principles is found among different groups, independent of their justification and original context.

In addition, in the revised version, public tolerance means not to favor one or several religious or philosophical ways of or conceptions of life. Tolerance is to be neutral in metaphysical matters. Tolerance means liberty and neutrality, within the limits of justice as fairness. This means that procedural tolerance operates with a thick conception of tolerance. The state cannot disapprove of any moral (or similar) action or activity because it has to be neutral in all such issues. Tolerance is not to endure the wrong; it is to establish liberty combined with justice. It does not demand disapproval as a condition of tolerance, difference and acceptance is enough. Tolerance means political neutrality. This is a lesser claim of neutrality than for instance a metaphysical or a moral one. Public tolerance is only one part of the story – the other is private tolerance, which operates on substantial conceptions of the good. The distinction between public and private tolerance does not concur with the distinction between the state and the individual. The individual is acting in the public sphere as a citizen, and then public tolerance applies. Acting in her group or by herself the individual is in the private sphere, where private tolerance applies. There are good reasons to conceive public schools as public domains, where the teacher and his students are acting as citizens. On the procedural liberal account they ought to be acting according to public tolerance. In their faith community or in their family, however, they are acting according to private tolerance. This distinction between public and private tolerance is often not spelled out in liberal theories. The distinction is more implicit than explicit. The interest of liberal theory lies in the common public sphere, not in particularities of the private.

Substantial Liberal Tolerance

Liberal tolerance is also of another kind, substantial or perfectionist tolerance. This argument claims that the state does not have to be neutral in matters of the good. Liberalism is not neutrality – there are certain distinct liberal values. One of these is autonomy. Joseph Raz (1988) presents a case for autonomy-based tolerance. Autonomy is a value that is deeply rooted in liberal culture, he claims: “The autonomous person is a (part) author of his own life” (Raz, 1988: p. 156). Being an author of one’s life does not mean control in every aspect, but a situation of real options and choice. Such autonomy, options, and choice are necessary because we live in a situation of a plurality of forms of life. They may all be morally acceptable, but still incompatible:

Moral pluralism is the view that there are various forms and styles of life which exemplify different virtues and are incompatible. Forms or styles of life are incompatible if, given reasonable assumption about human nature, they cannot normally be exemplified in the same life. Moral pluralism claims not merely that incompatible forms of life are morally acceptable but that they display distinct virtues, each capable of being pursued for its own sake (Raz, 1988: p. 159).

This does not amount to individual relativism in the sense that everything goes. Each of the rival moralities has its own standards. Another way of putting it is that moralities or forms of life are decided on a meso or group level, not a macro, universal, or a micro, individual level. Still, some values transcend the meso level, for instance autonomy and tolerance. Autonomy constitutes the conditions for the individual to make her own choices of forms of life. And tolerance is a means to prevent people interfering with other people’s autonomy:

Toleration, then, is the curbing of an activity likely to be unwelcome to its recipient or of an inclination so to act which is in itself morally valuable and which is based on a dislike or an antagonism of that person or of a feature of his life, reflecting a judgment that these represent limitations or deficiencies in him, in order to let that person have his way or in order for him to gain or keep some advantage (Raz, 1988, p. 163).

Here we see that tolerance is understood somewhat differently from how it is understood in procedural liberalism. Objection (dislike) and acceptance, as well as difference, are conditions of tolerance. Put differently, the meso-morality creates the condition of objection, but the macro-morality of autonomy overrules it. As well as in procedural liberalism tolerance is seen as a negative or passive concept, being tolerant is refraining from a legitimate action. This may lead to tolerating bad and evil actions and persons, Raz claims, but it may also lead the tolerator to tolerate things she really should be tolerant of. There are of course limits of tolerance, namely harm and that the actions do not threaten the liberal order of society.

Other authors within liberal perfectionism distinguish between two kinds of tolerance. One strong, generally positive recognition, which is extended to differences within the liberal good, and one weaker and negative one, which is putting up with differences at odds with the liberal good (Galeotti, 2002). This means that the persons and actions that can be placed within the liberal good are given preference.

It also means that tolerance is substantially and strongly liberal in character. Strong tolerance in this sense may be tolerance toward liberals (although of different kinds) only, and tolerance may be understood as liberal virtues.

Critical Tolerance

Another alley in the maze of tolerance is the critical one, and critical tolerance also comes in a number of versions. One famous text is Herbert Marcuse's essay *Repressive tolerance* (1965), in which he distinguishes between false and true tolerance. He uses also the terms "abstract" or "pure" for false tolerance. In modern history tolerance started as a true term, Marcuse claims. Tolerance was extended to the minority groups and persons fighting for freedom and truth and against domination. This means that tolerance worked together with truth, with partiality and the repressed. Tolerance was accompanied with the idea of change. Later, tolerance changed meaning and side, so to speak. Tolerance was extended to everyone, in order to neutralize the forces for change. This way tolerance became a vital means for a laissez-faire attitude, a stronghold for the establishment. All opposition, whether right or wrong, legitimate or illegitimate, is treated equally, is tolerated. Marcuse did not dismiss tolerance as an ideal, but claimed it had to be changed:

The conditions under which tolerance can again become a liberating and humanizing force have still to be created. When tolerance mainly serves the protection and preservation of a repressive society, when it serves to neutralize opposition and to render men immune against other and better forms of life, then tolerance has been perverted (Marcuse, 1965, p. 134).

Tolerance has to take sides, it has to be defined in light of truth, freedom, and liberation, and the forces that prevent freedom and truth are not to be tolerated:

The realization of the objective of tolerance would call for intolerance toward prevailing policies, attitudes, opinions, and the extension of tolerance to policies, attitudes, and opinions which are outlawed or suppressed. In other words, today tolerance appears again as what it was in its origins, at the beginning of the modern period – a partisan goal, a subversive liberating notion and practice. Conversely, what is proclaimed and practiced as tolerance today, is in many of its most effective manifestations serving the cause of oppression (Marcuse, 1965, p. 100).

The distinction between false and true tolerance can be made rationally on empirical grounds, Marcuse claims, a point of view which he does not elaborate in any detail.

Two other theories on tolerance may be classified as critical, although the first leans toward a communitarian view and the second toward a liberal one. David Miller (1988) argues that tolerance has to be related to a common citizenship. Such a common citizenship is a condition for social justice and equality. Miller argues that national politics and national autonomy are attacked on two fronts. From the "outside" globalization is forcing the nation state to abide after global market mechanisms, decreasing national self-governance and autonomy. From the inside increased tribalism means more group-based autonomy, which also threatens

national unity. It is therefore imperative to strengthen the nation state, not because of some national ideology, but to keep a political level that can maintain equality and justice. Such a level has to be of a certain strength in order to do and carry out politics.

A common citizenship is not something that can be (entirely) chosen, but something into which one grows. Common citizenship is therefore closely connected to national identity. National identity is always in tension between unity and plurality, and always changing: “For the dialogue ideal to have a chance of success, participants must share a common identity as citizens that is stronger than their separate identities as members of ethnic or other sectional groups” (Miller 1988, p. 248). This means that dialogues on tolerance are always taking place on the background of some common identity. This common identity has to be maintained and strengthened through education. Such a policy is not contrary to tolerance, but a condition for tolerance.

Jürgen Habermas (1990b) distinguishes between the particular life-world of individuals and groups on the one hand and the public sphere on the other, in much the same way as in liberal theory. On a superficial reading, Habermas does not seem concerned with tolerance – he does not use the concept much at all. He does, however, often use “solidarity” synonymously. Habermas distinguishes between a particular solidarity/tolerance which is located in the private sphere and a universal solidarity/tolerance in the public sphere:

As a component of universalistic morality, solidarity loses its merely particular meaning, in which it is limited to the internal relationships of a collective ethnocentrically isolated from other groups – the character of forced willingness to sacrifice oneself for a collective system that is always present in premodern forms of solidarity. . . [where] fellowship is entwined with fellowship. . . Justice conceived in postconventional terms can converge with solidarity, as its other side, only when solidarity has been transformed in the light of the idea of a general, discursive formation of the will (Habermas 1990b, 244–245).

Habermas’ main concern here is to establish a universal moral in the public sphere. It is based on the assumption that humans are communicative beings and that it is possible to identify certain procedural conditions or principles that can ensure a public discourse. Through such a discourse it is possible to reach new consensual understanding on common norms and principles for social and moral relations. Solidarity or tolerance is a necessary precondition for such a discourse, Habermas maintains. We need to respect the other as human in order to meaningfully enter a discourse. The more precise principles and content of tolerance are to be worked out through the discourse.

Critical tolerance has in many ways been formed in critical dialogue with liberal tolerance. This is also the case with communitarian tolerance. To put it simply, communitarian tolerance denies a universal liberal framework for understanding and dealing with difference. Such a framework is always partial and particular, and it becomes easily illiberal toward strong differences. Tolerance must therefore be conceived in light of its particular historical, political, religious, and philosophical context. Tolerance is not one thing; it changes according to social situation and

theoretical framework. This also means that tolerance never can be understood as a procedural principle. It is always dependent on some substantial account of the good. Put differently, there is no one theory of tolerance that transcends all particular moral understandings and theory. Still, there may be similarities and commonalities between the different conceptions of tolerance.

Communitarian Tolerance

Walzer makes some valuable distinctions regarding different contextual understandings of tolerance. First, he states that tolerance may be understood along a continuum, including the following positions:

- (1) Resigned acceptance
- (2) Indifference (passive, relaxed, benignly) to difference
- (3) Recognition of others' rights (even if expressed unattractively)
- (4) Openness, respect (listen and learn)
- (5) Enthusiastic endorsement of difference (Walzer 1997, 10–11).

Second, Walzer claims that tolerance takes different shape in different regimes. For instance, tolerance in nation states is different from tolerance in immigrant societies. Nation states are characterized by one dominant group and one or several minorities. There is a pressure of the minority groups toward national identity and assimilation, at least in important public matters. On the other hand, there is a pressure toward minority groups to increase tolerance toward its members. Immigrant societies have no dominant group. One is tolerated as an individual, not as a member of a group. Tolerance is therefore more horizontal than vertical. It is not a matter of a more dominant majority versus a minority, but individuals versus individuals at equal basis.

Members of immigrant societies often have hyphenated identities. This leads to the third issue on context and tolerance, the distinction between modern and post-modern tolerance. Modern tolerance is found in two versions, Walzer claims. On the first account the focus is on individuals and inclusion. People are to be tolerated as citizens. On the second account tolerance means recognition of cultural groups. Minorities understand themselves as members of cultural groups, they have group identity. These minority groups are under pressure, and this leads to identity crises among minorities. Tolerance therefore means to positively recognize cultural minority groups. While modern tolerance operates with an understanding of difference between groups and individual, postmodern tolerance understands difference more radically. The subject is itself characterized by plurality. A human being has a relational, fluid, and plural identity, and tolerance does refer not only to how to relate to others but also to how to relate to oneself. The difference between modern and postmodern tolerance is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Modern and postmodern tolerance, according to Walzer (1997), from Afdal (2006, p. 127)

	Modernity		Postmodernity
Tolerating	The individual	The group	The stranger
The person	Citizen	Member	Divided self

Postmodern Tolerance

An account of postmodern tolerance is found in Richard Rorty’s *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989), although he also is using solidarity instead of tolerance and does not use the term postmodern frequently. Rorty understands difference as radical and constitutive. Difference is all pervasive, it is not something that should or could be overcome. Neither is there any way we can transcend difference, in knowledge, language, morality, and so on. There is no neutral position or ground from which to understand and evaluate difference. This means that we can never know for sure whether our account is right or true. This leads to individual tolerance. Rorty calls the tolerant individual the “ironist.” She is trapped within her own language, but sees the partiality and the contingency of this.

Rorty also works out an account of state tolerance, the liberal state. The purpose of the state is to ensure individual freedom. The state should only interfere with individual liberty when harm is at risk. Both these kinds of tolerance are negative (passive). Rorty is also arguing for a third, positive form of tolerance, tolerance as solidarity:

In my utopia, human solidarity would be seen not as a fact to be recognized by clearing away “prejudice” or burrowing down to previously hidden depths but, rather, as a goal to be achieved. It is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers. Solidarity is not discovered by reflection, but created. It is created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other, unfamiliar sorts of people. Such increased sensitivity makes it more difficult to marginalize people different from ourselves by thinking, “They do not feel it as we would,” or “There must always be suffering, so why not let them suffer?” (Rorty 1989, p. xvi)

These three different kinds of tolerance in Rorty are summarized in Table 3.

To summarize theories of tolerance: Tolerance has, since the Enlightenment, theoretically been developed as a liberal idea. Today, however, tolerance can be understood within a number of different theoretical perspectives. Here I have

Table 3 Three accounts of tolerance in Rorty (1989), from Afdal, (2006, p. 130)

	Private	Group	Public
Negative	(1) Tolerance as irony		(2) Tolerance as freedom
Positive		(3) Tolerance as solidarity	

sketched critical, communitarian, and postmodern tolerance, in addition to two liberal conceptions. Although there are common themes and overlapping understandings of tolerance, there are also vital differences and disagreement as to what tolerance is, why one ought to be tolerant, and about the limits of tolerance. My aim in this chapter is not to judge between theories, but to use the different conceptualizations and theories to work out three different typologies of tolerance. This is the next step.

Three Typologies of Tolerance

Introduction

It is easy to lose direction in the maze of tolerance. I argue that it is possible and fruitful to construct three typologies or models on the basis of the distinctions established above. I use the concepts “typology” and “model” to indicate that they are ideal types in the Weberian sense. The typologies are ideal, not in the sense that they correspond to how tolerance should be, or that they give a comprehensive account of all aspects of tolerance as it is actually understood. The typologies are theoretical simplifications, emphasizing certain aspects. Here they are useful in order to reflect on the relationship between tolerance and inter-religious education. In working out the typologies I also use empirical research on tolerance in education, which there is no space for reporting here, but which can be found in *Tolerance and Curriculum* (Afdal, 2006).

Tolerance One: Tolerance as Endurance

Tolerance one is a classical and minimal tolerance: I endure what I consider wrong. Tolerance is always the second best, a last resort. It is only an interim value – tolerance is no aim in itself, it has instrumental value. It is a way to handle difference in opinion and action that is not of the good. Tolerance is the last way out, after having tried to argue for the right, good, or true. It is often formulated as freedom of speech, as in the following quote (Voltaire): “I may disagree with what you have to say, but I shall defend, to the death, your right to say it.” This means that tolerance is when one knows the right and the true, but for some reason do not act on it. Tolerance as endurance takes place when a strong theory on right and/or true, a theory with universal claims, conflicts with another. Strong theories can be of quite different kinds. In Norway tolerance one is most common among conservative Christian groups and groups within the Norwegian Humanist Association (a secular humanist society). They have in common a strong modern ideal of one truth, and a conception of the free, rational, autonomous individual human being. It is vital that each individual take an unambiguous stand on issues on truth and the right. This is also the kind

of tolerance that has been defended in much modern moral and political philosophy. Tolerance one is both procedural and negative. A procedural liberal theory of tolerance is taken for granted; there is no substantial theory of tolerance from the particular conception of the good. This means that tolerance is something external to their own theories, it is not integrated as a good. Tolerance amounts to doing nothing, to let people speak without interfering. The problems with tolerance one are twofold: first I become more tolerant, the more I disapprove of the other (but still endure it). Tolerance is no road to better understanding of the other; second the theory of difference may be too shallow. Difference is something out there. But is it? Is not difference a part of our group and ourselves?

Tolerance Two: Tolerance as Being Unprejudiced

Tolerance two consists in not being prejudiced. That is, the tolerant person is the person that is open and liberal toward other people and issues. She is progressive and does not let tradition limit her life and her points of view. Tolerance two is therefore not a last resort, but the characteristic of a good person. Tolerance is a virtue. The virtue consists in being unprejudiced. People are individuals and different, and that is good.

With tolerance two there is no need for a strong theory on the right and true. There is no double condition of tolerance. One does not first have to disapprove of something, to accept it. No, tolerance is acceptance of difference. This is the kind of tolerance that most often is mapped in surveys and other quantitative empirical studies of tolerance. Tolerance in these studies is measured by different questions of prejudices (Vogt, 1997; Sullivan, 1982; see also Jackman, 1994 for a critical account). Then one can uncover relations between tolerance and education, age, sex, religion, nationality, and so on. This is the first step to discover the causes for tolerance, which in turn can help education and policy.

The problem with tolerance two is that it can only tolerate tolerant people. People who are not tolerant are not tolerated. This is because tolerance two loses its double ground; it is not effective in those cases where there is real difference. Tolerance really means to make everyone the same, not just persons with tolerant attitudes. This kind of liberal tolerance easily becomes very presumptuous, repressive, and intolerant toward radical forms of life. There are plenty of recent examples of this in the Western world.

Tolerance Three: Tolerance as Openness

Tolerance three is tolerance as openness. Tolerance as openness is in many ways the most ambitious of the three. Tolerance can here be translated with empathy and learning. Tolerance is conditioned by difference and acceptance, but difference is

conceived as more than objection (disapproval and dislike). Difference is not necessarily a threat or something on which I have to take a stand. Still, tolerance does not come easy. Tolerance means engagement, trying to understand and learn, and in order to do that I have to open up.

Opening up does not mean extinguishing oneself. Being tolerant means that you are other than me, which presupposes “me” and “identity.” Identity is, however, not understood as fixed, but as something on the move, as a never-ending story. It is plural and ambiguous, but accountable. This means that difference is not out there, something external to our group and me. Difference is constitutive of all of us, in all the changing relations we stand. This means that tolerance is always reflexive – it is turned toward the other and toward me. Difference is a resource, for how I understand and relate to others and myself. Tolerance three is positive, it is active. Tolerance is not not-interference, tolerance is interference, care. The problem with tolerance as openness is that it may be too romantic and harmonic, too naïve of the power structures that condition and partly define human relations (Table 4).

Table 4 Three typologies of tolerance

Tolerance 1 Endurance	Tolerance 2 Being Unprejudiced	Tolerance 3 Openness
Objection and acceptance	Acceptance	Difference and acceptance
Last resort	Virtue	Empathy and learning
Unity vs difference	Difference within unity	Difference vs difference
Negative	Positive	Positive
Procedural	Substantial	Relational

Tolerance and Inter-religious Education

How can the three typologies contribute to inter-religious education? I am not able to present any comprehensive answer, but can point to some possibilities. I will do this in the same three steps as above.

In Some Cases Peace Is All One Can Hope for

In some cases of inter-religious education the differences are so deep that the best one can hope for is non-conflict or negative (passive) peace. In teaching about religious conflicts in the world, this is apparent. In some cases the conflicts go so deep that the only realistic alternative is nonviolence. One may moralize and claim that the participants should be able to respect each other. But sitting in a safe classroom some thousand miles away, making such a claim is easy. The next day the teacher may be at war with his neighbor or wife. Sometimes the human, social, moral, and religious conflicts involve so much history, emotions, and identity that the goal of

tolerance in inter-religious education is to acknowledge one's disapproval, but still not interfere.

This may also be the case when some religious groups claim something to be absolute true or right. Demanding more of tolerance than tolerance one implies a demand of opening up absolute claims, and demanding the crossing of a line in the multireligious classroom. This does not mean that one shall not discuss and challenge religious truths, but in certain situations demanding more of tolerance means educational coercion.

Some Virtues Have to Be Identified as More Tolerant Than Others

Some virtues are more tolerant than others. I do not mean this in any absolute sense, that these virtues can be identified once and for all. However, in any historical situation some virtues are more preferable, seen as more admirable than others. This also goes for multicultural societies and classrooms, although one can never hope for absolute agreement. It is always a negotiated, political agreement, changing through the years. This means that the goal of tolerance in inter-religious education is to promote for instance respect, solidarity, and justice.

The Ultimate Goal of Tolerance in Inter-religious Education Is Openness

Still, leaving other people alone and promoting some common tolerant virtues do not make us learn. It does not require us to understand difference better or to see whether these differences may teach me something. Inter-religious education is not only to understand the other as other but to understand what is in-between. It is not only to understand what is, but what may be. Movement in inter-religious education begins when tolerance three is taught and practiced.

There is one more reason why tolerance three is preferable. In late modernity people belong to and act in and between several systems of meaning. This also goes for religion. Being religious is not to settle for a fixed worldview, it is to be on the move. It is being able to see the shifting landscapes better and navigate through them. At its best a tolerant inter-religious education can open the students' eyes to these changing and possible horizons.

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Memory as a Key Concept in Inter-religious Education

Reinhold Boschki

Introduction and Primary Thesis

Whenever two people meet in an inter-cultural and/or inter-religious setting, they are not alone: their predecessors, who belonged to one or the other religion and culture, as well as their histories, are with them. These historical figures, be they grandparents or great-grandparents, are present in any modern inter-religious encounter – sometimes in a conscious, but frequently also in a subconscious way. As an example, this can be observed clearly in the relationship between Jews and Christians. A young Jew meeting a Christian from any European country may recall his special family biography in this encounter as soon as the other mentions his place of birth. Frequently, direct ancestors of the Jew would have been expelled from the very country the Christian person comes from. Often, the family will have been humiliated, concentrated in a Ghetto, deprived of all property, deported, most of them murdered. How could this not directly affect the present coming together of the two people? A second-generation Holocaust survivor told me that when she was young the Holocaust was an everyday topic at the family table. Even if nobody spoke about it, the experience of ultimate humiliation and death remained present; it dominated family life and, in particular, the children's upbringing. The memory of that time of destruction is just as present in the education of the third generation. When I, as a German, met her for the first time, the remembrance of our peoples' shared history was there and it still is there. Although the destruction of the European Jewry by the Nazis was not an inter-religious conflict, religion was involved and cannot be excluded from any attempt to understand the context of this tragedy. Anti-Semitism, the core element of Nazi ideology, builds on a long tradition of hate and hostility against Jews within Christianity. Every encounter between Christians and Jews, therefore, carries a heavy burden of history; we cannot simply be indifferent to the

R. Boschki (✉)
Bonn University, Bonn, Germany
e-mail: reinhold.boschki@uni-bonn.de

events and developments of the past. Even inter-cultural or political conflicts of our time that appear to be entirely removed from any religious context frequently do have their inter-religious backgrounds.

The same can be observed whenever a Muslim meets a Hindu in India today. Innumerable violations between these religions took place in the past and, alas, are still taking place. How could these persons meet without being somehow aware – again, consciously or subconsciously – of all the negative aspects of the history of their inter-religious relationship? One can only hope for an equal awareness of its positive aspects!

These examples highlight that inter-religious relationships of the present are dominated by remembrance of the past. No modern-day encounter can be removed from historical events – even if these took place very long ago. In inter-religious encounters, it is impossible to start at point zero or in a vacuum as if history never had happened.

One explanation for the fact that memory underlies religious as well as inter-religious life can be found in the inner core of religious traditions themselves: religions are institutions of memory. The very nature of religion is to recall what others, the predecessors and founders of the religion, the scribes and representatives, have experienced, thought, spoken and written. Religion, therefore, *is* remembrance of religious tradition. On the basis of this starting point, the primary thesis of this chapter is that all religious traditions are based on memory and that both religious learning and inter-religious learning must therefore also be related to memory.

Memory as a Key Concept in Religious Tradition and Theology

One of the main figures in French sociology of religion, Danièle Hervieu-Léger, attempted to establish a definition of religion that would enable an understanding of basic elements of religious phenomena in *sociological* terms: “Religion is one of the possible ways to satisfy the human need for identification, for classification of collective experience and the need for anticipation of the future. . .” (Hervieu-Léger, 1987, p. 28). She later concretized this general definition of religion with a special term that is a basic element of all religious communities: *tradition*. Religion is a way of believing closely related to a *chain of memory* (Hervieu-Léger [1993] 2000). All religious expressions within a specific religious community – be they narrative, theoretical, practical, liturgical, symbolic or in prayer, songs, sermons, etc. – refer to tradition and, therefore, to memory.

In religious terms, the concepts of memory and tradition are interchangeable. Religion is always based on memory. All religions “remember”: they continuously refer to their founders and predecessors, their historical roots, their legends of origin. All religions furthermore use traditional texts based in the past, practice liturgy that is passed from generation to generation and use long-established prayers. In this way, members of the tradition place themselves *within* an established chain of memory.

This is equally true from a theological perspective, as memory can be seen as a basic religious and theological category. Recent theological publications argue that memory is a key concept in both religious tradition and theology; the latest German yearbook of biblical theology is titled “The Power of Remembrance” (Ebner et al., 2008). In this, as well as in other theological publications (e.g. Theobald & Hoppe, 2006; Petzel & Reck, 2003), the basic texts in Judaism and Christianity are interpreted as expressions of a biblical “culture of memory” (Metz, 2006). Biblical and traditional texts tell the story of the past – the history of suffering as well as the history of liberation and of salvation – both narratively and reflectively. This reiteration and interpretation of historic events create a specific religious hermeneutics through which Jews and Christians, as well as other religions, attempt to understand current reality. Memory is therefore made into a hermeneutics through which to interpret life in general. It never concentrates solely on the past, but gives meaning to historical and present events as well as anticipating the future (Manemann, 2005).

Liturgy is a prime example of various forms of celebrated memory that bring historical and present experiences in touch. Jewish and Christian liturgy may be seen as a “shape of memory” (Meyer-Blanck, 2008). The Pessach festival (Passover), for example, is one of the focal points of Jewish religious life and memory: this family ceremony recollects the slavery of the people of Israel in Egypt, the act of liberation and the exodus from the oppressing country as well as the new beginning in the promised land. The liturgical rules advise participants not only to remember the story cognitively but also to initiate a kind of existential and intense role play: *you*, descendant of the liberated slaves, should act today (at the festival of Pessach) as if *you* were a slave of Egypt yourself, as if *you* were liberated, as if *you* were part of the exodus. In doing so, the liturgy of the Pessach festival promotes direct historical identification on the part of the participants. Here, memory is far from being a mere recollection of historical facts; memory becomes part of the religious individual’s identity. This example allows a further important observation: as stated above, memory must, by default, involve interpretation. At Pessach, the interpretation of historical events provides the framework for a religious interpretation of the world and history in general: God does not want Israel (and, in a universalized understanding of the biblical story, any people) to be enslaved; God therefore initiates the exodus from slavery himself; God accompanies the people on their way to freedom; God promises and guarantees a new beginning.

The same structure of memory can be found in Christian liturgy, which is also rooted in the remembrance of historical events. In the Eucharist, Christians celebrate the remembrance of the story of Jesus’ suffering and death. This leads the believing participants to identify with the first disciples of Jesus: *today* we partake in the last supper, *today* we become part of the fate of Jesus Christ, *today* we gain part of the new life, of the resurrection and salvation.

Again, the past is remembered existentially as part of the own identity and brought into the present, causing a re-*present*-ation. In this way, past events become a new reality – highlighting the fundamental anamnestic structure of liturgy and religious festivals, as well as of religion as a whole. Liturgy and religion are

memory-based (Wahle, 2006), fundamentally making religions institutions that preserve memory. Although these examples are chosen from Judaism and Christianity, it appears to me that similar or analogue structures of memory take place in other religions: the *Hajj*, the Muslim pilgrimage to *Mecca*, can be understood as an anamnetic identification with the deeds of Mohammed, the ultimate prophet in Islam; the various Buddhist forms of meditation are aimed at a close remembrance of and identification with Buddha; Hindus and believers in various other religions act and pray in memory of their ancestors and follow their traditions by ritually identifying with them.

In the following second part of the chapter this hermeneutical approach is complemented by an empirical one: by focusing on young people, *their* approaches to remembrance and religion are investigated. These results are then placed within the framework of the basic thesis of this chapter in its third part.

Young People in Europe and Their Approaches to Memory and Religion

Having investigated the *objective* structure of memory within religious traditions, it is necessary to examine the *subjective* part of memory: the so-called historical consciousness and/or historical awareness of people. In a first approach this will be explored in a non-religious setting. Historical consciousness has been a focus of empirical research for several decades. The history of National Socialism with its millions of victims, especially European Jews, is a good example, as it is still very much a guiding theme in current European research on historical consciousness. As such, it can frequently be identified as a subconscious or unreflective element that fundamentally shapes the “historical conception” and “historical consciousness” of individuals (Levstik & Barton, 2008; Barton & Levstik, 2005; Wineburg, 2001; Stearns, Seixas, & Wineburg, 2000).

“Historical conceptions” are mental constructs, created by individuals in dialogue with others and through mutual exchange within society: they form an understanding of history. “Historical consciousness” is more wide-ranging, a human competence that combines “history” (i.e. historical facts, historical knowledge) with the present (Zuelsdorf-Kersting, 2008, 13ff). Historical consciousness can therefore be defined as a personal relation with history, causing an individual identity to be affected and touched by historical events. The interpretation of history, therefore, becomes part of the world view, self-definition and identity formation of a person.

A full analysis of past research on youth and the Holocaust would greatly exceed the scope of this chapter. As such, the results of the last decades of research, as well as those of recent empirical studies, are summarized in order to identify structures of memory that directly affect the thesis of this chapter. It is generally true to say (Zuelsdorf-Kersting, 2008, pp. 35–121) that *knowledge* of the Holocaust among young people has remained constant on a very low level since the 1960s and may even have decreased slightly. Knowledge of concrete facts, however, is

highly deficient. An example of this can be found in the research of Silbermann and Stoffels (2000) titled “Auschwitz – I have never heard about it”. Many young Germans attempt to play down National Socialism and the Holocaust in order to disburden and exculpate their families, as well as their own identity as grandchild or great-grandchild of a generation of murderers. Simultaneously, most young people condemn National Socialism and morally judge the Holocaust as negative. This shows that knowledge of facts is clearly separated from the ability of historical judgement. Historical judgement is learnt socially because, in the case of this example, it is a social requirement to condemn the Holocaust – especially in Europe. This shows that historical consciousness is not formed by awareness of historical facts but by social impulses. This mechanism is called “communicative memory” (Welzer, 2008), meaning that memory of historical events does not exist on its own but its emergence is the consequence of a communicative process. Memory is generated in a social exchange on the meaning of history among members of a special ethnic, social or political unit. Historical consciousness, therefore, is a form of social interpretation of the past that is guided by specific interests and frequently bears little relation to knowledge of historical facts and their historical context.

In a structural analogy to these results, the same is true for religious consciousness and religious life. The dominant result of all recent studies on religiosity of young people in Europe is that most of them know virtually nothing about religion and religious tradition. Even if baptized, they have limited knowledge of the major Christian teachings and biblical or traditional details. The majority of views are based primarily on stereotypes and superficial information (i.e. Shell, 2006; although results must be differentiated with respect to gender as well as religious beliefs of migrants, especially Muslims).

On the other hand, *studies of young people’s religiosity* from the last decades consistently show that *religion still plays an important role in their lives*. Andreas Feige, a German sociologist of religion, concludes from his own studies, as well as from research carried out by others, that approximately one-third of German youths explicitly reject the notion of religion (Feige, 2000). These young people dissociate themselves completely from religion, the Church, faith and the quest for God. Another one-third expresses ambivalence towards religion as a whole while showing a degree of interest in religious themes and questions. These young people are open to religious impulses and look for religious answers to their specific questions and experiences, but mostly dissociate themselves from institutions such as the Christian Churches. The final one-third of young people are in agreement with the principles and basic elements of a religious tradition, be it Christian or Muslim. This does not necessitate their attendance at regular religious ceremonies such as weekly Masses or a life according to the morality and norms of a religious institution. Instead, the general attitude of these young people is one of affirmation, as summed up by Ziebertz, “. . . religion is not booming among adolescents, but neither is it out of fashion” (Ziebertz & Kay, 2006, p. 72). In the recent publication “Monitor of Religion 2008” (Bertelsmann, 2007), it is reported that 70% of the German population describe themselves as religious, 18% of whom can be seen as “deeply religious” (p. 27; in the United States, Poland and Italy the percentage is

greater; in the United Kingdom, France and Russia it is smaller). The majority of this group is made up of young people. Nonetheless, the religiosity of young people “. . . is devoid of content and not dogmatically outlined” (Ziebertz & Kay, 2005, p. 78). Feige and Gennerich (2008) conclude that both a religious dimension and a strong ethical ambition are there, but these dimensions are not connected with any religious tradition.

It is clearly difficult to combine both of the empirical results shown above, as there is no research regarding the combination of historical consciousness and religiosity. There can be little doubt, however, that young people are open to both the historical dimension of life and the religious one. This openness allows hope that learning processes can and may be initiated in both fields.

Learning Memory: A Basic Competence of Inter-religious Learning

Religious learning does not simply mean the learning of facts related to religion. Spirituality, for example, a fundamental of any religion, is not a merely cognitive matter, but a realm of acting, living, meditating, praying and approaching life and reality in religious terms. To learn spirituality means to learn a way of life. This includes not only cognitive but also emotional, social and action-oriented aspects. Spirituality is an integral concept (see several articles in De Souza et al., 2006). If an individual wants to learn about religion, he/she must make an effort to learn about the spirituality of their religious community. Religious insights cannot be gained by reading of books or learning of facts alone. It is impossible to acquire religion in a library. To learn about a religion, one must visit the places where religious life takes place and seek contact with people who live a religious life; in other words, it is necessary to learn about and understand a *religious tradition*.

According to the results shown in the previous sections of this chapter, religious education must help people who are open to the religious dimension of life to bring their own religious feelings, yearnings and questions (their *subjective religiosity*) into contact and dialogue with an *objective religious tradition*. This is not a mere adoption or assumption of tradition by simply taking on what is traditionally handed down. Religious learning is an active and dialogical process of encountering religious traditions where people acquire basic religious competences. As I have argued in the first part of this chapter, it enables individuals to develop *their own* answers in contact with tradition, *their own* hermeneutics and *their own* interpretation of the world and reality. Religious learning requires dialogue with a religious tradition, and therefore religious memory.

For this reason religious education must include a significant amount of learning about history or, to be correct, learning about a specific interpretation of historical events. It may be assumed that learning in religious terms can actively help an individual to become sensitized in historical terms, as religious learning involves a significant amount of *historical learning* – again, not in terms of learning mere facts

but as a deeper learning that provides a sense of history. Learning religion, therefore, means learning memory.

This begs the question what happens when people from different religious traditions come together? Instead of their sharing the same memories quite the opposite is the case: often their memories are contradictory because memory is interlinked with interpretation, as shown above. This interpretation of the past, however, forms the basis of identity formation for the in-group, while the out-group is perceived in a completely different way. As such, memories of religious groups frequently conflict with one another, especially where two religions are close together and share a common history with several contact points. Sometimes these contact points mark hate, oppression, persecution or even war.

Learning about these events, and about the interpretation and narrative concerning meaningful events in the history of religion in particular, may help to understand the other religious identity in the same way as the own. As any religious identity is formed by identification with historical experiences and biographies, an understanding, even if only partial, of this historical self-interpretation can act as an important competence in an inter-religious encounter. This is reflected in inter-religious learning, which generally aims to establish several such competences (Leimgruber, 2007, 100f; see the chapter by S. Altmeyer, this volume):

- The competence of *perceiving* the documents, testimonies and expressions of other religions;
- The competence of *knowing* (at least some) concrete details about other religions;
- The competence of *understanding* the contents of other religions, their beliefs, their religious conviction; The competence of *dealing with respect* with the expressions of other religions (even if they are strange, as long as they respect humanity);
- The competence of *inter-religious communication and encounter*;
- The competence of *acting together* for common goals.

It is clear that not all of these competences can be achieved together and completely. They are goals and it must be seen as a success if they are realized only partially. There is, however, one core competence that acts as a fundamental basis for all of these skills: the *anamnetic competence*, the competence of remembrance, meaning the ability to remember the history of the religion – again at least partially.

But how are we to achieve this basic competence of remembrance? Usually, history is far removed from the everyday life of (young) learners. The main way to learn historical sensitivity is by learning about history from the perspective of suffering individuals and families. Not only the deeds of conquerors, not only the victories of emperors should be learnt, but the biographies of persons who had to endure persecution, violence or war. These enable the listener or reader to see a completely new perspective. Students who learn about other religions should learn about the stories of individual children, young people, adults and families who tell *their* story and who express *their* interpretation of what happened in the past. Likewise, they should learn from similar biographies of their own religious tradition in order to

learn both the history of suffering *and* the history of salvation not only of the *own* but also of the *other* religious tradition. Without understanding the “chain of memory”, the tradition of remembrance of religions, it is impossible to create situations of equal communication between two (or more) religious traditions. To a large extent, therefore, learning in inter-religious terms means learning about the interpretation of past events by both the *own and* the other religion. Furthermore, study of historical situations of suffering by various religions (e.g. the Holocaust, the Crusades, inter-denominational wars) from the perspective of individuals, families and groups sensitizes learners to situations of oppression and suffering in today’s world, thereby contributing to a human rights education (Benedek, 2006).

Naturally, the task of learning memory in terms of inter-religious exchange is primarily a task for teachers themselves and for teacher training. Universities and teacher training institutions should focus on the memory of other religions in order to make students understand the self-understanding and self-interpretation of these religious systems. This collective memory is summed up in personal prayers, forms of liturgy and rituals, testimonies and diaries, essays and novels, etc. Learning about and from other religions means learning about and from their life-world in history.

Only if the “other”, meaning the person from another religious tradition, can identify a sensitivity to the history of oppression and injustice done to their religion in the past (and perhaps in the present), i.e. when a true and cordial sense of *remembrance* is in evidence, can dialogue take place at the same level, eye to eye, with mutual respect and understanding.

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Competences in Inter-religious Learning

Stefan Altmeyer

Introduction

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, religious education has repeatedly had to justify its original place in general education. The core issue is the extent to which it can contribute to the most fundamental educational goals, i.e. to help individuals to develop their own identity and empower them to become capable of acting in modern society. In this respect, Wright (1996, p. 175), for example, sees religious literacy as “his or her ability to think, act and communicate with insight and intelligence in the light of that diversity of religious truth claims that are the mark of our contemporary culture”. This statement contains two central themes: first, the most important challenge to contemporary societies, religious diversity, and second, the original contribution of religious education to this challenge, formulated in terms of action-oriented abilities or, in other words, competences. As such, this chapter seeks to address what it means to adopt the pedagogical concept of competence within the context of inter-religious learning. Figure 1 may serve as an initial clarification of the interdependence of the basic terms (cf. Vött, 2002, p. 60).

The experience of religious diversity and plurality marks the starting point of inter-religious learning, which is understood as a transforming process that is circularly fed back to situational conditions (cf. Berling, 2007, 2004). Inter-religious competence means the desired or factual outcome of this process in relation to life-world-related demands and with limited generalisation in respect of new challenges. While these abilities are deeply connected with religious identity, which emerges from a personal position in relation to others, they can be achieved through neither a mono- nor a multi-religious approach (cf. Ziebertz, 2007, 1993; Tautz, 2007, pp. 21–79). The principal thesis of this chapter, therefore, is that inter-religious learning has to be understood as a constitutive and essential part of religious learning rather than being an opposite or alternative thereof. Inter-religious dialogue and learning are always and coincidentally intra-religious (cf. Sajak, 2005,

S. Altmeyer (✉)
Bonn University, Bonn, Germany
e-mail: s.altmeyer@uni-bonn.de

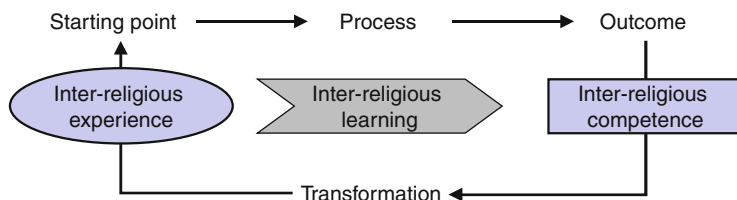


Fig. 1 Competences in inter-religious learning

pp. 290–295; Ziebertz, 1991, p. 326). This is one of the reasons why this chapter is divided into three consecutive sections: initially clarifying the pedagogical key term of competence, subsequently proposing a concept of religious competence in general and finally transforming this concept into a model of competence in inter-religious learning.

Competence as a Pedagogical Concept

At first glance, the meaning of the term competence seems to be reasonably clear. In everyday speech, competence – outside specific juridical contexts – is usually linked to a capacity or specific quality of a person. It does appear somewhat difficult, however, to judge under what terms someone is to be called competent, while the opposite is significantly more straightforward: incompetence describes a person failing to do a job, to perform a task or to fulfil a particular role. The phenomenon of incompetence occurs where the knowledge, skills and capabilities of a person do not match the requirements of a position held or a task to be completed. On the basis of these negative clarifications, the positive concept of competence can be described as the ability to do something well, especially where this term defines the skills and knowledge needed in the context of a particular job or task. More generally, if all factual and potential jobs and tasks that a person may be confronted with during a lifetime are seen in combination, competence may be seen as a sufficiency of means for the necessities and conveniences of life (cf. Müller-Ruckwitt, 2008, pp. 109–123). All in all, the everyday meaning of competence is not quite this abstract, but three concrete terminological aspects of usage can be identified for further consideration. First, although the term competence can be applied to a group of persons (e.g. a “competence team”), it is normally used as a *subject-oriented* term. Speaking of competence means speaking of qualities (knowledge, skills and capabilities) of a specific person. Second, the concept of competence is closely associated with situations of performance: the identification of an individual as competent depends on his/her actions in challenging situations. Competence, therefore, is an *action-oriented* concept. Third, the first two characteristics imply the last, which states that specific competences cannot be formulated as abstract definitions, as they are *bound to a specific area or domain*. Such competence necessitates a description of the field to which it is related.

Competence as a Key Term in Pedagogy

Beyond such basic linguistic concepts of competence, the spectrum of competence as a scientific term is significantly more complex (cf. Klieme & Hartig, 2008; Schmidt, 2005; Weinert, 2001). Competence is a popular concept in different sciences ranging from the psychological, social and educational sciences to the cognitive, linguistic or even economical ones. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that “the term ‘competence’ is associated with a wide variety of definitions and meanings” (Klieme & Hartig, 2008, p. 11). In a detailed terminological study, the German educationalist Anne Müller-Ruckwitt (2008) differentiates between the following five most influential theories of competence (cf. also Klieme & Hartig, 2008; Oelkers & Reusser, 2008, pp. 20–26): the competence approach of motivation psychology founded by Robert W. White (1959); the model of operative intelligence in developmental psychology (cf. Connolly & Bruner, 1974); the linguistic competence term according to Noam Chomsky (1995); the concept of communicative competence in the communication theory of Jürgen Habermas (1990); and the model of moral reasoning as cognitive competence developed by Lawrence Kohlberg (1984).

This plurality of concepts and meanings does form not only an inter-disciplinary problem but also an intra-disciplinary one. In most of the scientific fields mentioned above and in educational research in particular, the term competence is associated with controversial discussions. In an educational context the debate has been substantially stimulated by the so-called Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) coordinated by the Organisation for Economical Co-operation and Development (OECD, see www.pisa.oecd.org). The aim of this programme, which was launched in 1997, is to monitor “the extent to which students near the end of compulsory schooling have acquired the knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society” (DeSeCo, 2005, p. 3). Since the first assessment in 2000, two further worldwide surveys have been carried out, with 57 countries contributing in 2006. While the initial focus was on comparing students’ literacy skills in posing, solving and interpreting problems in different domains, special emphasis is now put on the key category of competence, which is defined as follows (DeSeCo, 2005, p. 4; cf. Rychen & Salganik, 2001):

A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. For example, the ability to communicate effectively is a competency that may draw on an individual’s knowledge of language, practical IT skills and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating.

This assessment programme claims to provide a theoretically sound and empirically validated model of competence in order to develop educational systems worldwide by means of quantitative empirical measurement and cross-national comparison. Although the programme and its underlying competence model in particular have often been criticised, it can be seen as the original stimulus for the wider

focus on the discourse of competence in educational science (cf. Müller-Ruckwitt, 2008, pp. 23–55).

Relation to Traditional Pedagogical Concepts

In order to specify the theoretical foundation of competence as an educational key category, the relationship between the concept of competence, introduced in order to evaluate the success of educational processes and improve didactical planning, and the goals of education needs to be clarified and elucidated. This conceptual clarification is necessary for any evaluation of the extent to which the introduction of such a new concept actually contributes to the tools available to the educational researcher and facilitates the process of education. The intended relationship of competence to the traditional key category of educational goals is summarised concisely in the following statement of Eckhard Klieme (2004, p. 64):

Competency models [...] provide a framework for operationalisations of educational goals, which in turn allow the output of the education system to be monitored empirically in assessment programmes.

This delineation clearly states that the concept of competence is not intended to displace educational goals. On the contrary, competences have the same applications as the formulation of goals, but take a fundamentally different perspective: first, they aim to make traditionally abstract goals (such as maturity of taking action under today's social and cultural conditions) more concrete; second, they purport to achieve concrete goals by means of a shift of perspective. The classical point of view represented by educational goals is input-oriented, while the concept of competence focuses on the desired outcomes of learning processes. Competences aim to provide a framework to “translate the content and levels of general education into specific terms. They thus constitute a pragmatic response to the issues of construction and legitimisation raised in traditional debates on education and curricula” (Klieme et al., 2004, p. 5). In this respect, competence is conceptually subordinated to educational goals and has to fulfil an auxiliary role.

The practical benefit of the concept of competence in relation to educational goals can be specified in two ways: the articulation of abstract educational goals in terms of specific learnable abilities and skills offers teachers a clear pedagogic and didactic focus for their work; at the same time, the operationalisation of educational goals facilitates the assessment and evaluation of students' learning outcomes.

Defining Pedagogical Competence

Returning to the heuristics touched upon above, the pedagogical concept of competence underlying this chapter can now be outlined. As Weinert (2001, p. 45) puts it, a competence is “a roughly specialized system of abilities, proficiencies, or skills that

are necessary or sufficient to reach a specific goal". The term is not to be understood as a reduction to the cognitive dimension of learning, but rather includes motivational, volitional and social dimensions (cf. Weinert, 2002, pp. 27f; 2001, pp. 62f). Beyond this general description, which puts competence (as a singular term) in a dependent relationship to educational goals, the following aspects of different competences (as a plural term) in learning processes can be specified.

The first aspect is that competences can only be learned in *connection with specific domains*. Even the so-called key competences, which have to be understood as cross-curricular skills such as reading or writing, need material content. In the words of Jürgen Oelkers and Kurt Reusser (2008, p. 21), "Competences cannot be developed 'net'" because they need concrete problems or challenges to appear. Therefore, the second characteristic becomes appropriate: the acquisition of competences is related to *subject-oriented learning processes*. Competences intend to translate abstract objective goals into subjective learning situations and problem solving in a *particular domain*. Third, "the term competence therefore corresponds to a more pragmatic and functional or action-based (as opposed to material or contemplative) understanding of knowledge and education" (Oelkers & Reusser, 2008, p. 21). Competences, while deeply action-based, are closely *related to the life-world of students*.

In short, in this chapter the term competence is used to refer to the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to cope with life-related challenges within a domain-specific perspective (cf. Müller-Ruckwitt, 2008, p. 247).

Competence in Religious Education

Due to the fact that competence must be understood as a domain-related concept, recent years have seen several attempts to apply the term to the field of religious education. It remains unclear, however, whether it is possible to actually define a specific religious competence. It is equally unclear to what extent such a competence – should it exist – could be differentiated into specific terms of knowledge, skills and actions which concretise – as the idea of competence postulates – the content and goals of religious education. One of the first attempts to appropriate the language and concept of competence undertaken by religious educators in Europe took the form of an anthology entitled "Towards religious Competence" (Heimbrock, Scheilke, & Schreiner, 2001; cf. also the important but little received earlier study: Hemel, 1988). In their introduction the editors state as follows (Heimbrock et al., 2001, p. 9):

As a key term we introduce "*religious competence*" as an overall aim of religious education. [...] Religious competence means being able to deal with one's own religiosity and its various dimensions embedded in the dynamics of life-history in a responsible way but also to appreciate the religious view of others.

In comparison with the definition of competence as a pedagogical term in the earlier section of this chapter, it is noticeable that the terms competence and goal

are frequently mixed up in this reference. This results in a model where religious competence, as the ability to deal with the religiosity of oneself and of others, remains somewhat abstract (despite being definitely central in terms of its goals). Later on in the study, more concrete specifications are presented: religious competence includes active tolerance, ethical orientation, readiness for dialogue and the handling of religious diversity (cf. Heimbrock et al., 2001, pp. 9 and 15).

This initial terminological fuzziness, however, has been removed by further theoretical work since then. In Germany, for example, two models of Christian religious competence have gained influence, especially so in terms of curriculum reform. The first, concerning Protestant religious education, has been proposed by a group of experts at the Comenius Institute (cf. Fischer & Elsenbast, 2006); the second concerns Catholic religious education and includes the formulation of normative guidelines for standards in Catholic religious education in primary and secondary schools by the bishops in Germany (cf. DBK, 2006, 2004). Both models explain religious competence in a comparable way, seeing it as a set of general dimensions that have to be connected with specific religious content (cf. Fischer & Elsenbast, 2006, p. 19; DBK, 2004, p. 13):

- Perceiving and describing of religious phenomena (perceptive dimension)
- Understanding and interpreting of religious knowledge and traditions (cognitive dimension)
- Forming and acting in forms of religious practice (performative dimension)
- Communicating and reasoning in connection with religious questions and creeds (interactive dimension)
- Participating and deciding in life-world-related religious situations (participative dimension)

At least two points remain unclear in connection with this five-dimensional model of religious competence. The first is that these competences appear rather general, while the specific religious part is only introduced by religious content that has to be taught in order to develop the general competences. The second issue is whether these competences can be related to an analysis of the concrete religious act. Such a theoretical definition, however, would be necessary for the subject-, domain- and action orientation of competence to be taken seriously.

Analysis of Faith as Communicative Action

If learning is defined “as the growing capacity or the growing competence of students to participate in culturally structured practices” (Wardekker & Miedema, 2001, p. 27), a theory of religious learning in terms of competence must be based on an analysis of the structures underlying religious practice. The theory of communicative action according to the Frankfurt school (cf. Habermas, 1984, 1987) suggests itself as a theoretical framework for the intended description of religious practice. This concept of communication goes beyond the simple sender–receiver

model and moves towards a model of communicative rationality, but can still be described in straightforward terms. Each communicative act can be differentiated into five dimensions summed up in the following mnemonic: *I communicate – about something – with others – under contextual conditions – by using a specific form*. The five constituents of communicative action are as follows: first, the autonomous subject that is communicating ('I communicate'); second, the content of communication as its objective-material aspect ('about something'); third, the subjective counterpart of communication ('with others'); fourth, the social life-world in which the action is situated ('under contextual conditions'); and fifth, the aesthetic dimension concerning the perceivable form of communication ('by using a specific form'). According to Habermas, a successful communication oriented towards the ideal of total absence of domination has to guarantee certain communication claims in all five of these dimensions, ranging from truthfulness in the subjective dimension to aesthetic coherence in questions of form.

This model of communicative action forms the basis of the following analysis of the religious act (cf. Mette, 2005; Peukert, 1988). This analysis focuses on Christian faith as communicative action, primarily because a pure consideration of religious *action* without thinking of the *practice* of a specific religion would be unfeasible. A short mnemonic parallel to that above may, again, be helpful: *I believe – in God – who confronts me in the person of my neighbour – under the conditions of today's life – by using condign forms of expression*.

The first (and subjective) dimension refers to the inner reality of faith that motivates an individual's free decision of living in the gifted relationship to God (in traditional terms: *fides qua creditur*). The second (objective-material) dimension forms the necessary counterpart as the aspect of belief; no faith act could be imaginable without content (*fides quae creditur*). The third (and inter-subjective) dimension describes the relational reality of Christian faith – insofar as the vertical relationship to God is not to be separated from the horizontal relationship realised in human relationship (cf. Hull, 2008). The fourth (contextual) dimension extends this relational aspect of faith to the conditions of everyday life. Every faith act, finally, has to be situated in a contextual frame by use of certain subjectively authentic, inter-subjectively suitable and materially well-grounded forms, which constitute the fifth (and aesthetic) dimension of faith.

Competence Model for Religious Education

These theoretical reflections allow the suggestion of a competence model for religious education based on the analysis of Christian faith as communicative action:

- *Spiritual sensitivity* (subjective dimension): Insofar as the act of faith is deeply rooted in human subjectivity, religious learning helps to develop awareness of a person's inner world of ultimate concern.
- *Religious knowledge and ability of reasoning* (objective-material dimension): In order to connect spirituality to reflected experience, religious learning brings the material dimension of faith as interpretational frame into play.

- *Ability to relationship* (inter-subjective dimension): Christian faith is concentrated on the idea that the way of experiencing God involves an encounter with the self and with others (including people of other religions). This is why sensitising to personal relations must be at the heart of religious learning (cf. Boschki, 2006).
- *Capacity for action* (contextual dimension): While faith as communicative action is always dependent on social and cultural conditions, religious learning helps people to be religious in terms of thinking, acting and communicating in the light of religious truth claims (cf. Wright, 1996, p. 175).
- *Faculty of expression* (aesthetic dimension): Religious learning encourages people to search and find an appropriate way of correlating their personal belief with traditional religious forms (cf. Altmeyer, 2006).

In summary, religious competence is to be seen as the learnable ability to deal with life-world-related challenges (cf. Helbling, 2004) by using religious rationality in its five dimensions, i.e. by returning to subjective points of ultimate concern, by reasoning in connection with religious tradition and creed, by relating to others as representatives of God, by substantiating options for action through religious claims and by using religiously relevant and coherent forms.

A Two-Dimensional Model of Competences in Inter-religious Learning

The general description of religious competence as given in the previous section must also be applied to the field of inter-religious learning. As stated in the introduction, inter-religious learning ought not to be seen as an alternative to, but as a constitutive part of, religious learning. This assumption has furthermore become evident through the analysis of faith as communicative action underlying the proposed competence model. This has also been described as the claim of the inter-subjective dimension of faith, namely that the encounter with others (regardless of their religion) forms a crucial way of experiencing God. The call for inter-religious encounter and dialogue, therefore, stands for more than some contingent requirement of post-modern times, but is founded in the relational reality of faith itself. The groundbreaking declarations of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) have to be read in this spirit: if Christians believe that all religions “reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men” (*Lumen Gentium*, 16) because principally God is never “far distant from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God” (*Nostra Aetate*, 2), then the willingness to engage in dialogue becomes a sign of Christian identity and authenticity (cf. the corresponding chapters of this handbook).

This background rationalises the belief that in the majority of cases the general educational goal in the context of inter-religious learning lies in a mandate

to encounter and come into dialogue with people of other religions (cf. current overviews in Pollefeyt, 2007; Schreiner, Sieg, & Elsenbast, 2005; Ruppell & Schreiner, 2003). This necessitates that an important part of religious educational discourse on inter-religious learning be focused on the pedagogical, cultural, theoretical and theological key term of dialogue. Insofar as competences try to translate educational goals to outcome-oriented terms in the form of knowledge, skills and attitudes, the next issue is this: which knowledge, skills and attitudes, which cognitive, pragmatic and emotional prerequisites are pedagogically in demand because they are supposed to be essential in order to enable or foster dialogue? What does a student have to know, be able to do or want in order to be capable of carrying out a dialogical encounter with people of other religions “with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life” (Nostra Aetate, 2)?

Inter-cultural Dialogue Competence

While the concept of dialogue competence in religious education research is still rare (cf. Leimgruber, 2007; Lähnemann, 2005; Schreijäck, 2000), the approach to inter-religious dialogue competence has much to learn from the field of inter-cultural communication competence in the social sciences. Ever since the term was introduced in the late 1950s, there have been a large number of studies with a wide diversity of conceptual foci (cf. Landis, Bennett, & Bennett, 2006; Arasaratnam & Doerfelb, 2005; Gudykunst & Mody, 2004; Wiseman, 2004, 1997; Bradford, Allen, & Beisser, 2000; Hannigan, 1990). Subject to an accurate clarification of the relationship between inter-cultural and inter-religious competence, the conceptualisations of inter-cultural competence are of great interest for religious education because they propose a wide range of empirically validated models and practical training concepts. A general definition has been proposed by Richard L. Wiseman (2004, p. 208), one of the leading scholars in inter-cultural communication: “ICC [Intercultural communication] competence involves the knowledge, motivation, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures.”

In accordance with the concept of religious competence presented in this chapter, this definition describes an interactive competence divided into the three basic components of knowledge, motivation and skills. This suggests that a fruitful discourse between the two fields seems feasible. In a central study, the German scholar Matthias Vött (2002) reviewed a large number of international models of inter-cultural communication competence in order to test their relevance and importance for inter-religious learning. Combining quantitative and qualitative criteria, he identified eight sub-competences that are linked to dialogue competence in inter-religious learning in general. He utilises concrete operationalisations that enable him to evaluate his competence model empirically. The eight components, arranged

in the sections of knowledge, motivation and skills, are defined as follows (cf. Vött, 2002, p. 129):

- Within the knowledge component as conceptualising “the information necessary to interact appropriately and effectively, and the requisite cognitive orientation to facilitate the acquisition of such information” (Wiseman, 2004, p. 218) he names, first, self-awareness in terms of values and creeds and, second, avoiding premature attributions.
- The motivational factors which influence one’s affect over others are represented by the sub-competences of, first, empathy and, second, appreciation and respect.
- In the third sector, reflecting “the needed behaviors to interact appropriately and effectively” (Wiseman, 2004, p. 219), Vött identifies, first, tolerance of ambiguity, second, appropriate self-disclosure, third, behavioural flexibility, and fourth, meta communication.

Competences in Inter-religious Learning

This model of dialogue competence finally allows an assessment of competences for inter-religious learning. While the fundamental thesis of this chapter implies that inter-religious learning must be seen as an essential part of religious learning, the problem of defining inter-religious competence cannot be solved by simply adding two specific religious competences to the list of dialogue competences, as proposed by Vött (2002, pp. 126–129). On the contrary, it must be shown how each dimension of dialogue competence can be integrated into at least one dimension of religious competence. To this end, the two-dimensional model of competence for inter-religious learning shown below (see Fig. 2) illustrates how a competence for inter-religious learning can be formulated by combining dialogical competences (as listed on the horizontal axis) with religious competences (as listed on the vertical axis). Such a combination process alone guarantees the complex enmeshment of both components of inter-religious learning: concerning the dimension of “intra” as well as of “inter”.

The following examples illustrate the function of this two-dimensional model and show how it can be used to provide a framework for didactical questions as well as for the assessment of inter-religious learning processes. The idea is to place an intended learning process in the context of specified religious competences. The examples are taken from the list of competences provided by the German religious education scholar Stephan Leimgruber (2007, p. 100f) in his book on inter-religious learning.

- Leimgruber specifies three competences concerning knowledge, i.e. *perceiving*, *knowing* and *understanding* the contents of other religions, their beliefs, their religious convictions as accessible in documents, testimonies, etc. In Fig. 2, the knowledge component is found in the first two columns, showing that these competences can be specified as primarily applied to self-awareness or to awareness

	Self-awareness	Avoiding premature attributions	Empathy	Appreciation and respect	Tolerance of ambiguity	Appropriate self-disclosure	Behavioural flexibility	Meta communication
Spiritual sensitivity								
Religious knowledge and reasoning								
Ability to relationship								
Capacity for action								
Faculty of expression								

Fig. 2 Two-dimensional model of competences in inter-religious learning

of the other. This poses the didactical question to which dimension of religious learning one would assign the three knowledge competences.

- Leimgruber’s competence of *dealing with respect* with the expressions of other religions can be placed in the fourth column of dialogical competence. Once again, however, the interesting question of which dimension of religious learning should be touched (e.g. spiritual sensitivity or faculty of expression?) remains.
- Finally, Leimgruber names two competences in the field of behavioural skills, i.e. *communication and encounter* and *acting together* for common goals. In this case, the correlation with the third and fourth rows (ability to relationship, capacity for action) suggests itself. The dialogue competence axis, however, makes it obvious that no less than four dialogical competences are included in this (ranging from tolerance of ambiguity to meta communication).

Such and similar reflections by means of the two-dimensional scheme of competences may be helpful in translating the abstract and extensive goals of inter-religious education into learning processes. This translation task, however, remains to be done on site, since competences are always subject-oriented and action-based and therefore highly dependent on contextual conditions.

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Education for Peace as a Dimension of Inter-religious Education: Preconditions and Outlines

Karl Ernst Nipkow

Introduction

In this chapter, Karl Ernst Nipkow draws upon two fields of research, the investigation of the role of religion in conflicts and conflict resolution, and the contributions of religious and inter-religious education to the reduction of violence and promotion of peace building. He takes a realistic perspective by referring to empirical data and his own historical studies. The paths to peace need a multidimensional approach, not only an educational one. War and peace depend primarily on economic, social, political and ethno-cultural conditions. We are confronted with the double face of humans in their capacity to cooperate and reconcile and their propensity for aggression and violence.

The Escalating and De-escalating Impact of Religion on Political Conflicts: Preconditions of an Inter-religious Education for Peace

Introduction

A publication by R. Scott Appleby (2000) is titled “The ambivalence of the sacred.” The double role of religion is also reflected in the opening sentences of an introductory paper by Andreas Hasenclever and Alexander De Juan (2007) delivered at an international conference in Tübingen University in November 2007:

A glance at contemporary civil wars attests to the prominent role of religions in many intrastate conflicts. Violent clashes in Sri Lanka, the ongoing fighting between Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq, the bloodshed between Christian and Muslim militia in Nigeria and the seemingly irresolvable Israeli-Palestinian conflict sadly demonstrate how religious beliefs can foster violence. The duration and intensity of these conflicts drive religions’ potential to promote violence into public awareness. Much less noted are their contributions to

K.E. Nipkow (✉)

University of Tübingen, Friedrich-Naumann Str. 14, 35037 Marburg/L., Tübingen, Germany
e-mail: karlernst.nipkow@t-online.de

peaceful conflict management. Time and again, religious actors have effectively promoted peace. The Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSSL), the South African Council of Churches under the leadership of Desmond Tutu, and the engagement of Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani in Iraq are but a few examples of the peace promoting potential of religious traditions (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, p. 19).

Religion as a Primary Cause of Conflict?

In a rich review of selected empirical studies and theoretical works, the authors distinguish between religious beliefs and traditions as primary sources of armed conflicts and as additional factors in pre-existing non-religious conflicts. “Figuratively speaking, the first perspective represents religion as the fire’s ignition, and the latter regards religious differences as its fuel” (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, p. 20). The first case is supported by three causal assumptions: (1) the oft-cited thesis (see S. Huntington’s “Clash of Civilization”) that the very nature of religious faith makes it highly unlikely that people of different faiths will coexist peacefully; (2) the assumption that comparably strong religious groups (e.g. two rivals like Hindus and Muslims in the Kashmir conflict or Tamils and Buddhists in Sri Lanka) split a society and lead to a bipolar constellation which under certain circumstances could escalate to violence; and (3) that a perceived threat to the religious identity of the faithful by secularized irreligious masses or other evil forces like internal dissenters creates aggressive defensiveness (see “fundamentalists”).

However, “The empirical support for these three causal mechanisms – as plausible as they are theoretically – is still weak” (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, p. 22). Instead, the onset of civil wars – the main focus of the authors – strongly correlates with low average income and poor state performance, that is, with economic as well as political and legal factors. The connectedness of peace and social justice shows up. Data on youth violence similarly reveal social deprivation and frustration as the main factor. A fatal “crucial role” (p. 24) is being played by corrupt and opportunistically acting political elites. Although one *cannot rule out* that religious differences might operate as root causes, “behind the religious façade of most violent conflicts, secular structures clearly remain operative and drive the confrontation.”

Preconditions of Peace Education I: Peace and Justice as Effective Public Realities

Education is rather weak in its effects, if just social conditions of life for all are not a powerfully supporting reality in a society as a whole. Peace and social justice have to be explicitly given priority by the responsible political authorities and religious communities. In the Middle Ages the classical Christian ethic was embodied in the two inter-related values of *pax* (peace) and *iustitia* (justice). The same connection is to be found much earlier in the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament).

In awaiting God like a mighty political ruler, the days of his coming kingdom are praised with the words: “In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound . . .” (Ps. 72, 7), “Righteousness and peace will kiss each other” (Ps. 85, 10) – since they need each other.

The inter-dependence of peace and justice is so deeply rooted in humankind’s knowledge that one wonders why politicians don’t learn this lesson and instead rely on weapons; military actions will never produce human welfare. The discrepancy between rich and poor calls for another “globalization” than that which results in notorious winners and losers. In Islam a similar emphasis is given to social justice as in the Bible. In the perception of many Muslims, however, the prosperous Christian countries have betrayed their Christian values. Post-colonial memories and present experiences of humiliation add to this impression. Diffuse mistrust, disappointment and sometimes hate against “the West” have in many places led to a “blockaded communication” (Kandil, 2008).

Preconditions of Peace Education II: Law and Good Governance

The second indicative aspect in the data concerns the peace-promoting impact of good or corrupt governance. In countries with a missing statecraft which often results in a chaotic situation, religious education is helpless and inter-religious education remains a nice dream. Therefore, peace building is aligned to the political state of affairs in two ways: first, in supporting a legal consciousness and commitment that knows what a constitutional state is made of, and second, by emphasizing good governance and an independent jurisdiction from religious reasons. Western democracies should meticulously avoid blame in this area, in particular if there is the danger that they may present a self-contradictory policy. The disastrous effects are well known if, on the one hand, human rights are verbally praised, while, on the other hand, they are violated by their advocates.

Religion as an Additional Fuelling Factor of Conflict Escalation

While Hasenclever and De Juan state that religious differences rarely cause civil wars (which form the majority of military conflicts today), a number of studies have found that “they can contribute to the escalation and intractability of originally political and economic conflicts” (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, p. 24). One precondition is that members of a faith community “distinguish themselves from competing groups and develop a sense of superiority” (p. 25). A humiliating ranking of one’s own religion over another one, or worse, the denigrating demarcation and finally exclusion of others, is the beginning of violence (cf. Gen 4). This can happen from within the religion itself or/and by influences from outside, which instrumentalize religion for secular purposes.

In the Philippines, elites have used the originally pejorative label “Moro” as a positive symbol for a common identity of the Muslims in the South of the country. They evoked a collective past, emphasized the unjust and suppressive acts done to all Philippine Muslims and called for armed resistance against the faithless oppressors. Thus, they succeeded in uniting members of over 13 different ethnicities for the fight against the central government (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, p. 25). In the prelude to the war in Bosnia, agitators stressed the religious differences of the national groups (Catholic Christians, Orthodox Christians, Muslims) and their insurmountability.

Religion can create an intensive loyalty in the believers to what is held by them to be an absolute truth, in such a way that this dogmatism can lead to the readiness to sacrifice oneself. “Throughout history and across cultures sacred violence has been sanctioned, condoned and deemed necessary for religious principles” (Dawn Perlmutter, as cited in Hull, 2007, p. 50). In such a situation conflicts tend to be scarcely negotiable. This is also the case, if by labelling the adversary as a devilish power, rational causes of war are being replaced by irrational mythical and irreconcilable differences. “In Sri Lanka, Buddhist monks equated the Tamil combat units with the mighty Army of Death. Fear and terror were spread among the population, and any settlement was excluded from the outset” (Tessa J. Bartholomeusz as cited in Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, p. 26). Finally, announcements of heavenly rewards in the afterlife or threats of infernal punishment increase the readiness to fight and sacrifice oneself.

The examples show how mundane conflicts can be religiously “charged”. The educational implications have to do, first, with a human quality that can best be explained first by hypotheses of evolutionary psychology. Because of our early “bonding” desires and experiences, we are prone to fall prey to forms of indoctrination which exploit our deep-rooted need for belonging to a collective whole in analogy to our internalized family loyalty. Politicians and religious leaders who use the language of kinship bonding (“family semantics”) are more likely to be successful in persuading the masses towards their interests (in more detail Nipkow, 2003, pp. 153–154). In French history, in a “Chant of Soldiers”, “fair France bids her children arise, soldiers around us are arming, on, on, ‘tis our mother who cries” (as cited in Shaw & Wong, 1989, p. 91). “France is clearly not a ‘mother’, but by breathing life into these abstract entities, reification makes them part of our family heritage and well-being” (p. 96). Inter-religious education has to withstand those mechanisms.

The second educational consequence refers to the dualistic cognitive structure of thought patterns (either–or patterns), if uncompromisingly “heavens” and “hell”, “God” and “devil”, “the good” and “the evil”, “the redeemed” and “the condemned”, “the chosen” and “the rejected” are torn apart. Unless a “third” entity with a mediating power between those two cognitive extremes is introduced, it is mostly impossible to solve the conflict. A simplistic binary logic in the field of war and peace is dangerous. We will come back to the educational consequences.

Religion and the De-escalation of Conflicts

According to Hasenclever and De Juan peaceful conflict management is religiously influenced by two activities. “The first seeks to question religious conflict escalations publicly and to emphasize those elements of the religious traditions that commit the believers to nonviolent means” (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, pp. 27–28). These hypotheses presuppose that (1) there does exist a government which permits to voice resistance and that (2) also theological peace traditions exist as clear guidelines in the religions. As an “impressive example” they remember the engagement of the South African bishop and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Desmond Tutu. On the one hand, he “sedulously praised the Christian duty to overcome suppression and injustice with nonviolent means. On the other hand, he emphasized the indissoluble unity of blacks and whites as children of God” (p. 28) as a basic theological guideline.

Preconditions of Peace Education III: Democracy as a “Civil Society” with a Critical Public

In South Africa, both positive conditions, a liberal political framework and vital theological peace traditions, did not exist before the breakdown of the old regime of apartheid. Neither did the protesting Black movements share the same civil rights nor did the conservative dominant Churches take seriously what at the beginning of the Old Testament is meant with “God created humankind in his image” (Genesis 1, 27). In other words, behind the sociological data one detects two further preconditions of peace education: first, the understanding of good governance (see already above) in the categories of a democracy as an open “civil society” (not a hidden dictatorship) and a critical public. The latter is characterized by informed citizens, freedom of speech, free press and the right of demonstrations. According to the theory of “democratic peace” (although it is regarded as not strictly cogent, Layne, 1994), in our times democratic nations will not wage war against each other. The second precondition is an effective theology of peace – our next point.

Preconditions of Peace Education IV: Self-Critical Theology and Religious Peace Traditions

With regard to war and peace a vague and undifferentiated reference to “religious traditions” ignores the severe hermeneutical theological differences between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We are in a puzzling way more or less confronted

by a plurality of interpretations of the holy scriptures according to the different religious camps and wings. What is the adequate peace-promoting theological interpretation?

In Germany, studies on the history and theory of peace education have inexcusably been neglected. The author had to start without earlier publications which might have paved the way when he researched the topic from the time of the Renaissance (Erasmus of Rotterdam), the Reformation (Martin Luther, Sebastian Frank), the Thirty Years' War (John Amos Comenius), the eighteenth century (Johann Gottfried Herder, Immanuel Kant), the beginning of the twentieth century (Friedrich W. Foerster, Kurt Hahn) until today (Nipkow, 2007a). In an embarrassing way the historical investigation discloses the systematic suppression of those very few authors (even if they belonged to a moderate pacifism) who did not follow the dominating mainline in Church, society and state. The political and educational preparation of the population for "just wars" was the irrefutable rule.

Faith communities in Asia with a less obligatory text-bound basis than Judaism, Christianity and Islam are not better off. They also show how national interests can suspend their own pacifist attitudes.

In Sri Lanka, the interpretation of the conflict with the Tamils as a religious fight for the 'holy land' is crucial to the suspension of Buddhist pacifism. However, there have always been influential monks who openly questioned such an interpretation of the struggle. An integral part of their position is rejecting the reinterpretation of the principle of Dharma Yuddhaya. According to Bartholomeusz . . . , this concept originally refers to the inner fight against greed and hatred. Nationalist Buddhist clerics, however, reinterpreted the principle as a secular war of defense to legitimize the resistance against the British colonial power and, later, the violent persecution of the Tamil minority as a holy war against evil (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, p. 28–29).

Hermeneutical controversies are an unavoidable, inherent part of each religious tradition. Therefore, inter-religious education cannot do without solid theological knowledge and hermeneutical competence in order to learn to distinguish between options. It has to start with terms. In the Qu'ran the word "jihad" means the "inner endeavours" and "struggles" of a believer, but, under certain conditions, also war against non-believers and death to dissenters.

Preconditions of Peace Education V: The Organizational and Hermeneutical Situation of Religions

Religious leaders are obliged to unmask a one-sided war propaganda and to sensitize their own membership to start a peace campaign. Other important resources of religious actors are their trans-national contacts. "For example, Maha Ghosanda used the worldwide network of Engaged Buddhism to rally political and financial support for the peace process in Cambodia" (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, p. 29).

More direct peace-promoting activities are the attempts of religious organizations to foster structural changes in order to eliminate the structural, societal and political causes of conflicts, in particular social injustice (see above precondition I) or stop the violation of human rights. The term "structural violence" was coined by the

Norwegian peace expert John Galtung (cf. 1996). Two major examples of structural initiatives were the “Anti-Apartheid-Movement” of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in South Africa and the Catholic Liberation Theology Movement in Latin America. However, in both cases the intricacies either of inter-church or of intra-church barriers can be illustrated, too. The WCC ought to have protested also against the inhumane traits of Communist regimes; but in the days of the “Cold War” the delegates of the Russian Orthodox Church (a member church) anxiously stifled any critique against their country. In Latin America, although even Catholic bishops had supported the liberation theologians in their criticism, the Roman Catholic Church intervened and stopped the movement.

These examples lead to an open question concerning an organizational aspect. Are large, structurally loose superorganizations like the WCC or is a centralized religious organization like the Roman Catholic Church a better safeguard against wars caused by religious factors? Which organizational form is better equipped for de-escalation? Or would a religion like Islam with a minimum of centralized organizational power be a better bulwark against bloody conflicts? The radical terrorist Islamist groups of today are totally out of the control of the Islamic Law Schools. It seems to be that at least a certain religious authority as an effective conflict-regulating power is desirable.

To sum up, religions are permanently at crossroads between politics and theology. Additionally, in matters of war and peace their traditions are open to several and controversial interpretations. Consequently, religions have to carefully examine themselves. Will they comply with cliques in power or protest although running the risk of becoming political trouble-makers? They ought to decide this question in face of the very essence of their religion. What is the truth they are standing for? Inter-religious education is challenged by weighty intra-religious hermeneutical issues.

Outline of a Religious and Inter-religious Education for Peace

Religious Education Matters

Hasenclever and de Juan present data and hypotheses on the specifically educational side of the theme. The most important result is: Religious education matters, positively and negatively; “religious illiteracy” (Appleby, 2000, pp. 60–69) can produce blind religious obedience to political and religious exploitation. Appropriate religious education demands religious knowledge instead of religious ignorance – in many respects.

“Pacifists” and “Firebrands” – How to Meet Ambivalent Potentials

The research data show that each religion is composed of both, potentials for escalating and de-escalating violence. If so, the peace-promoting potentials need to be

systematically mobilized in each religion irrespective of whether a specific religion is actually involved in existing or pending conflicts or not. Peace education deserves to be called a “dimension” of religious education, not just a curriculum unit among others.

A second point refers to the basic chances of inter-religious dialogue at all. The syllable “inter” in expressions such as “inter-faith” encounter and “inter-religious” education implies at least a certain friendly mutual openness to the peace-oriented potentials at both sides. If, however, one religion strengthens its peace-promoting educational resources while another one does not, a joint resistance to overcome violence cannot be realized.

There are several levels of understanding each other. Even if (1) unbridgeable substantial dogmatical differences of views rooted in different ontologies, i.e. ways of interpreting reality as a whole (*ontological level*) and in different interpretations of divine revelation (*theological level*), will prevent religions from an in-depth understanding of each other, it might be (2) that religions do have at least certain overlapping moral values in common (*moral level*) (see Hans Küng’s “Global Ethic”). A minimal prerequisite (3) is the readiness to come together at all and communicate about the differences as an agreed-upon starting point for all further steps (*procedural level*). In the given situation, in Western and non-Western countries, mostly “mixed” constellations exist with either more pacifist and or more belligerent attitudes, possible peace coalitions here and ironical negative coalitions of the extremist firebrands on both sides, captured in a never-ending circle of revenge.

As a third item, the well-known issue of neutrality or commitment in religious education reappears in inter-religious education. In order to balance the dilemma, on the one hand, a teacher surely must avoid her teaching being perverted to political or missionary propaganda; on the other hand, in matters of life and death, humanity and inhumanity, she has to take position. Since war and peace are highly value-charged phenomena, peace education definitely needs an *ethical fundament*, if a specific religious basis (Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, etc.) should not be allowed or could not be generalized. Among the secular traditions of moral philosophy, Kant’s deontological ethics focused on the moral dignity of all humans and the Human Rights Ethics meet a broad global acceptance.

A Sensual-Cognitive Approach

Perception Change and Perspective Taking

An antidote to militant persuasion is to promote “a perception change” (Hasenclever & De Juan, 2007, pp. 30–32), the word “perception” meaning a recognition of things using our senses, especially the sense of sight. Another meaning of “perception” is the opinion one has formed as a result of noticing something. Our concepts are formed by what we see. Much of what we know, however, is pseudo-knowledge, not acquired by own authentic experiences. It is from hearsay or

inculcated by propaganda, false information instead of clear knowledge. “Inter-religious” education should definitely resist this. It should teach children, youth and adults to look at things with their own eyes and to take the perspective of the other side.

The ability of *perspective taking* (Selman & Byrne, 1974) depends on structural-cognitive developmental changes. The steps are more or less well known and taken regard of in social education from the elementary schools of childhood onwards. Each step beyond oneself enriches and multiplies the world of a child and reduces the child’s “egocentrism”, a term which means a necessary egocentric perception in early years, not egoistic moral behaviour. Development goes on in youth and – much slower, if at all – in adulthood although nobody stops learning in life. To take the perspective of others is the basic prerequisite for all social relationships and the more necessary the more these relations are becoming fragile or destructive.

Suffering, Empathy and Compassion

Perspective taking is also a precondition for empathy and compassion. They are human capacities without which no positive relationships with other children can develop. Research shows that among very young children it matters whether a child directly observes another one crying if she has suffered a material damage (destroyed toys) or not. Watching her tears, these direct “emotional signals” were influential in evoking “empathetic reactions” (Frank Halisch as cited in Nipkow, 2003, p. 171). Perceiving material damage alone would not cause compassion.

We can support this by self-observation. People get accustomed to daily news about material destruction in military conflicts without being emotionally moved very much. The death of people whom we cannot directly perceive does not touch us. A report from the Vietnam War by the famous Italian reporter Oriana Fallaci who accompanied a bomber crew speaks for itself.

The third time I had put up with the thing and was only eager not to miss the moment when Andy would uncouple the bomb . . . The fourth, the fifth, the sixth time I had become accustomed to it. Now I could observe the spectacle from a certain distance, and this spectacle consisted of little figures who fled from their bunkers and sandbag barricades, waving their arms in order to free themselves from the flames, and one suffocated in the flames. I would lie if I were saying that I felt guilt or mercy (as cited in Nipkow, 2003, p. 170).

Meeting Strangers – The Need for Inter-cultural Education

Wars in the Middle East (Iraq), Asia (Afghanistan), Africa (Somalia, Sudan) differ from classical warfare in that they are more or less shaped by ethnic and cultural factors. The simple advice of “perspective taking” is insufficient and must be complemented. We are facing a much more complicated challenge. More and more “inter-religious” education has to become “inter-cultural” education. The new task

is – to give an example – to learn about the customs and values of Muslims in differing cultural settings, in Turkey different from Iraq, in black Africa different from Indonesia, etc. Everyone knows of the ignorance of Western soldiers at the beginning of the second war in Iraq in 2003 and its fatal effects when they were storming into houses without a sense for the values of shame and private intimacy in Muslim families. Even today, western politicians are still failing to take account of the cultural values of pride and honour. They often know little of the collective memory of Muslims. “Christian faith was born in weakness and has been corrupted through power; Islam was born in victory but is now having to endure the presence of a dominating power” (Hull, 2007, p. 54).

The forms of multiple humiliation and lacking understanding, on the one hand, and the one-sided trust in military forces, on the other hand, obviously strengthen Muslim fanaticism, which, as the “whole history of fanatical religion proves . . . flourishes under persecution and is encouraged by repression” (Kepel, 2002, as cited in Hull, 2007, p. 56). In this situation education again comes in as a factor to change perceptions and educate a generation of wiser political leaders who set priorities on food, medical aid, schooling and economic assistance instead of military violence.

Structural Knowledge Approach: Ambivalence and Complexity of Religions

In his excellent analysis of the religious fanatic, John M. Hull undertakes to *understand* fanaticism (pp. 47–51), starting with the fact that “there can be no doubt that religion is capable of exciting some of the strangest and darkest aspects of human belief and behaviour” (p. 48). However, “not all fundamentalists by any means are fanatics, nor are all conservatives fundamentalists.” The different faces of a religion are puzzling. They reach from the most heartening and consoling verses in the Bible and in the Qu’ran down to most abominable reports on merciless “Holy Wars” in the Old Testament, ruthless Christian crusades in the Middle Ages and the colonial past, and the bloody execution of the Sharia in some regions of Islam. In all three Abrahamic religions good and evil lie side by side. Religious educators have to know about the ambivalence of their own religion and other religions in order to share this knowledge with the younger. When ever did the Christian churches systematically teach “peace on earth” (Lk 2, 14) and not only peace in heaven?

The future generations, in a world of steadily growing educational standards, also need to know the complexity of a religion. Text-bound religious traditions create more or less different hermeneutical interpretations of their holy scriptures. They produce a religious diversity with the better educated unable any longer to think in simplistic religious categories, while little schooling results in ignorance and prejudices. The mere idea of an “inter”-religious education is severely impeded. However, what looks like an unsolvable dilemma has to become the basic task: *to preserve one’s own religious identity and simultaneously respect other identities*. This challenge lies at the very root of the new programme of “inter-religious

education” as it is reflected in this handbook. In the perception of religions today, the syllable “inter” signals a paradigm shift, a step from traditional self-assertion to the spirit of relationship, cooperation and conviviality as the most necessary prerequisites for peace.

Legal Approach: Religious Liberty and Equality as Secular Framework of Mutual Inter-religious Acknowledgement

In Europe, it was the era of confessional wars in the seventeenth century (“Thirty Years’ War”) which gradually enforced the establishment of a framework of a secularized law by the Peace Treaties of Münster and Osnabrück (1648). In the eighteenth century, the epoch of Enlightenment, confessionalist and supranaturalistic categories of thinking were slowly replaced by liberal philosophical ones which were deduced from the premises of a rational “Natural Theology” and from “Natural Law”. In the nineteenth century, neo-confessionalism regained ground in Germany and finally stopped any further influence of liberal ideas. This lasted until 1919, the year of the end of a state-church (“Staatskirche”) and a new constitution (“Weimarian Constitution”) which allowed each “religious society” (the Christian churches, the Synagogue) to manage their own affairs provided they would not disturb the public order.

In 1949, the “Grundgesetz” (“Basic Law”, “Constitution”) of the young Federal Republic of Germany (“West Germany”) continued and strengthened this new liberal and democratic self-understanding. Today the state has to strictly obey religious neutrality. On behalf of negative religious freedom, it shrinks from interventions into the private sphere (negative freedom) while, on behalf of positive religious liberty, the liberal frame grants rights to the “religious societies” (the word “Church” is not any longer used) in the public sphere (denominational Christian, Jewish and Islamic religious education in state schools, theological faculties in state universities). Thus, the larger religions are granted the right of an equal development, self-presentation and self-interpretation.

The German situation may illustrate why religious education in a state school system is regarded by experts as more effective than leaving religious and inter-religious education in the private sphere (Hull, 2007, p. 58). Official public provisions are important for immigrants. Religious peace within a society can be better preserved if governments show the serious will to provide for equal educational conditions (cf. above the precondition II concerning law and good governance).

Education for law is a constitutive element of inter-religious education as well as community education. In the past, religious rules worked as legal prescriptions. Inner-societal peace lives from religious freedom guaranteed by secular (!) law. We have to distinguish between three aspects: (1) the role of divine law (the Torah in Judaism, Church law in Christianity, the Sharia in Islam), (2) the role of secular law and (3) the relationship between both. Without a differentiated consciousness of legal affairs, education for peace would miss one of its stabilizing aspects.

Trans-national Approach: Education Between Nationalism and Worldmindedness

My recent investigation into education for peace (2007a) started with historical chapters (parts I–V) and ended in a systematic “theory” of peace education (2007a, part VI). In the historical process in Europe four violence-regulating institutions emerged: (1) the *state* with its necessary monopoly of the use of legitimate violence and a corresponding political education; (2) *legal* institutions and correspondingly an education for respecting law; (3) *democracy* as “civil society”, today as a “global civil society”, with a corresponding education for “worldmindedness” or cosmopolitanism; and (4) *religions* with specific religious means for channelling and minimizing violence (Nipkow, 2007a, pp. 363–375).

In the centuries since Erasmus the number of committed advocates for peace education formed but a very small minority. The twentieth century was the most belligerent one, and this was caused by nationalism, chauvinism, extreme patriotism and imperialism. National power ideologies will remain a permanent source of future conflicts if trans-national powers do not come into play. The global challenges demand political actors on three levels: (1) that of independent states, (2) inter-state institutions (UNO) and (3) “non-governmental organizations” (NGOs) and private enterprises (Rittberger, Schrade, & Schwarzer, 1999, p. 3). In this process the international power structure is gradually shifting to what Joseph Nye has called “soft power” “that coopts people rather than coerces them, cooption instead of force” (cited in Rittberger, 2006, p. 50).

Inter-religious education is also prompted to shift from a one-sided national or nationalistic education to an education for “worldmindedness” (“weltbürgerliche Erziehung”) as the secular side of inter-religious consciousness. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, cosmopolitan ideals were much more appreciated (J. A. Comenius 1592–1670, G. E. Lessing 1729–1781, I. Kant 1724–1804, J. W. Goethe 1749–1832). What followed was, however, the nationalist nineteenth century and the totalitarianism of the twentieth. Today we are rediscovering the old educational perspectives (“global education”), although great difficulties remain. The question is how to transfer the kind feelings for members of one’s own family, kinship, people or nation to foreigners and strangers. Nobody is genetically predisposed to have the globe as home. However, the future will inevitably bring ever more human beings into a closer contact with each other. Each of these contacts can contribute to the shift from “local to global responsible fellowship” (Nipkow, 2003, p. 148).

Theological Approach: From Absolutist Truth Propositions to Experienced-Based Truth Witnesses in Plural Contexts

The modern world is a plural world. We are facing pluralism as moral pluralism of values (Nipkow, 1998, Vol. 1) and religious pluralism (Vol. 2), the latter in two forms, as religious intra- and inter-pluralism. The first consists of competing

religious groups and interpretations within the same religious tradition, today including a growing diversity of highly individualized forms of religious and spiritual search. The second form needs to respect the different “stories” the Churches have had in history.

In my country the history of Christians and Jews was a history of crime and shame. It cannot be adequately presented in the distanced descriptive language of comparatistics in Religious Studies. As to Judaism, inter-religious education is confronted with the history after Auschwitz. With regard to Islam, the teachers of religious education have to talk about European colonialism and the still existing post-colonialist attitudes of superiority over and against Muslims because of enduring Western economic and strategic interests.

As to *inter-religious hermeneutics* I have displayed what an “inter-faith hermeneutic of mutual recognition in truthfulness” means (Nipkow, 1998, Vol. 2, p. 361), in particular involving no glossing over of differences which for believers are of crucial weight. Others must be allowed to be others before we look for commonalities. Thus, inter-religious education becomes a shared search for understanding in sincerity (Talbi, 1976, p. 155). But what about the issue of religious truth which is not identical with subjective religious truthfulness and sincerity?

On the one hand, modern historical consciousness inevitably questions religious truth-claims as they are seen in their relative historical contexts. On the other hand, religions regard their own truth to be valid for all. Among religions of a missionary type (Christianity, Islam), this interest is interpreted as God’s divine will. It is the dignity of each religion that a community of believers share deep convictions they absolutely hold to be true. Discarding the issue of truth in inter-religious education by looking for the smallest common denominator would lead to a weak, passive notion of tolerance instead of to a strong, active idea of tolerance. But what if different “absolute” truth-claims create conflicts? In addition, what about the issue of truth in religious education as a subject in state or community schools?

The dilemma loses its dangerous potentiality for fuelling conflicts, if one distinguishes between “*general objectively valid*” *propositions* and “*personal unconditionally valid*” *witnesses*, which are exposed to open *argumentation*. Unfortunately the permanent mixing-up of the language of person-related witnesses with object-related propositions produces logical confusion and unsolvable conflicts. By inter-religious education children and adolescents can and should learn to make this difference. The open question is, however, whether a religion allows such an enlightening clarification at all.

Historical Approach: A Shared Memory of Historical Guilt and Common Victims

Education for historical understanding makes the younger generations aware of the legacy of guilt in one’s own nation and religion. It urges them to serve life in the name of the victims at both sides, also that of the “enemy”. A good deal of the guilt of the Christian churches in relation to the fate of the Jews in Europe is rooted in

doctrinal prejudices. “The” Jews were accused of having murdered God’s son. This anti-Judaism added a religious justification to the general racist anti-Semitism in the population. Today Western countries should be careful not to become persuaded to accuse “the” Islam in a similar hysterical generalization.

Education will have to set its hope on the young generations. In many countries young people from different backgrounds want to meet each other and share a common memory. Although a personal memory is not free from subjective distortions, it recalls the dramas of the past and is a strong bulwark against racism, religious prejudice, aggression and violence. Inter-religious education is called to cultivate a common memory.

Learning Theory Approach

The Cultural Learning of Habitudes

Our analysis concludes with data concerning effective methods of learning. As a result of centuries of habitually learning, war is regarded as a normality of life. The term “culture” is a keyword to explain both the success and failure of education. If a militant cultural atmosphere is being transferred to the next generation, not only by formal educational programmes but also more effectively by informal or structural political socialization, war is considered as normal and will not become a topic for critical public debate. We used to speak of a cultural phenomenon, meaning that the educational system as a whole follows the general cultural patterns of behaviour, the term “culture” meaning the dominating system of symbols by which the values and norms of a nation are visibly incorporated. Symbols are, for example, the national flag, the daily pledge of allegiance, rallies around the flag, military parades, the celebration of battles for the eternal memory of the nation’s victory and the defeat of the other nation. The feeling of superiority becomes deeply indoctrinated by recurrent habits. If so, inter-religious education should initiate and cultivate *counter-habits* by symbols and actions on behalf of reconciliation.

The “Ease of Learning Hypothesis”

In most European countries, the cult of heroes and the misuse of God’s will for waging war was a widespread phenomenon. The argumentation and glorifying propaganda rested on cognitive simplifications and emotive incentives which entered more easily the volition centre of a person than complex rational distinctions. Today fundamentalists worldwide nourish simplistic dualistic religious thought patterns fitting Lionel Tiger’s (1998) “ease of learning hypothesis”. It refers to cognitions and emotions that do not invite too much reflection. Many people are completely satisfied with simple political slogans and religious messages. Most effective are

“images” as R. D. Deutsch (1998) has found out in the context of research on the indoctrinability of people by ideologies as a main factor in preparing warfare (Eibl-Eibesfeldt & Salter, 1998).

Meaning is extracted selectively from only a small portion of what is actual observable. We take those things that stand out and make them fit with what we already know and expect. Thus people “concoct an image with an emotional bottom line: positive or negative” (Deutsch, p. 302).

Religious education for peace must resist cognitive simplifications. Emotionally charged simplistic images (stereotypes) of foreigners and strangers must be criticized and replaced by respecting attitudes. Schools have the opportunity to make young people sensitive to agitation, provided that those political and legal preconditions are given, at least partly, that have been introduced in the first part of our analysis.

In-Group Amity vs. Out-Group Enmity and the Two Codes of Morals

Research on devaluing others draws on psychoanalytical explanations insofar as others serve as a screen of “projection”.

- projections serve the deeply rooted need for maintaining one’s own individual and collective identity,
- they protect the self from self-accusations because of one’s own ugly traits, and
- they provide outlets for aggression and revenge.

In my studies (2003, 2007a, 2007b) I have complemented the psychoanalytical patterns of explanation by hypotheses of evolutionary psychology. Wherever lines of demarcation are drawn between “us” and the “others”, two codes of morals can be observed. On the one hand, in-group amity can be explained by the processes which in hundreds of thousands of years shaped the warm, affiliative feelings of bonding in one’s own family, clan and tribe. Until today these genetic predispositions serve as a sort of hook for indoctrinating messages to “hook in” if those messages evoke similar feelings of belonging which one is accustomed to from the earliest years of childhood. Out-group enmity can be explained by the complementary process of learning to protect oneself and one’s own group against others who are perceived as a real or fictive threat. In everyday interactions as well as in political strategies the means remain the same: deterrence, discouragement, provocation and pre-emptive strokes. The two inherent evolutionary factors causing the hostile disjunction are to be found: (1) on the level of social relationships with the basic distinction between friends and foes, and (2) on the level of material profits concerning possession and territory. Both are crucial for survival and can be summed up in two plain questions:

- Who belongs to me or us and against whom do we have to protect ourselves?
- What belongs to me or us and what do we have to defend against whom?

It is not simply *that* we classify that is so important, but (1) *what* we classify and (2) *how* we act on our classifications through cognition and related emotions (Shaw and Wong, 1989, pp. 81–82). The educational response to stop warfare and promote reconciliation is also twofold; it encompasses the critical clarification of cognitions (e.g. prejudices) and the reflection on feelings (resentments, antipathy, feelings of revenge, hate). An accompanying educational task is to introduce young people into a critique of ideologies in order to question double moral standards. The British philosopher John L. Mackie (1992, p. 282) states: “It is perfectly possible for people to combine the finest moral sensitivity in relation to their fellows with extreme inhumanity towards . . . human beings whom they see in some way alien to themselves and their associates.”

Overcoming Anxiety and the Learning of Trust

A standard work entitled “Training with Aggressive Children” based on behavioural psychology (Petermann & Petermann, 2001) and the behaviour of Jesus of Nazareth as it is described in studies on the spirit of the “Jesus movement” (Theißen, 2004) reveal surprising Parallels in stopping overt violence. Aggression can have different causes and exists as latent readiness and overt performance. Whether aggressive potentials (readiness) leads to violent acts of a child (performance) depends mainly on the child’s anxiety.

The ability to build up trust between her and a child is the core of what the therapist has basically to care for. A trusting relation is not a natural gift; but is a hard work to establish by demonstrations of kindness in the interaction with the child, but also with the child’s family (Petermann & Petermann, p. 109).

Much depends on whether the child perceives her surroundings as threatening or not. Provided that trust can be generated (stage 1), the next presupposition is whether the child knows appropriate non-violent reactions (stage 2). Are there alternatives for non-violence strategies before her inner eye? If not, a negative performance is more probable. The further stages above open violence are concerned with the anticipation of possible negative consequences of one’s actions (stage 4) and certain still existing potentials of restraint (stage 5).

The internationally known New Testament scholar Gerd Theißen (2004) has studied the ways the Jesus movement has effectively transformed their own aggressions under Jesus’ influence. Jesus succeeded in creating the “room” for a *new culture of love and reconciliation*. “The preposition to become able to treat different forms of aggression was a fearless basic atmosphere, a renewed fundamental confidence in the reality of being that radiated from Jesus as person – until now” (2004, p. 289).

Education for peace seems to begin with a new kind of perceiving reality and with the building of basic trust. In living together with his followers before the Easter event, Jesus created a reconciled community which included sinners and outcasts. The divine grace in the coming of God's Kingdom in Jesus' person is also illustrated in parables and becomes visible in common meals. Before his death, Jesus celebrated a last supper and wanted it to be continued in order to remain present among them. This sacramental event in word and signs is the core of the Gospel and the core of all other activities of the Church. Its meaning is peace with God and peace with the world. To live together in mutual trust is already identical with living in peace.

Outlook: Clarifying the Peace-Promoting Origins

The factual situation of the Church and of other religions differs. In looking out for peace-promoting potentials, the criteria are to be found in the origins of each religion. Usually they will embody the obliging standards for later religious developments. Inter-religious education continuously needs the clarification of the peace-making normative fundamentals in each religion as its starting point. An outstanding recent pioneer publication in this sense in Germany is a voluminous study by Karl-Josef Kuschel (2007; Tübingen), a close colleague of Hans Küng. Kuschel very carefully compares the traditions in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and the Qu'ran concerning Adam, Noah, Moses, Mary and Jesus, Abraham (in this sequence) in order to identify what they have in common and where they differ. Each of these traditions he relates to present ideological, political, anthropological, moral, ecological issues demonstrating why we need a "trialogical" theology that helps to bridge the gaps between Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

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The Role of Inter-religious Education in Fostering Peace and Development

Eunice Karanja Kamaara

Introduction

In spite of human advancements in many spheres of life, the world is largely characterized by violence. War and conflict remain the major threats to human life and development today: domestic violence, ethnic clashes, civil wars, international war and terrorism dot the globe. Against this background, humans of goodwill seek solutions towards controlling conflict and fostering peace.

Any effective solution to an undesirable situation or any attempts to maintain a desirable situation demand an analysis of the situation to determine its root causes. Otherwise, what may be seen as solutions may only serve to suppress the symptoms and therefore may appear to work but only for a short while. Later, the undesirable situation could blow out with serious implications for human life.

Therefore, in seeking to foster peace in a context as characterized by violence as the contemporary world, it is necessary to establish the root causes of violence. This chapter propounds the argument that violence in the world today has root causes in religion. This is because religion is like a double-edged sword: although all world religions claim to uphold peace and justice, they are heavily associated with conflict and violence. The first section of this chapter presents this double-edged nature of religion.

Sociologists, psychoanalysts, naturalists and other scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century predicted that religion would become obsolete and consequently extinct with the scientific and technological advancements of humankind. This is yet to happen and there are no indications that it will happen in the near future. Religion continues to be a major influence on human behaviour. In this context, we focus on religion and violence. Religion simply refers to a set of human beliefs and practices related to a supernatural being or forces. Violence refers to the

E.K. Kamaara (✉)
Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya
e-mail: eunkamaara@yahoo.com

absence of peace and security. It includes both active conflict (war) and latent conflict among human beings so that the absence of war does not necessarily constitute peace.

Religion is often the source of violence in many situations. In others, it is the basis of violence. Yet in others, it is used to justify violence. The following section presents illustrations from various parts of the world to show the role played by religion in initiating and perpetuating violence at all levels. This will guide us into the next section which is on the need for inter-religious education for peace and development in the world today. The major conclusion is that sharpening the right edge of religion through inter-religious education is an effective strategy towards the much desired peace and development in the contemporary world.

Religion as a Double-Edged Sword: The Functions and Dysfunctions of Religion in Society

Compared with other human institutions, such as the family, which ensures perpetuation of life through reproduction and socialization, and economic institutions, which ensure production, maintenance and distribution of resources, religion, with its concern with the intangible beyond, seems irrelevant to human life. This appears more so especially in the face of scientific and technological advancements. However, this is only an appearance. In reality, religion remains an indispensable institution. From an African perspective, everybody is religious because to be born and to live is to be religious. (Mbiti, 1969)

According to functionalism, society is made up of complex institutions which, as a whole, constitute the social system (O'Dea & O'Dea, 1993). If an institution loses its functions, it ceases to exist. Religion remains unabated in spite of earlier predictions that it would die with modern scientific and technological developments. This implies that religion is still functional. O'Dea and O'Dea (1993, p. 3) observe that religion has been described as

... something unimportant and evanescent, something peripheral to the genuine business of human life. Yet, the facts point to something else. ... Religion has been characterized as embodying the most sublime of human aspirations; as being a bulwark of morality, a source of public order and inner individual peace; as ennobling and civilizing in its effects upon (hu)mankind. It has also been accused of being a stubborn obstacle retarding progress and promoting fanaticism and intolerance, ignorance, superstition, and obscurantism. The record reveals religion to be among the strongest buttresses of an established social order. It also however, shows it is capable of exhibiting profound revolutionary tendencies, as in the peasant war in the sixteenth century Germany.

O'dea and O'dea seem contradictory in their observation but this presents reality. Such are the contradictions of religion in real life.

One of the major functions of religion in society is provision of moral guidance. Consequently, it provides a major source of public order and peace. Yet, the majority of the various acts of war and violence in the world are acts of religion, based on

religion, justified by religion, or heavily associated with religion. No wonder, as observed by Priestley (2007, p. 30):

It is hardly surprising, then, that for many people in our world today, the words and the claims of religion are seen as offensively hypocritical. For in many instances, it appears that religions, far from seeking peace are the progenitors of war, with the result that the secular world sees in us only hypocrisy of a high order. To face ourselves, we have to admit but not be overwhelmed by this for there is plenty of hypocrisy in the secular world as well.

All major world religions condemn violence and uphold peace and justice as their hallmark. Yet, suffice to emphasize that majority of violent situations in the world are initiated and/or justified, maintained and perpetuated by religion. The following section presents illustrations of the role of religion in violence in various parts of the world.

Religion and Violence Across the World

Introduction

As has already been indicated, various parts of the world are characterized by various forms of violence. In this section, we present some forms of violence manifested in historical events at the international, national, community and family levels to illustrate the close relationship between religion and violence.

Violence Justified by Religion

Various forms of violence are perpetuated by religious justifications. The best illustration of these is probably violence within the family. While the family is expected to provide love and security to individuals, it is one of the most brutal institutions. All forms of violence occur within it. Violence against children in such forms as child labour, child battering and child sexual abuse prevails all over the world. Moreover, one of the major forms of violence all over the world, gender violence, is mostly manifested at this same institution. In this section, we focus on how violence against men and women in the family is justified by religion.

Gender violence is especially manifested at the family level though it is not limited to it. On the basis of their sex, women are generally discriminated against in terms of access to, control over and ownership of resources and processes. To justify this discrimination, specific gender attributes, roles, characteristics and stereotypes are socially constructed. For example, women are said to be physically and emotionally weak and therefore positions of power and decision-making may not be entrusted to them.

To maintain the situation of male dominance, gender violence is expressed in sexual violence, psychological violence, social, economic and/or physical violence. ECA-WIDNET (1971, p. 15) observes that physical violence is administered 'to

maintain women in a dependent and submissive state' and so is sexual and psychological violence. Gender violence results from individual or group pursuits of interests at the expense of other individuals or groups. In sexual violence for example, male sexual needs are met at the expense of female sexual needs, while in social violence men's needs for social empowerment are met at the expense of women.

Men too have been violated on the basis of their sex especially, ironically, with the development of the so-called gender empowerment programmes. Gender violence has been associated, with adequate reasons, to violence against women and various attempts to address it have been made. However, these have had counter-effects resulting in further gender violence albeit of a different form. Gender empowerment programmes all over the world have continually focused on the economic empowerment of women. This may be justified because traditionally, it is women who have been marginalized and therefore attempts to redress the situation must favour women. However, such empowerment has sometimes been at the expense of men. As women are empowered economically, they take up what were traditionally male gender roles without dropping any of their traditionally female gender roles. For example, many women especially in Africa have become the breadwinners and home builders of their families, two major roles that were traditionally male, but they continue to play their roles as homemakers and caregivers.

Unfortunately, while there are social systems supporting women to take up traditional male gender roles, there are no such systems to support men to take up traditional female gender roles. Men require a lot of courage to engage in such activities as domestic chores and child caring as traditional social norms which do not expect them to do such have remained largely unchanged. This means that as women take up traditional male gender roles, many men are left with no responsibilities at the family level. This is a dangerous situation for any human being to find himself/herself in because it erodes one's value and esteem. Research by Silberschmidt (1999) among the Kisii of western Kenya, for example, supports this view. To compensate for loss of self-value and esteem, some men become careless, irresponsible and aggressive with many of them resorting to alcoholism and drug abuse. This has led to gender antagonism and increased gender violence.

Religion plays a major role as a source, basis and justification for gender violence. Many of the major religions of the world seem to endorse the idea and practice of male dominance. This is clearly manifested in that many of them do not have women in leadership and decision-making positions. At their worst, religions seem to be the source of patriarchy. For example, Christianity has presented to the world a male God and a subordinationist view of women. Male characters in the Bible hold traditional male gender roles which are dominant, while women hold traditional female gender roles which are characterized by submission and subordination. This presentation may be understood because the Bible was written, canonized, translated and interpreted by men from patriarchal societies. However, understanding this does not mean upholding it but rather demand just reinterpretations of the Bible. This implies that religious education is critical for peace and development today. Critical analysis of the Bible, for example, reveals that the scripture has a liberationist view

as well. For example, while many female characters in the Bible play subordinate roles in the salvation history, other female characters, like Mary the mother of God, are central to the history.

The Bible is also used to justify violence against men in the name of the liberation of women. Some radical feminist theologians draw from the Bible to exaggerate the revolutionary character of Jesus. Hence, they advocate for separation of men and women to the point of recommending lesbianism at the expense of the family unit. The story of Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, Chuza, and other women who followed and supported Jesus as he travelled from one town and one village to the other in his evangelization mission. As Ann Brown indicates: '... Joanna, one of these mentioned came from Herod's court, the very seat of the opposition to Jesus, and her husband was a senior official. Yet, she identified herself with a man who was regarded as a state traitor' (Brown, 1991, p. 138).

Such radical theologians will quote scriptural verses on the need to fight evil at whatever costs without appreciating that social living requires a great deal of sacrifice on the part of individuals. However, this must not be construed to mean that women and only women must sacrifice for family peace and unity. Self-sacrifice has been presented in many religions as a prerogative for women. It is not. Self-sacrificing servant-hood is a calling for all human beings interested in peace and development.

Without any contradiction, it seems necessary to point out that on many occasions, women have obediently listened to religious leaders who push them to self-sacrifice for the sake of their families even where there is no reciprocity from their husbands. This is not the way to peace. As one psycho-biologist, Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (1990, p. 46), observed:

If women insist on peace at any price – if they settle for abnormal quietism as a way of avoiding the risk and potential isolation that may result from opposing evil – they are not exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit. They are sinning just as surely as the man who rides roughshod over relationships in order to assert individual freedom. For 'peace' in the Biblical sense does not consist of 'peace at any price'. It is rather shalom in that all things are in their rightful, creationally ordained place. And in the light of the Fall, the distortion of Shalom – including that between men and women calls for a prophetic refusal to say "peace, peace when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6: 14) and willingness to make changes needed to restore the true shalom.

Christian religious education enables one to understand the need to strike a balance between self-sacrifice and the struggle for peace.

However, Christian religious education on its own is not adequate. It is important to study other religions alongside Christianity in order to establish whether it is all religions that seem to have such contradictory views which are interpreted to justify gender violence. Such study would then lead one to understand that the use of religion to found or justify gender violence is common in all religions even though it has no basis. This would then help one to understand that gender violence has its root in patriarchy rather than in religion. Religion is always expressed through cultural media and therefore what is found in cultures across the world may be found in religions across the world. Consequently, one would be well placed to question

religious justification of gender violence and to act appropriately against it even as one considers the need for self-sacrifice for peace and harmony in society.

Inter-religious education allows one to have different perspectives on addressing gender violence for peace and development. If one were to use only one religion to argue that religion is inappropriately used to justify gender violence, such an argument may be dismissed as being specific to that one religion.

Religion as a Form of Violence

Religion has itself been a form of violence in various communities (McTernan, 2003). Perhaps it would be kind to refer to this as ‘violence in the name of religion’ rather than ‘religion as violence’. Some people would argue that religion is in itself good but believers of religion can abuse religion leading to violence. Whichever way we refer to it, the truth is that it is not always easy to differentiate between a religion and its adherents.

Through history, a number of illustrations of religion as conflict in itself exist. For want of space we will limit ourselves to one illustration – the Kanugu saga. On March 17, 2000, members of The Movement of the Restoration of the Ten Commandments based in Kanugu, Uganda, woke up to a new day as usual. Kampala (2000, p. 41):

Many members entered their church for their daily morning prayers. Before this the leaders had told all members of the movement that they would be locked in the church to pray and Mary {the Virgin Mother of God} would personally come in flames of fire to take them to heaven. The significance of this ‘locking’ was so that only those inside would be delivered while those outside would be destroyed. The locking also implied prevention from any escape. Every member was urged to enter the church apart from one seventeen year old boy, Peter Ahimbisibwe, who left early that morning to look for food. About 10.30 a.m. a big blast was heard at the camp. Fire broke out in the church and a big black smoke was seen by the people in the neighbourhood as they gathered at the place. Much screaming was heard from inside the church for about five minutes. Over five hundred people are believed to have perished in the fire and their remains were buried in a mass grave located at the site.

To date nobody knows whether the members of this church committed suicide, were murdered or were saved as they had been promised by their leaders. If they were saved, we have no way of knowing though that is so violent a way of salvation that few people would opt for it. Whether they were murdered or they committed suicide or they were even saved, the point is clear that religion acted violently against its own members. Individuals violated themselves either into suicide or into salvation or their leaders violated them to death in the name of religion. The result was human suffering and loss of many lives.

One may want to dismiss this as the work of a ‘cult in Africa’ and therefore not worthy to be cited as an illustration of religious activity, but such dismissal may not be justified for the following two reasons. First, cults emerge out of frustrations and/or dissatisfactions with religion. In this case, the Kanugu cult broke away from the Roman Catholic Church, hence the movement’s idea of salvation through the

Virgin Mary. Second, there is no other force other than religion that would drive people to such naivety and folly as to allow oneself to be locked in a room to await salvation through flames of fire! One may want to call it religious fundamentalism or religious folly but whatever we call it, it amounts to religious violence.

Suffice to mention that cults with similar tendencies that have led to loss of human lives and property have been reported across the world including in highly secular places like Europe and America. If cults are disputed as not being religious activities, one may illustrate the point with what may not be disputed as a religion – the active violence that continues to manifest itself between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

In the name of religion, humans have been violated or violated themselves throughout history. It is therefore through religion that such violence may be controlled. Inter-religious education provides an understanding that religious cults emerge in all religions and of why they emerge. Such understanding is necessary in controlling religious violence of the afore-discussed kind. Moreover, inter-religious education could foster peace within and among religions as it promotes appreciation and respect of the other.

Religion as a Basis for Civil and Ethnic Wars

In August 2007, this writer was privileged and honoured to serve as a member of the Living Letters Team sent on a pastoral visit by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to Sri Lanka. This was first of the Living Letters visits to world churches operating in situations of conflict, in the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence of the WCC. The visits are meant to strengthen the work of the churches for reconciliation and peace and to be a symbol of the solidarity of the churches around the world. At the same time the visits were designed to give content to the proposed Declaration on Just Peace and to prepare the churches for their participation in the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation planned by the WCC for 2011. The experience gained from the visit provided a perfect illustration of ethnic violence that is so closely related to religion that one cannot be sure whether religion or ethnicity is responsible for the violence. I share part of this experience in the proceeding paragraphs extracted from the report of the Living Letters Team to Sri Lanka.¹

Historically, there has been both Indo-Aryan emigration from India which forms the largest ethnic group in Sri Lanka today – the Sinhalese (74%); and of Tamils, the second-largest ethnic group (18%), originally from the Tamil region of India. The Sinhalese and Tamil populations have at different moments of history coexisted peacefully but have also had conflicts. The Tamils, primarily Hindus, claimed the

¹ See <http://www.2.wcc-coe.org/pressreleasesen.nsf/index/pr-07-51.html> and also: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/all-news-english/display-single-en>. Both websites were last viewed on 29 September 2007.

northern section of the island and the Sinhalese, who are predominantly Buddhist, controlled the South. In 1505 the Portuguese took possession of Ceylon until the Dutch India Company usurped control (1658–1796). The British took over in 1796 and Ceylon became an English Crown colony in 1802. The British compounded the problems by following a divide and rule policy, aggravating the tensions between the communities. Ceylon became independent of British rule in 1948, a few months after India and Pakistan became independent and the name Sri Lanka was adopted for the country. From the moment of independence, the Tamil people tried to achieve justice through democratic processes for 25 years.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike became Prime Minister in 1956 and championed Sinhalese nationalism, making Sinhala the country's only official language and including state support of Buddhism, further marginalizing the Tamil minority. He was assassinated in 1959 by a Buddhist monk. The Tamil minority's mounting resentment towards the Sinhalese majority's monopoly on political and economic power, exacerbated by cultural and religious differences, and led to bloody violence and pogrom against the Tamils in the southern provinces of the country.

In 1976, the Tamils opted for an independent Tamil State. The younger generation of Tamils became restless and took arms to fight for the creation of this independent state – the strongest of the rebel groups is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) popularly known as Tamil Tigers. This stage of the war has been going on since 1983. There was a formal ceasefire with the Tamil rebels, signed in February 2002. In September 2002, the government lifted its ban on the group, and in December 2002 LTTE agreed to explore the possibilities for a viable solution within a federal structure, of power devolution as an alternative for an independent Tamil State. But the talks did not proceed beyond December, 2002, leading to further disillusionment of the Tamils. In 2005 Mahinda Rajapakse won the presidential elections.

To add fuel to the fire, the tremendously powerful tsunami that ravaged the Sri Lankan coast in December 2004 killed over 38,000 people. There was hope for peace as the government and the Tamil Tigers reached a deal in June 2005 to share about \$4.5 billion in international aid to rebuild the country. But a verdict of the Sri Lankan Supreme Court jeopardized the aid package. In August 2005, the government declared a state of emergency. The Sri Lankan government continues to withhold the LTTE's share of the tsunami funds in the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

The influence of the Buddhist monks has continued to dominate politics. In 2006, repeated violations of the 2002 ceasefire on both sides turned into outright war. Since April 2006, about 1,000 soldiers and civilians have been killed, and 350,000, mostly Tamils, have been displaced. Efforts by the government of Norway, which brokered the Oslo Peace Accord and ceasefire in 2002, to bring both sides to the negotiating table once again have been unsuccessful. Fighting between the rebels and government troops has continued into 2007. Earlier this year (2007), after a week of deadly battles, the military took control of rebel-held regions of eastern Sri Lanka (Vaharai – a place the Living Letter's Team visited) leaving tens of thousands more civilians displaced. The army shelling has destroyed the houses that had been built just 2 years earlier following the tsunami! In April this year, the Tamil Tigers

launched their first air raid, using small airplanes to bomb an air force base near Colombo. The present government pursues the conviction of a unitary form of government and does not support a form of power sharing or federalism that has been proposed. Many in the North and East of Sri Lanka do not approve of violence, but the LTTE is for them the only answer to their problems.

One of the strong forces seeking peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka is the Interreligious Association for Peace. The Living Letters Team had the privilege to meet the executive committee of this group. The Rev. Fr. Dominic Saminathan, who chaired the meeting, said that Sri Lanka has many religions and it is not possible for people of any religion to live independent of the others. The challenge then has been for people of the different religions to accept and respect one another. They told us that the problem in Sri Lanka is one of 'Buddhist colonization' where people of one religion seek to dominate all others. For example, the people are forced to learn Sinhalese language and the names of roads and villages are being changed from Tamil to Sinhalese even in areas that are 100% Tamil. The tragedy is that the established government is part of this process of colonization. This is clear from the fact that all military people, all district secretaries, all commissioners and all assistant commissioners are Sinhalese. The Inter-Religious Association for Peace was formed to address the inter-religious situation in Sri Lanka as well as to resettle victims of the tsunami. It has one single objective and that is to establish peace in Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan experience indicates the need for inter-religious education. Since different religions provide the basis for violence, it is necessary to study many religions if peace is to be established. In view of the perspective of many Tamil leaders that the war in Sri Lanka is war against 'Buddhist colonization' one of the major recommendations of the Living Letters Team was that inter-religious dialogue be promoted. This presupposes inter-religious education. One would want to understand whether the accusation of 'Buddhist colonization' is accurate. If it is, how can it be when Buddhism is known for its claim to peace? If it is not, why is there this misinterpretation? Could there be a misunderstanding among religions? How could this be corrected for peace in Sri Lanka? Answers to such questions are critical for peace.

Another illustration indicates that even within one religion, religion may provide a basis for war. The world is yet to recover from the shock of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Rwanda claims to be 70% Christian. Yet not even church buildings could provide refuge to victims of the genocide. On the contrary they were turned into sites of carnage. In the context of this paper the central questions one would ask are best expressed by Agatha Radoli (1998, Preface) thus:

How could Catholics desecrate Christ's presence in the Blessed Sacrament by slaughtering their brothers and sisters in the churches? What drove them to such a degree of savagery that they could not even hear the cries of innocent children as they died in agony? Where did they throw the Christian values of love, forgiveness, faith, respect of human life, honesty, service, non-violence, respect of places of worship, sharing, justice, peace, reconciliation, etc? Can Christians in Rwanda really trust one another after what happened? Who will assist them in the reconciliation process since some of their pastors were also implicated in the genocide.

These are questions that one would find in the study of inter-religious education. The truth of the matter is

Church {read religious} leaders are often caught between their understanding and knowledge of the gospel of reconciliation and their ethnic ties and obligations. They must be encouraged to stand for the gospel which is above ethnic ties and to work for peace in their communities.²

Religion, in this case, Christianity, had the potential to control ethnic conflicts but it did not as members of various religions fell back to their ethnic identities. How ugly it is to imagine “priests killing members of their congregations who had sought refuge in Church buildings in the belief that the ‘Reverend men and women of God’ would protect them” (Kubai, 2005, p. 10).

Inter-religious education provides its students with lessons on how religions work to initiate and maintain violence contrary to their teachings, but also on how they work to foster peace and development. Such education is useful in indicating where religions went wrong and therefore guide people away from similar mistakes, but it would also bring out the positive values common in all religions that may be harnessed for peace at all levels.

International War/Terrorism

With its transcendent reference to ‘hereafter’, religion influences human behaviour in so strong a way that no other institution can. This is best illustrated in what has come to be popularly referred to as 9/11. The final report of the National Commission on the Terrorist Attacks (2002) upon the United States observes:

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, dawned temperate and nearly cloudless in the eastern United States. Millions of men and women readied themselves for work. Some made their way to the Twin Towers, the signature structures of the World Trade Center complex in the New York City. Others went to Arlington, Virginia, to the Pentagon. Across the Potomac River, the United States congress was back in session. At the other end of the Pennsylvania Avenue, people began to line up for a White House tour. In Sarasota, Florida, President George W. Bush went for an early morning run. For those heading to an airport, weather conditions could not have been better for a safe and pleasant journey. Among the travelers were Mohamed Atta and Abdul Aziz al Omari, who arrived at the airport in Portland, Maine.

This day was to remain a landmark in the history of humanity as the 9/11 attack on America. The damage done with respect to loss of lives, of property, not to mention the effects of the consequent declaration of war by America is difficult and very painful to imagine.

At the centre of the 9/11 attack was religion. Although Islam as presented in the Qur’an is a peaceful religion that does not advocate for war, Osama Bin Laden, who

²“Report on the Consultation on Ethnicity and Nationalism” hosted by the Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue in Colombo and the Christian Council of Sri Lanka, Nov 1994, in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol 47, No. 2, April 1995; p. 229.

is identified as the leader of the Al Qaeda Group that took responsibility for the attack, uses Islam to justify the war against America. This war did not start with 9/11 though 9/11 marked a new war because it was the first time that America was being attacked by the Al Qaeda on its own soil. Throughout the preparations for the attack believed to have been carried out throughout the 1990s, Osama bin Laden repeatedly inspired his 'soldiers' to embrace martyrdom because in his own words: 'the walls of oppression and humiliation cannot be demolished except in a rain of bullets' (Bin Laden, cited in The 9/11 Commission Report, p.50–51).

Islam is not the only religion that was used to justify war between America and the Al Qaeda. Christianity was also. Speaking at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C., President Bush is reported to have said: 'Americans do not yet have the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: To answer these attacks and rid the world of evil'. The declaration was that America was at war and therefore its consequent war on terror was made from a church pulpit! This is significantly important especially because the declaration of war on terror divided the world into two: those for and therefore with America and those against America and therefore not with Bush. In the words of President Bush: 'Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them. . . . Every nation, in every region, now had a decision to make: either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.'³

Given such scenarios, inter-religious education is extremely necessary if peace is to be fostered. Although President Bush differentiated between Islam and Muslims on the one hand and Islamic terrorists on the other, the truth is that both Christianity and Islam had a major role to play in justifying both the 'attack upon America' and the 'war on terror'. It follows then that both religions have a major role to play in fostering peace between 'those for and those against America' throughout the world.

The Role of Inter-religious Education

Indisputably, religion is commonly associated with conflict and violence: in nearly all situations of violence and conflict in the world today religion is identified as a major factor. The previous section presented concrete illustrations of the role played by religion at all levels in initiating, perpetuating and justifying violence. As has already been mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter, this is ironic because major religions of the world claim to be in search for peace among humans. What this contradictory reality implies is that anyone interested in peace and development must essentially address the question of religion.

Inter-religious education seeks to equip learners with the histories, practices, beliefs and values of various religions of the world, with a basic objective of comparing the common points along which religions may engage in common thinking

³White house transcript, President Bush's Address to a Joint session of congress and to the American people, September 20, 2001, cited in The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 337.

and action towards common goals and mutual benefit. This section presents the role of inter-religious education in fostering peace and development in the world today by presenting the common challenges to all religions in view of their common experiences and the claimed common value of peace.

Writing on the role of religious education in peace building, Priestly (2007) argued that one does not need to study other religions except his/her own. For him learning about other peoples' religions does not add value to any effort for peace. I beg to differ. It is ignorance and misunderstanding of the 'other' that leads to the dichotomization of society into 'us' and 'them', the basis of all conflict and violence. As illustrated in the previous section, religion may be used to dichotomize society. In such situations, people identify those who belong to their religion as 'us' while identifying those of a different religion from one's own as 'them'. Due to the egoistic nature of human persons, 'us' are designated as superior and deserving better treatment than 'them'.

In Christianity for example, the concept of 'a chosen race, God's own people', presupposes that those who are not chosen are not God's own people, whether we think of the 'chosen race' as the Jews as implied in the Old Testament or as Christians as implied in the New Testament. The idea of Divine appointment gives weight to the importance of 'us' thereby justifying anything done in favour of 'us' and anything done against 'them'. Since the Divine is All Knowing, the people then believe that God can never be wrong about the importance of 'us' and therefore are inspired and determined in protecting 'us' from 'them'. It is no wonder then that religious and religious-associated wars are the most brutal through history.

The implication is that education about religions other than one's own reveals to individuals and individual groups that all religious people consider their own as the authentic religion and therefore they are the 'chosen people'. This realization makes people understand that they could be wrong in assuming that theirs is the only true religion while all others are wrong. Moreover, studying other religions reveals to individuals and individual groups that one's religion is not necessarily out of choice but rather destined. Such a realization is the basis of learning about other religions and therefore not judging them in ignorance.

I vividly remember the first lesson in my undergraduate class on comparative religion. My teacher, Professor E.M. Kasiera, asked each one of us in the class: 'What is your religion?' Many of us were Christians and we said so while a few were Muslims and they said so. Turning to the Christian students Professor Kasiera asked: 'What is your denomination?' I remember saying: 'I am a strict Presbyterian'. Then the Professor asked the next question: 'Did you choose to be a Presbyterian?' I proudly responded in the affirmative. My pride was brought down to nothing when the truth of the matter dawned on me. I was a Presbyterian not out of choice but because of past experiences that I had little or no control over. If I had been born to different parents in a different continent at a different time in history, it is unlikely that I would be a Presbyterian. He went on to explain why Presbyterians in Kenya are almost entirely of the kikuyu background because missionaries of the Church of Scotland basically settled in the central province limiting their missionary activity to the people around them.

No other lesson has had such an impact in my life as far as breaking down the wall I had created between ‘us’ Presbyterians and ‘they’ who at the time were limited to the Roman Catholics due to my limited exposure. Note that up to this time that I had not had close encounters with people of other ‘faiths’ other than Roman Catholics. The other ‘faiths’ being completely unknown to me were of no interest but the Roman Catholics were a little known to me only in as far as my fellow Presbyterians defined them as ‘them’, that is different from ‘us’ in a negative way. Since then a lot of experiences have transformed my Christian identity: Born and brought up as a strict Presbyterian, I later became a Roman Catholic by marriage so that today I fellowship in a Roman Catholic Church while my involvement in religious and inter-religious education makes me a Catholic by choice.

All religions have a common challenge to try and understand other religions particularly those with whom they interact. In the absence of interaction, not knowing the other is without much consequence. However, if one interacts with any group other than their own, it is necessary to understand the other, otherwise one will brand the other inferior leading to conflict. In a globalized world where interactions are no longer limited by time and space, inter-religious education is indispensable.

Inter-religious education reveals that there are common values in all religions and therefore one’s own religion is not as unique as one perceives it. Further, inter-religious education reveals to individuals and individual groups the fact that one’s own religion, like other religions, has made similar mistakes through history and therefore all face the same challenge, the challenge to deepen faith and translate this into action is common to all religions. It is for lack of deep faith that people including religious leaders find their ethnic, national, class and other ties stronger than their religious ties. In such circumstances, ethnic, national and class competition and struggles take precedence over religious beliefs. In fact religious beliefs are compromised or misinterpreted to suit other pursuits. This explains why many people claim to belong to certain religions and yet their practices do not resonate to what they claim to believe. As has already been presented in the preceding pages, if people truly followed the values of their religion there would be peace for all humanity.

Inter-religious education has a major role to play in preparing people for inter-religious dialogue which is the basis for addressing religious-associated violence in the world today. It is difficult for people from different religious backgrounds to dialogue if they do not have adequate knowledge of the ‘other’. This presents all religions with a challenge to promote inter-religious education for inter-religious dialogue. It is necessary to acknowledge that there is significant development in inter-religious dialogue; religions are increasingly coming together to dialogue. However, not much action is coming from such dialogue as much of the time is spent talking. The challenge is for religions to move beyond what Landau calls ‘talk-talk-talk cycle’ (Landau, 2007) into practical action. Landau is accurate in his assertion that inter-religious dialogue groups are often ‘dogged by religious and personality conflicts’. My contention is that such conflicts arise from lack of adequate knowledge of the other, which may be achieved through inter-religious education.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the role of inter-religious education in promoting peace and development in the world today. The writer began by presenting the role of religion in war and conflict at various levels: family, community, national and international. Using illustrations from historical events from various parts of the world, religion was presented as a source, basis and justification of initiation and perpetuation of violence. Gender violence, religious violence, ethnic violence, civil violence and international violence were discussed in these illustrations.

Having thus shown the relationship between religion and violence, the next section presented the role of inter-religious education in fostering peace and development by identifying the common challenges to religion. These included the following:

- (i) the challenge to promote inter-religious education
- (ii) the challenge to deepen faith and therefore bridge the gap between faith and practice
- (iii) the challenge to promote inter-religious dialogue that moves beyond talk to practical action for peace and development.

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Reflecting on the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions: The Continuing Challenges for the Interreligious Movement

Desmond Cahill

Introduction

In 1993 in Chicago when Barak Obama was learning to sharpen his political teeth in the hotbed of the city's class and ethnoreligious factions, the first Parliament of the World's Religions of the modern era was held, and it was held precisely a 100 years after the very first Parliament in 1893. Under the guidance of the Chicago Board of Trustees, successive Parliaments have been held in Cape Town (1999), Barcelona (2004) and Melbourne in December 2009. To what extent the US first black president was affected by the 1993 Parliament remains unclear but he has spelled out his religion-in-politics philosophy in an address he gave in June 2006 at a *Call to Renewal* Conference. He argued that the religious right should not be allowed to monopolize religion and articulated how his own Christian commitment had emerged out of the central and prophetic role of the Black churches (Glaude, 2008).

Obama reflected on this commitment, "I still believe in the power of the African-American religious tradition to spur social change, a power made real by some of its leaders here today. Because of its past, the Black church understands in an intimate way the Biblical call to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and challenge powers and principalities". He went on, "I was able to see faith as more than just a comfort to the weary or a hedge against death, but rather as an active hope palpable, an active palpable agent in the world as a source of hope". This personal base led him to reflect on how religious belief ought to animate public deliberation and public policy. "Democracy demands that the religiously motivated translate their concerns into universal rather than religion-specific values". In other words, religious or secularist followers cannot hide behind the claims of their worldview. Those claims must be subject to the social conscience within the parameters of public reason and accord-

D. Cahill (✉)
RMIT University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: des.cahill@rmit.edu.au

ing to the discourse of public debate. Such policy claims must be made accessible to public reason though in the world of religious pluralism and democratic societies this capacity and need to speak across differences in worldview in a publicly reasonable way is never easy in the consultative process that leads to the formulation of public policy (Glaude, 2008).

It is not surprising given his international family heritage that Obama's heritage is also multifaith. His father became an atheist though today his African relatives in Kenya remain Muslim. His revered mother was skeptical of organized religion. His half-sister is Buddhist and there is a rabbi in his mother's ancestry. Not long after his inauguration on 5 February 2009 at the National Prayer Breakfast, this multi-faith and Chicago heritage expressed itself in President Obama's establishment of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, a revamped version of President Bush's multifaith office. At the Breakfast, he recalled that he became a Christian after moving to the south side of Chicago, working as a community organizer from a Catholic Church office. "It was on those streets, in those neighbourhoods, that I first heard God's spirit beckon me. It was there that I felt called to a higher purpose – His purpose" (*CathNewsUSA*, 2009).

The reflections for this chapter are focused on the 1893 Parliament. They are indebted to and based on the collection of speeches edited by Richard Hughes Seager (1993). His work in turn is based on the two-volume compilation edited by John Henry Barrows' *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular History* (1893) and Neely's *History of the Parliament of Religions* (1896). It also contains useful introductory commentaries and press excerpts that give the flavour of the Parliament during its course of 17 days. The dawn of religious pluralism is said to have occurred at the first Parliament of the World's Religions, held in the building that is today Chicago's Art Institute. It began in 1893 on the morning of September 11, exactly almost to the minute 108 years before the religiously inspired terrorist attacks on New York and Washington which again have highlighted the need for the interreligious movement.

Circumstances of the 1893 Parliament

The Chicago of the 1890s was a very different and diverse place, an unlikely place for the Parliament. It was chosen because its staging was associated with the Colombian Exposition, celebrating 400 years after Christopher Columbus had arrived on American shores. New York and St. Louis had competed to stage the event but Chicago won the bid because it was perceived as "the great city of the West" and had finished recovering from its Great Fire of 1871. Chicago had been founded as a trading post in the 1770s but it was the opening of the railroad in 1838 in the same year as the opening of the Illinois and Michigan Canal that led to the establishment of Chicago as a major world city and the leading city of the United States' mid-west. Rural refugees from within the United States had migrated into the

rapidly expanding metropolis as had their overseas counterparts. By 1893, Chicago had just over one million people.

The 1890s marked the twilight and end of the colonial era of globalization triggered by technological innovations such as the steam engine and the telegraph. The introduction of international conventions and exhibitions was also hallmarks of colonial globalization, and the 1893 Parliament fitted into this pattern as did the Exposition itself. In the colonial era, west generally met east in the east, whereas during the Parliament, rather uniquely for that time, east met west in the west. Whilst there had been over the centuries many previous interfaith contacts (e.g. Francis of Assisi visiting the Sultan in Istanbul), the 1893 interreligious gathering was the first truly global interfaith event where religious leaders from east and west met in formal dialogue. Whilst its vision was grand, even global, and inclusive, the first Parliament deliberated in a particular historical and geographical context that was, at times, quite narrow.

During the previous decade in 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act had been passed by Congress, though the presence of Asians was critical to the global image the Parliament wanted to project. It was run by the Protestants, perhaps for the Protestants, but they were careful to invite the Catholics who had begun to step onto centre stage in the United States of President Grover Cleveland. But it would be almost 70 years before a Catholic became President. The Parliament was diverse for its time, but it could have been and should have been more diverse. The native Americans were not invited nor did immigrant Americans play much of a role; the leading Muslim of the time, the Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid II, declined the invitation. Few Muslims attended. India and the Indians were to become very popular in the person of Swami Vivekananda. The Asians were Orientals, the Muslims were Mohammedans. The world was divided between Christians and heathens, Christians and pagans, though many speakers did rise above such disparagement. Boos and hisses twice greeted presentations on Islam, especially when polygamy was mentioned. But generally the atmosphere was open and curious of the different. Many new voices were to be heard.

The Many Voices of the Parliament

The Jewish voice was one voice to be heard, and it was part of the intellectual foundation of the Parliament. It was open and inviting, coming from the liberal Reform tradition. The Jewish inputs stressed the universality and necessity of religion as well as the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The Holocaust was still half a century away but it was a Jewish laywoman, Josephine Lazarus (1846–1910), who raised the issue of anti-Semitism. Josephine was the older sister of the more famous Emma Lazarus (1849–1887), poet and writer, who was responsible for the immortal words, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free” associated with the Statue of Liberty. Both sisters had committed

themselves to reinforcing the Jewish identity and to Zionist causes, these commitments triggered by the Russian pogroms in the 1880s. Josephine admitted that “when we are attacked as Jews, we do not strike back angrily, but we coil up in our shell of Judaism and entrench ourselves more strongly than before” (Lazarus, 1993, p. 234). She condemned barbarous Russia, liberal France and philosophic Germany where the scourge of anti-Semitism was most acute at that time, and asked, “What is the meaning of this exodus from Russia, from Poland, those long black lines, crossing the frontiers or crushed within the pale – these “despised and rejected of men”, emerging from their ghettos, scarcely able to bear the light of day?” (Lazarus, 1993, p. 242).

Black migration from down south was yet to occur. African Americans were given little part in the Columbian Exposition with one representative comparing the “white city of Chicago” to “a whitened sepulchre”. Though underrepresented at the Parliament, Black America was represented by some powerful speakers who were progenitors of the same tradition to which Barak Obama belongs. It was pointed out that Simon the Cyrenian who carried the cross of Jesus on the road to the hill of Calvary, the site of his execution, was an African.

The searing comments of Benjamin Arnett still ring down the 11 decades since,

We speak not thus in anger, but in the words of truth and soberness. We know what has been done in the name of Christianity, in the name of religion, in the name of God. We were stolen from our native land in the name of religion, chained as captives, and brought to this continent in the name of the liberty of the gospel; they bound our limbs with fetters in the name of the Nazarene in order to save our souls; they sold us to teach the principles of religion; they sealed the Bible to increase our faith in God; pious prayers were offered for those who chained our fathers, who stole our mothers, who sold our brothers for paltry gold, all in the name of Christianity, to save our poor souls. . . when the slave trade was abolished by the strong hand of true Christianity, then false Christianity had no interest in our souls at all (Arnett, 1993, p. 140).

The Black American speakers addressed the destructive stereotypes and the negative historical perspectives whilst admitting there were “heroic men and saintly women” who had always believed in the humanity of African Americans. The Black laywoman, Fannie Williams, was equally searing:

The hope of the negro and other dark races in America depends upon how far the white Christians can assimilate their own religion. At present there seems to be no ethical attitude in public opinion toward our colored citizens. White men and women are careless and meanly indifferent about the merits and rights of colored men and women. The white man who swears and the white man who prays are alike contemptuous about the claims of colored men (Williams, 1993, p. 149).

Eighteen women addressed the Parliament, and whilst this was only 10% of the total number of speakers, it was more than tokenism as we have seen with Josephine Lazarus and Fannie Williams. Swami Vivekananda, having journeyed from his ashram outside Kolkatta, began his first speech with the electrifying words, “Sisters and brothers”, which resulted in a sustained, standing ovation. Later, in his speech on Hinduism, he raised the feminist cause fleetingly yet tellingly when referring to the *Rishis*, some of the very greatest of whom were women. The *Rishis* had

discovered the spiritual laws governing the relationships between soul and soul and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits (Vivekananda, 1993a).

The Seeking of the Truth in Sharing and Disagreement

The majority of attendees were from the United States, and the Parliament reflected the confidence of the Christian West and the American dream. Charles Bonney, lawyer and member of the Swedenborgian Church, who had conceived the idea of the Parliament, initially saw its mission as, in the spirit of religion as social capital, “to unite all religions against all irreligion . . . to present to the world . . . the substantial unity of many religions in the good deeds of the religious life”. The focus was on the 10 world religions which were considered to be Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shintoism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism. Sikhism was strangely missing. The Parliament metamorphosed into a concentration on the articulation of truth, its sharing and its showcasing. The blatant Anglo-centrism, if not Christian triumphalism, implied highlighting the superiority of Christianity. According to the guidelines, the speakers were instructed “to state their own beliefs, and the reasons for them, with the greatest frankness, without, however, employing unfriendly criticisms of other faiths”. Other faiths, however, were not backward in stating their superiority.

Almost two-thirds of the speakers were Protestant Christians. Henry Jessup, a Presbyterian with missionary experience in Syria, led the way with views widely shared by mainstream Protestants in an address entitled, *The Religious Mission of the English-Speaking Nations*. “No nobler service has been given to any people, no nobler mission awaits any nation than that which God has given to those who speak the English tongue” (Jessup, 1993, p. 37). He went on:

A divine voice summoned the Anglo-Saxon race out of paganism into a positive faith and the cheering hopes of the Gospel; but centuries of discipline and gradual growth were needed to fit them as a nation to be the messengers of light and life to the world. The native love of truth of these peoples has been confirmed and intensified by the English Bible. Integrity, veracity and impartial justice are to great extent national traits. These great nations are permeated with the principles of the Bible (Jessup, 1993, p. 39).

This expression of Protestant colonialism was then laced with a little anti-Catholicism: “We are not ashamed of that Divine Book which has made the difference between North and South America, between Great Britain and the Spanish peninsula” (Jessup, 1993, p. 42).

A clergyman, George Pentecost, did not live up to the iconic and inclusivist tone of his surname, “Christianity is not intolerant of other religions except as light is intolerant of darkness, but will in no way compromise with error nor enter into fellowship with any religious system or philosophy that is not built on the Rock of Ages” (Pentecost, 1993, p. 319). John Gracey and others were dismissive of any religious thinking that came before Jesus Christ unless it was Jewish.

The Catholic delegation, particularly happy to have been invited and thus be formally recognized on the American scene, was led by Cardinal Gibbon from Baltimore. The 1965 Declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, and the Pope's 1984 joint prayer service with non-Christian leaders were still far in the historic distance. The Protestants may have thought their version of the Christian faith superior whereas the Catholics had no doubt, but they were more circumscribed in its proclamation. The cardinal's vision for the Parliament was "to present to thoughtful, earnest and inquiring minds the respective claims of the various religions", quickly dismissing most other religions except the Jewish, but especially condemning polytheism and pantheism: "Before the advent of Christ, the whole world, with the exception of the secluded Roman province of Palestine, was buried in idolatry" (Gibbon, 1993, p. 155).

Gibbon went on, acknowledging its worthwhile nature. "This Parliament has been a mighty blow to atheism, to deism, to agnosticism, to naturalism, to mere humanism". Catholic superiority was built on the claim of universality, "The Catholic religion alone is world-wide and cosmopolitan", the Church then numbering 250 million. However, Gibbon's argument was built mainly on his Church's contribution to social capital with an impressive recitation of its educational, health and welfare institutions. He did not articulate the Church's social justice policies even though Pope Leo XIII had published just 2 years previously the first of the great social encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum*. However, the interventions of the Christians were to be trumped by a Hindu.

The Electrifying Contributions of Swami Vivekananda

The historical accounts are unanimous in suggesting that the stellar performance of Swami Vivekananda was the highlight of the 1893 Parliament. Born on 12 January 1863 as Narendranatha Dutta, he was a member of a quite rich and aristocratic family in Kolkatta. His life became one of seeking God, and his master was the famous Sri Ramakrishna whose depth of God-consciousness was the central point of his life and teachings. Sri believed that all religions lead to the same goal of communion with God.

The life of Vivekananda was relatively short as he died on 4 July 1902 after a second and shorter stay in the west. An instant celebrity in the United States where he found a ready outlet for his teachings, he became a key figure in the introduction into the West of the Vedanta philosophy and religion together with Yoga. In tune with his master and mentor, his mantra was *Jiva is Shiva*, "each individual is divinity itself". He strongly recommended the practice of Brahmacharya or celibacy to which he attributed his own spiritual, intellectual and physical attributes. He also played a key role with his teachings in the making of modern India and had a strong influence on Gandhi and Nehru.

The Chicago press of the time dubbed Vivekananda “the cyclonic monk from India”. From the beginning, Vivekananda threw down the gauntlet to Christian supremacy with the words, “I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration but we accept all religions as true”. He quoted the words from a Bhagavad Gita hymn:

As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so O Lord, the different paths which people take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.

He then went on:

Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair . . . I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal (Vivekananda Vedanta Network 2009).

In the final session, he observed, “A few jarring notes were heard from time to time in this harmony. My special thanks to them, for they have, by their striking contrast, made general harmony the sweeter” (Vivekananda, 1993b, p. 336). Unlike some others, the Swami did not argue for one world religion as this is “an impossible hope”, but he suggested that each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve their individuality and grow according to their own law of growth. He concluded that the 1893 Chicago Parliament “has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any Church in the world”.

Poverty and Missionary Work in India

Local and international development and social justice were never a central focus of this first Parliament though speakers did refer to social relations, which usually meant their relationships with other faiths and with the broader society. Religious truth was too overriding a concern to permit this. Vivekananda, however, did raise one very pertinent issue and was acclaimed for doing so. In a short speech on 21 September, 1893 entitled *Religion Not the Crying Need of India*, he reprimanded his American Christian audience:

You are so fond of sending out missionaries to save the souls of heathens. I ask you: what have you done and are doing to save their bodies from starvation? . . . during the terrible famines, thousands died from hunger but the missionaries did nothing. They come and offer life but only on condition that the Hindus become Christians, abandoning the faith of their fathers and forefathers. Is it right? . . . Brethren of America, you erect churches all through India, but the crying evil in the East is not religion. They have religion enough, but it is bread that the suffering millions of burning India cry out with parched throats. What they want is bread, but they are given a stone. It is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion (Vivekananda Vedanta Network 2009).

The Final Session

At the final session on the evening of 27 September 1893, the two speeches saw the Parliament in terms of a global triumph for Christianity. In an earlier session, a Hindu reformist, Protap Chunder Majumdar (1993), reminded his audience of Asia's rich spiritual heritage. He outlined with beautiful and awe-inspiring imagery the six gifts conferred by Asia on the global religious world:

1. Asian spirituality communes with the Spirit of God who fills all creation; nature, as God's abode and God's image, is for spiritual emancipation, and it is where God is personally active. For "Asia is at one with God".
2. The second gift from Asia is introspection by which the Spirit of God generates attitudes of blessedness and reveals the abundance of Divine blessedness.
3. Through these attitudes fired by the imagination and the power of intelligence, a prophetic fire is kindled within each person, glowing with the light of the dawning heavens and spiritualized into a vision of the eternal – the philosopher has become the seer who has gone beyond logic and observation.
4. The fourth gift Asia has given is the notion of the supreme and universal Spirit manifesting himself as reason and love and righteousness and joy, leading to wisdom, including in Christ, the spirit of truth.
5. Asia has taught the world to worship, which is not a duty but instinctive, a longing and a passion to be drawn into the depths of God; the love of God is a madness of the spirit, man calling after God and God seeking after man – all this is done in devotional silence which breaks out into worship through flowers, incense, sacrificial fires, sacramental food, symbolic postures, bathings, fasting and vigils.
6. Lastly, there are the practices of self-conquest or renunciation of the force of bodily and worldly desire, a positive asceticism and an absolute holiness in poverty, simplicity and homelessness (Majumdar, 1993).

This and other less powerful attempts by Eastern religious leaders to engage the west were brushed aside, albeit politely. As a poem recited on the last day, put it, "O golden, olden East; right welcome to the feast; the New World welcomes you." In this last session in the first of the two speeches, John Keane, rector of the Catholic University of the United States, noted that the Parliament had given object-lessons in old truths, namely, that there is some truth in all religions and that the world cannot do without religion. The future of religion must be more glorious than the past. But most attendees would live to see the slaughter house of the First World War though very few would live to see the Second World War, the horror of the Holocaust and the devastation of the two atomic bombs. Neither war was caused by the forces of religion; in fact, if anything, especially the Second World War, both were caused by the forces which had humankind at their centre rather than God. The optimism of those departing the Parliament was not to be forged in the events of the dawning twentieth century.

It was hoped that a subsequent Parliament would be held at Benares in India but this never occurred. What did occur was the eventual formation in 1900 of the International Association for Religious Freedom which continues its work still today with 90 affiliated member groups in 25 countries.

Conclusion

If Christian supremacism was one dominant feature of the Parliament, on balance, it was tempered by the non-Christian input and more dominant was the theme of inter-religious understanding. There was the very strong sense that something historic was happening and that a new era of human unity was in germination. The hand of the one was outreached to grasp the hand of the other. Each Parliament has the opportunity of enhancing the sense of global consciousness and global commitment.

The 1893 Parliament did herald the beginning of the interfaith movement, but the two world wars would intervene before a group of world leaders, reflecting on the message of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, would establish the World Conference of Religions for Peace with its first world assembly in 1970 at Kyoto, based on national chapter representation. Later, as the contemporary forces of globalization became more apparent driven by the revolutions in transportation and information and communications technology, Chicago resurrected its Parliament heritage in 1993 in recognition that a more popularist event needed to be provided. The need for an interfaith movement has become more apparent and focused around the characteristics of the city to which it is awarded every 5 years. This focus on the city at a time when cities have become the hubs of the global network is timely because, as the terrorist attacks in London, Madrid and Mumbai have illustrated, the cosmopolitan cities of the world need to develop interfaith organizations as part of the need for the continuous construction of socially cohesive societies. Perhaps the lesson of the Parliament from the beginning has been the centrality of the city in contemporary society as the encounters between the religions take place principally in its streets, neighbourhoods and suburbs of the city.

A second lesson to be drawn from the 1893 Parliament is the role of education. In reading the various speeches, one is struck by the lack of reference to the importance of education at all levels in overcoming ignorance, increasing understanding and in working together though it is to be recognized that the commitment to mass education was still in its beginnings.

A third lesson which has not been forgotten is that interfaith interaction cannot be based around, even principally, the exchange of theological views if done in an exclusivist stance. It is preferable to seek theological and philosophical understandings of the various religious traditions and to emphasize the dignity and equality of each individual, however religiously inclined, as global citizens. More preferable, based on this very notion of global citizenship, is to work together to gain a consensus on addressing global, regional and local situations of injustice and conflict.

In summing up the Parliament, on 24 September 1893, *The Chicago Tribune* paid tribute to the harmonious atmosphere for “those whom we have been accustomed to call heathens are not so much heathen as we imagined”. The Parliament had worked to suppress “the antagonisms and persecutions of fanaticism”, still relevant today. The search for truth will continue across the world, but in different ways. Chicago, “the youngest of cities” had successfully brought together “the oldest of faiths”

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Muslims, Catholics and the Common Purpose of Justice and Peace

Kath Engebretson

Introduction

It is the argument of this chapter that Muslims and Catholics are natural partners in the work of justice and peace. This partnership comes from their mutual respect for each other's religions and the recognition of salvific aspects of each religion that allow them to mutually identify commonalities in beliefs and values. It also comes from the common ground of the belief they share in the unity of God and in his attributes of mercy, compassion and forgiveness. Finally it comes from the example of Muhammad and Jesus themselves, who advocated and practised peace, and from the Holy Books that guide the lives of Muslims and Christians. This chapter first establishes that the Catholic Church holds Islam in esteem as a religion that mediates salvation to its people. It then identifies a common platform of belief which puts Muslims and Catholics together in a world where the work for justice and peace is paramount. Then it identifies four particular areas – human dignity, freedom of religion and conscience, the drive to eradicate poverty and the search for peace – in which Muslims and Catholics are natural collaborators. In order to build the argument we first consider the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding the credentials of other religions to mediate salvation to their followers, for it is on this teaching that the Church's attitude of respect for other religions rests.

The Catholic Church and the Salvific Potential of Other Religions

Not Pluralism

The Catholic Church takes an inclusivist rather than a pluralist view of other religions. In a pluralist view all religious paths have the same purpose and lead to the

K. Engebretson (✉)
National School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, VIC,
Australia
e-mail: Kath.Engebretson@acu.edu.au

same destination, the Reality of God (Hick, 1989, p. 235). In this view, differences in religions exist because religions are human constructs, socially and culturally enmeshed, each putting its own interpretation on the mystery of Real. The religion itself, in the conscious and unconscious awareness of the individual and community, shapes perceptions of the Reality often referred to as God. Therefore there are differences and often conflicts between religions, but they are all equally valid ways of approaching the mystery at the centre of the universe.

The pluralist approach to religions requires one to forsake any view of one's own religion as unique and therefore is difficult for the committed believer. The committed Muslim respects what has gone before in Judaism and Christianity, but sees Islam as the true fulfilment of these religions and as the fullness of God's Revelation. The Christian wants to assert the unique place of Jesus Christ in salvation, and the Jew, while respecting the later developments of Christianity and Islam, sees them as departures from the original covenant. For those who want to hold to individual religious convictions, and yet openly engage in dialogue with other religions, the philosophical position with which they are most comfortable is inclusivism, and this is the position which since the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) the Catholic Church has adopted in relation to other religions.

Inclusivism: the Perspective Transformation of the Catholic Church¹

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) demonstrated a perspective transformation in which the Church officially moved from an exclusivist to an inclusivist position in regard to the salvific potential of other religions. We now briefly trace some of the steps in this perspective transformation before explaining the present theology of the Church in relation to other religions.

The axiom of no salvation outside the Church (*The Decree for the Jacobites*, Council of Florence, pp. 1431–1445) reflected a time when it was believed that the world was co-extensive with Christianity, and therefore that all had the opportunity of hearing the gospel. The command of Jesus to take the gospel to the ends of the earth appeared to be a geographical possibility (Sullivan, 1992). This was challenged by the discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Jesuit missionaries to China and India (Mitchell, 1980) found religions much more ancient than Christianity, and 50 years after the axiom “no salvation outside the Church” was formalised in the Council of Florence, Columbus discovered America. It became clear that there were countless people beyond the then known world who had not heard of the gospel of Christ. Indeed these people had their own religions, often far more ancient than Christianity, and which often espoused similar values to those of

¹For a fuller treatment of the material in this section, see Engebretson, K. (2008). Why Should Catholic Schools teach about Religions of the World? *Australian E-Journal of Theology*. Issue 11. Institute of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Education. Australian Catholic University.

the gospel of Christ. Did a loving God who willed the salvation of all choose to deny these good people any possibility of becoming members of the Church, outside of which, it was believed, they could not be saved.

Theologians too numerous to mention, among them notably the Dominicans and the Jesuits,² sought to reconcile the teaching of no salvation outside the Church with their belief in the universal salvific will of God. The Flemish theologian Albert Pigge (1490–1542) for example claimed that all that was necessary for those who had not heard of Christ was faith in God (Hebrews 11:6). This led him to the question of whether Muslims, who believed in the one God, could find salvation through their own faith. A conviction was growing among these theologians that contrary to the axiom of no salvation outside the Church, adherents of other religions might be saved through their sincere faith in God expressed in their own religions. This conclusion rested on both an expanded sense of geography and a developing psychological understanding that until people were convinced of the truth of Christianity they could not be guilty in their rejection of it.

Without going into the complex discussion of this issue which took place in the Church in the first half of the twentieth century, by the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council it was accepted Catholic doctrine that there were people in the state of grace and on the way to salvation who would never be visibly joined to the Catholic Church. The influence of the best known argument in support of this, Rahner's (1966) controversial concept of the "anonymous Christian", can be seen in these passages from the documents from Second Vatican Council.

Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or his Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do his will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience (*Lumen Gentium*, p. 16).

and

Since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery (*Gaudium et Spes*, p. 22).

In regard to the great majority of people in the world who have neither Christian faith nor baptism, the Second Vatican Council affirmed that they are not only related to the Church by the grace that the Holy Spirit offers to them, but that the Church is also the sign and instrument of their salvation. The *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions* (Nostra Aetate, 1965) advocated Christ as the "way" of salvation, but argued that "certain ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth" . . . "often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men" (2).

²Francis Xavier (1506–1552), Robert Bellamine (1542–1621), Francisco Suarez (1548–1619) and Juan de Lugo (1583–1660).

The key element in the teaching of Pope John Paul II, in regard to other religions, was respect for the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit within them, action which existed even before Christ, in history and “outside the visible body of the Church” (*Dominum et Vivificantum*, p. 53).

The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the gospel revelation or to enter the Church. The social and cultural conditions in which they live do not permit this, and frequently they have been brought up in other religious traditions. For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his Sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free cooperation (1986, p. 10).

Even the controversial and conservative *Dominus Iesus* (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2000) asserted that while Christ is necessary for salvation, the Kingdom of God is bigger than the Church, and that the elements of truth in other religions may certainly be channels of salvific grace. It is on the basis of this “generous, tolerant inclusivism” (Kung, 1988, p. 255) that the religious believer is able to claim the uniqueness of their own religion and yet enter into dialogue with those of other traditions. As Pope John Paul II declared in 1987: “The truth that the plan of salvation includes all who acknowledge the Creator offers us a solid basis for dialogue and for peaceful co-existence with Muslims.”³

The Catholic Church Teaching About Islam⁴

Having established that the Catholic Church takes an inclusivist position in relation to other religions, we now examine Church documents to find what the Catholic Church teaches about Islam, and thus to establish on what basis Catholic–Muslim dialogue and collaboration may proceed.

From the Second Vatican Council and in numerous other instances the Church has pointed out that every religion is an effort on the part of human beings to ponder the divine mystery at the centre of life. They are ways in which the spirit of humanity finds expression.⁵ This search for understanding of God brings all people together

³Pope John Paul II addressing the Bishops of Tanzania on their Ad Limina visit, Rome, December 4, 1987.

⁴Qur’anic verses in this chapter are taken from *The Qur’an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English*, by Ali Unal, New Jersey: Light Publications and the New Testament references are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

⁵Nostra Aetate, 1: Pope John Paul II speaking to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations Organization. New York, October 5th, 1995.

in a common humanity, and into a unity under God of the entire human race, and the common Fatherhood of God. “God is the common Father of the entire human family. His design for humanity embraces the life and well being of every human person” declared Pope John Paul II in 1989.⁶ This common Fatherhood is both the platform for and the imperative towards dialogue. So the first thing that brings Catholics and Muslims together in faith is their common monotheism. This principle of divine unity and oneness (*Tawhid*) is the knowledge that God has revealed to humankind in all ages through his prophets from Abraham down to Muhammad (PBUH). In *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church from the Second Vatican Council, the Church declares:

The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, *along with us* adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind (16).

It is not surprising that the Council gave recognition to the monotheistic nature of Islam, for this is the fundamental characteristic of Islam and the first of its five pillars. What is significant is the phrase “together with us”. Muslims *together with us* adore the one God. Our differences about the nature of Jesus Christ do not, in the mind of the Church, take away from the fact that we are united in the worship of the one true God. “We would like you to know that the Church recognises the riches of the Islamic faith – a faith that binds us to the one God”⁷ declared Pope Paul VI in 1972. In another speech in 1976 he referred to Muslims as “Our brothers in faith in the one God.”⁸

In another significant document, *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council acknowledged some of the Beautiful 99 names of God, and in so doing recognised that for Muslims Allah is not one dimensional. His unity is a richly layered and complexly beautiful amalgam of Creator, the One who is all Merciful, the One who is All Powerful, the One who Judges, the One who Forgives and many other Beautiful names. Catholics also admit these characteristics of God as they have been revealed to us through Jesus Christ (Psalm 8; Psal 139; Exodus 19).

A further factor that unites us is that we both look to Abraham, father of Ishmael and Isaac, as prophet and forefather in faith. This is acknowledged not only in *Nostra Aetate* but also in many other papal speeches and writings. The common family legacy we have of Abraham’s response to his call, his fidelity to the one God, his unwavering faith in God’s plan for him and for his descendents, gives us a familial bond from which we can collaborate for the common good. “We assure our Muslim brethren” declared Pope John Paul II in 1994, “who freely laid claim to faith in Abraham, that we wish to collaborate with them. . .in working for the peace and

⁶Address to the Latin Bishops of the Arab regions on their Ad Limina visit, Rome, February 3, 1989.

⁷To the new ambassador of Pakistan, Rome, September 9, 1972.

⁸To the new ambassador of Morocco, Rome, June 4, 1976.

justice which alone can give glory to God.”⁹ In the holy Qur’an the covenant bond between Jews, Christians and Muslims is expressed in this way. “And remember when we took from the prophets their covenant, and from you (O Muhammad) and from Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant.” (S. 33.7)

Other foundations of unity between Muslims and Catholics can be found in their common obedience to God, submission to God’s plan, commitment to prayer and to service of others. In this regard it is enlightening to draw some simple parallels between the holy Qur’an and the New Testament, and these are presented in Table 1.

There is certainly more common ground between the Catholic Church and Islam than the brief analysis given here, but these three foundations are those referred to most commonly in Catholic Church documents: that is the monotheism that brings Catholics and Muslims together in common worship of the one God, the common family relationship with Abraham and their common desire to submit to the will of God, to commune with God in prayer, to seek humility and simplicity and to serve God in others. It is particularly this last foundation that we will now develop. What does the Church see as the work that Catholics and Muslims must do together into their service of humanity?

Table 1 Common ground between the Qur’an and the New Testament on almsgiving

From the Qur’an	From the New Testament
Those who <i>believe</i> in the Unseen, establish the <i>Prayer</i> in conformity with its conditions and out of what we have provided for them (of wealth, knowledge, power, etc.) they spend (<i>to provide sustenance for the needy</i> and in God’s cause, purely for the good pleasure of God and without placing others under obligation) (S. 2:3)	Do not be afraid little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. <i>Sell your possessions and give alms</i> . Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief draws near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is there your heart will be also (Luke 12:32)
Now O Human kind, worship your Lord who has created you as well as those before you (and brought you up in your human nature and identity) so that you may attain <i>reverent piety</i> towards him and His protection (S. 2:21)	Rid yourselves then of all malice and all guile, insincerity, envy and all slander. Like newborn infants long for the <i>pure spiritual milk</i> so that by it you may grow into salvation (1 P. 2:1)
Seek help through patience (and fasting which requires and enables great patience, and through the Prayer. Indeed the Prayer is burdensome, but not for those <i>humbled by their reverence of God</i>) (S. 2:45)	<i>Humble yourselves</i> therefore under the mighty hand of God so that the may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxieties on him because he cares for you (1 P. 5:6)

⁹Pope John Paul II: A Message for the Special Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops of Africa: Rome, May 6, 1994.

Catholics and Muslims Working Together

Working Together in Support of Human Dignity

Human dignity is the first of the fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching and it refers to the inalienable dignity of every single person, for every person has been created by God and their destiny is in God's hands. St Paul has said that human beings are God's masterpiece, created for a life that God has prepared for us from the beginning (Eph 2:10): This is echoed in the holy Qur'an: "He it is who created you from clay and then decreed a term of life for you, and there is with him another unchanging term determined by and known to him" (S. 6:2). Created by God the person, body and soul, is a child of God. Yet around the world there are numerous abuses of human dignity, and *Gaudium et Spes* identifies some of these as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children and disgraceful working conditions. In Australia we can add the desperate conditions in which some of our indigenous people live (GS, 27).

In 1993 Pope John Paul II called Muslims and Catholics together to work for the upholding of human dignity particularly through education of the young.¹⁰ Earlier, speaking to the leaders of Ghanaian Muslims in 1980 he had said: "I pray that the almighty and merciful God will grant peace and brotherhood to all the members of the human family. And may the harmony of creation and the great cause of human dignity be advanced through our fraternal solidarity and friendship."¹¹ So the first task to which Catholic-Muslim partnership should attend is the identification of local, national and global abuses of human dignity and work to eradicate these, a work called for in our sacred books.

Defence of Freedom of Religion and Conscience

"There is no compulsion in Religion" declares the Qur'an (2:256). The right of religious freedom, according to the Second Vatican Council, impels people to seek religious truth, and once it is known to order their lives in keeping with it. This is only possible if people are free of coercion, both physical and psychological. This right of religious freedom applies not only to individuals but also to religious communities, and the related rights of religious communities are self-government, public worship, assistance and instruction of their members, and the development of institutional infrastructures to support their members in the practice of their religions. Religious communities have the right to select and train their own ministers, communicate freely with other groups within their religion, build places for prayer and worship, raise funds and purchase property. They have the right not to be hindered

¹⁰ Address by Pope John Paul II to representatives of the Muslims of Benin, Parakou, February 4, 1993.

¹¹ Pope John Paul II to the leaders of the Ghanaian Muslims, Accra, May 8, 1980.

in their teaching and public witness when this is without coercion and unworthy persuasion, and to establish educational, social and charitable organisations. In addition, according to Second Vatican Council, parents have the right to determine the kind of religious education that their children are to receive and the right to freedom of choice in education. To quote *Dignitatis Humanae*, (5) “The rights of parents are violated, if their children are forced to attend lessons or instructions which are not in agreement with their religious beliefs, or if a single system of education, from which all religious formation is excluded, is imposed upon all.” Religious freedom must be protected by government, citizenry and social and religious groups, with Government in particular having a duty not only to protect but also to foster favourable conditions for the practice of religions.

Abuses of religious freedom include state control of and repression of religions, imprisonment, torture and other ill treatment of religious leaders, and the imprisonment and harassment of people who attend non-state-controlled religious worship. Religious freedom is abused when particular religions are denied legal status, resulting in arrest and imprisonment of people for their religious practice; when governments intimidate religious minorities or fail to address intolerance and attacks against religious groups; and when there is state favouritism towards majority religions and discrimination against others. Religious freedom is also in danger when public vilification or blasphemous portrayals of religions go unchecked. Public debate about religions needs to take into account the rights of those who practice them and to temper these considerations with the necessary principle of freedom of speech.

In 1980, speaking to the Catholic bishops of Burkina Faso in West Africa, Pope John Paul II urged them to work with the Muslims, the other principal religious group in the country, to understand the requirements of religious freedom and to work together to promote it.¹² Ten years later he used these words to the Bishops of the Philippines:

I would encourage you to seek agreement with your Muslim brothers and sisters on the fundamental question of religious freedom. The foundation of mutual respect and understanding among those of different religious beliefs lies in the right of every individual to freedom of conscience. Everyone has an inalienable right and a solemn duty to follow his or her upright conscience in seeking and obeying religious truth. Religious freedom is not a privilege but a requirement of human dignity.¹³

Here then, the understanding and promotion of religious freedom, and concerted protest when it is abused, is the second work of collaboration between Catholics and Muslims.

¹²Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of Upper Volta, Ouagadougou, May 10, 1980.

¹³Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of the Philippines on their Ad Limina visit, Rome, November 30, 1990.

Working for Human Development and the Elimination of Poverty

In 1967 in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI called development “the new name for peace” and argued that

When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being; we are also furthering man’s spiritual and moral development, and hence we are benefiting the whole human race. For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men (76).

This document is still the benchmark of the Catholic Church’s commitment to the eradication of poverty and the development of the world’s struggling nations. In February 2009, speaking to the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development, Pope Benedict XVI reminded his audience that the Catholic Church shared its commitment to overcome poverty and hunger and to come to the aid of the world’s poorest people. Through its many social justice agencies, the Catholic Church supports projects that assist indigenous communities around the world to flourish on their own soil and to live in harmony with their traditional culture, instead of being forced to uproot themselves in order to seek employment in overcrowded cities, teeming with social problems. The teaching of the Church is a preferential option for the poor and a consistent love that cannot tolerate injustice or deprivation, love that refuses to rest until poverty and hunger are banished from the globe.

We see this command to succour and support the world’s poor in the Muslim imperative of Zakat. The holy Qur’an in numerous verses exhorts almsgiving to the poor in ways that preserve the dignity of the poor and do not profit the giver: “If you dispose your alms openly it is well, if you conceal it and give to the poor in secret this is better for you, and God will make it an atonement to blot out some of your evil deeds. God is fully aware of all that you do (S. 2:271)” and “God deprives interest (which is thought to increase wealth) of any blessing and blights it, but makes almsgiving (which is thought to decrease wealth) productive” (S. 2:276). Work for human development, and for the ultimate eradication of world poverty, is thus the third area on which Muslims and Catholics can collaborate in a spirit of honour for their respective sacred books which call them to this task.

Building Peace Nationally and Internationally

In his social justice encyclical *Centissimus Annus* (1991) Pope John Paul II claimed that religions, now and in the future, would have a prominent role in building peace. (*Centissimus Annus*, 1991). Previously, speaking in Kenya in 1985, he had observed that in light of the human dignity of all, the challenge facing the Church and its collaborators in other religions was to help the world to live in peace and harmony.¹⁴

¹⁴Address to Muslim and Hindu representatives of Kenya, Nairobi, August 18, 1985.

The work for peace and harmony requires reconciliation of nations and groups who have been estranged from each other, even at war with each other. In following the just, forgiving and merciful God, Pope John Paul II said, this can be achieved:

Both the Bible and the Qur'an teach that mercy and justice are two attributes most characteristic of God. He, 'the Just One' the 'Merciful and Compassionate' can bring about these qualities in mankind if only we open our hearts to allow him to do so. He wants us to be merciful toward each other. Along this path there are new solutions to be found to the political, racial and confessional conflicts that have plagued the human family throughout history.¹⁵

Muslims and Christians agree that the call to be peacemakers issues from the God who is peace. The Qur'an says that "God is . . .the sovereign, the All Holy and All Pure, the supreme author of peace and salvation and the supreme author of safety and security" (S. 59:23). St Paul prayed for the believers that the God of peace would be with them (Rom 15:33) and said that "God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (1 Cor 14:33).

Furthermore, both Holy books call on believers to be peacemakers, drawing in this on the examples of their leaders and prophets, Muhammad and Jesus, who were people of peace. Table 2 shows close comparisons between the Qur'an and certain Hadiths regarding the peace-making characteristics of Muhammad and Jesus, and the call to be peacemakers in both the Qur'an and the New Testament.

In 1988, on the basis of this common concern for peace and the common expectation of peace-making between the two religions, Pope John Paul II reiterated the respect of the Church for Muslims, a respect that includes readiness to cooperate with them for the good of humanity and to search with them for peace and justice.¹⁶ Later, speaking to Islamic representatives in Assisi in 1993 and referring to the war-torn regions of the Balkans, he used these words, calling on the witness of Christianity and Islam to search for peace:

We stand in solidarity with these victims of oppression hatred and atrocities, with all those whose villages have been burned and bombed, with those who flee their own homes and seek refuge elsewhere, with those unjustly arrested and placed in camps. Both Christianity and Islam inculcate in us a commitment to persevere in the pursuit of justice and peace for them and all victims of conflict.¹⁷

Therefore, in response to the God who is peace, and in following the directives of the Prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ, Muslims and Christians are united in their common vocation to be peacemakers, on family, neighbourhood, national and global levels.

¹⁵Address to a group of Christians, Jews and Muslims, Rome, February 26, 1986.

¹⁶Address to the new Ambassador of Nigeria, Rome, October 27, 1988.

¹⁷Address to the representatives of the European Islamic community, Assisi, January 10, 1993.

Table 2 Muhammad and Jesus and the requirement for their followers to be peacemakers.

The holy Qur'an	The New Testament
There was a dispute among the people of the tribe of Bani 'Amr bin' Auf. The Prophet went to them along with some of his companions in order to <i>make peace between them</i>	He came and <i>proclaimed peace</i> to you who were far off and peace to those who were near (Eph 2:17)
Once the people of Quba fought with each other till they threw stones on each other. When Allah's Apostle was informed about it, he said, "Let us go to <i>bring about a reconciliation between them</i> " (Sahih Hadith Bakhari, 3:49)	Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you
No good is there in most of their secret counsels except for him who exhorts to a deed of charity, or kind equitable dealing and honest affairs and <i>setting things right between people</i> (S. 4:114)	Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God (Mtt 5:8-10)
Do not make thoughtless oaths by God and do not in striving to keep your oaths, make Him a hindrance by your oaths to doing greater good, acting from piety and <i>making peace among people</i> (S. 2:224)	If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, <i>live peaceably with all</i> (Rom 12:18)
And their greeting to each other and from God and the angels will be <i>Peace</i> (S. 10:10)	Let us therefore <i>pursue what makes for peace</i> and for mutual upbuilding (Rom 14:19)
<i>Make peace between your brothers</i> and keep from disobedience from God (S. 49:10)	Agree with one another, <i>live in peace</i> and the God of love and peace will be with you (2 Cor 13:11)

Conclusion

I have argued that Muslims and Catholics are natural collaborators on social justice and peace issues because their common beliefs, their holy Books and their respective religious leaders (the prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ) call them to this. It is relevant to conclude the arguments of this chapter with a quote from *A Common Word between Us and You* (13/10/2007), an open letter from leaders of Islam to leaders of Christianity:

Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world's population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. The basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God, and love of the neighbour. These principles are found over and over again in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity. The Unity of God, the necessity of love for Him, and the necessity of love of the neighbour is thus the common ground between Islam and Christianity.

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Improving Relations with Islam Through Religious and Values Education

Terence Lovat

Introduction

In a world disposed towards division and the inevitable conflicts that go with it, misunderstanding and misrepresentation are rife. When these things occur in relation to religious and/or values differences, a sound and effective religious and/or values education will respond with a content and pedagogy aimed at enhancing knowledge, understanding and proper representation. In the case of Islam, misunderstanding and misrepresentation are persistent, both within and beyond the Muslim world, increasingly putting at risk the fabric and security of our civilization. The task before religious and values education of dealing with this reality in a constructive and beneficial way is therefore particularly urgent. These areas of the curriculum cannot however carry the burden for such education alone. Especially if the dominant epistemology (or knowledge emphasis) in the school or system is indisposed to dealing with these sorts of content, even the best laid religious or values education programme will struggle to achieve its goals for want of support and effective pedagogy. Ensuring that an appropriate epistemology and attached pedagogy are in place is therefore our first consideration.

The Epistemological and Pedagogical Imperative

Dewey (1964) and Habermas (1972, 1974), two giant intellects of the twentieth century whose work has enlightened educational thinking, spoke of the importance of epistemology in our understanding of reality and, logically therefore, in the directions set by a school curriculum. Dewey spoke of the overarching need for a way of knowing that was about the cultivation of a mindset on the part of teachers that was,

T. Lovat (✉)
The University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW, Australia
e-mail: Terry.Lovat@newcastle.edu.au

at one and the same time, self-reflective and directed towards instilling reflectivity, inquiry and a capacity for moral judiciousness on the part of students. In his work lay an implicit (sometimes explicit) criticism of the dominant curriculum directions of his time. Over-attention to low-level cognitive matter (often referred to as the 'basics') would be fatal to the best interests of public education, in his view.

Similarly, Habermas, himself not an educationist, wished to temper society's natural inclinations towards overly instrumental approaches to learning. Habermas's theory of knowing (1972; 1974; 1984; 1987; 1990) has been a significant influence in attempts by educationists to deepen the understanding of learning and, in turn, in stretching conceptions of the role of the teacher and the school. Beyond the importance of technical knowing (the knowing and understanding of facts and figures), Habermas spoke of the more challenging and authentic learning of what he described as historical-hermeneutic or 'communicative knowledge' (the knowing and understanding that results from engagement and interrelationship with others) and, moreover, of 'critical knowing' or 'self-reflectivity' (the knowing and understanding that comes from critique of all one's sources of knowledge and ultimately from critique of one's own self or, in Habermas's terms, from knowing oneself, perhaps for the first time). For Habermas, this latter was the supreme knowledge that marked a point of one's having arrived as a human being. One might caricature him as saying 'There is no knowing without knowing the knower', and the knower is oneself. In a sense, the ultimate point of the learning game is to be found in knowing oneself and the consequent owning of beliefs and values that inevitably follows.

Building on this, Habermas spoke of 'communicative capacity', which is when the self-reflective knower comes to see his or her own life-world as just one that needs to function in a myriad of life-worlds, and of 'communicative action', where the self-reflective knower takes a step beyond mere tolerance of other beliefs and values to take a stand both for justice and for oneself because one's new-found self, one's own integrity, is at stake. This is a concept about personal commitment, reliability and trustworthiness that spills over into practical action that makes a difference, or what Habermas describes as 'praxis'. This is the kind of education that aims to transform thought and practice, to truly make a difference.

Deweyian and Habermasian thought between them would seem to provide a conceptual framework for an education intention that is quite beyond, though not exclusive of, the basics. It is an education intention that is directed towards schools undertaking more encompassing roles for society than has often dominated educational thinking. It is an education intention that accepts and applauds the notion that teaching and schooling are wide-ranging social agencies with charters to deal with the intellectual, social, emotional, moral and spiritual good of their clientele. It is an education intention that is directed towards teachers and schools playing a role in the forming of individuals who understand integrity and apply it to their practical decision-making and furthermore assist in the cohering of those individuals into functional and beneficent societies. An implication of this education intention is around the removal of any artificial division between knowing and values, since all knowing has an ethical component and is related in some way to human action. With

this understanding, Dewey and Habermas, in their own slightly different ways, challenge contemporary education to deal with the essentials rather than mere basics of learning. Between them, they offer an epistemology that impels a holistic and comprehensive pedagogy that engages with the full array of real-life issues. In our own time, their thinking leads, among many other things, to the inevitability of dealing with Islam and its relations with the West.

Implications for Religious and Values Education

Clearly, these are challenging thoughts for educators of any kind, but for religious and values educators in particular, whose objectives and intentions would seem to be about ‘making a difference’ through pedagogy and practical curriculum goals. While indoctrination and freedom-denying forms of enculturation should always be avoided, it is nonetheless possible that one can become so obsessed with the dangers of privacy invasion that the educational process becomes overly cognitive and bare of passion, so negating the potential to make a practical difference. The thesis underlying this chapter is that the current situation with Islam demands much more in terms of an educational response. The religious and values education required for Westerners, and especially those of direct Jewish and Christian origin, to truly understand Islam is one that must make a difference, not only a difference to head knowledge but, in true Habermasian fashion, a difference in the way these Westerners ultimately act towards their fellow ‘People of the Book’. Concomitantly, the religious and values education required for Muslims, especially in Western environments, are ones that engage them in the fullness of learning about the verifiable facts of their own religious history, in contrast with the increasing attempts by Islamist commentary to skew these facts, and to bring the beliefs and values of Islam into the marketplace where they can be negotiated and evaluated along with all other beliefs and values of a polyglot society that is functioning for the benefit of all its participants.

Islam has clearly become one of the globe’s most potent forces with the capacity to reshape human society as we know it, and so our motivation to understand it is naturally enhanced. Our sources of knowledge are much improved on the past, with new and friendlier translations and explanations of the Qur’an, as well as a rash of scholarship among Western educators attempting to understand Islam (cf. Nettler, 1995; Kramer, 1999; Armstrong, 1991, 2000; Rippin, 2001; Peters, 2003; Rogerson, 2003; Doogue & Kirkwood, 2005; Lovat, 2005, 2006; Cooper, 2006; Grieve, 2006; Penney, 2006; O’Shea, 2006). Of even greater significance, however, is the fact that we now have available to us a renewed Islamic scholarship, sometimes in stand-alone form and in other cases where Muslims and non-Muslims have united in a common cause, directed at understanding and/or re-interpreting Islam’s origins, including its relationship with the broader world of religion and especially with Judaism and Christianity (cf. al-Ashmawi [in Nettler, 1995]; Talbi, 1995;

Tantawi & al-Fattah Tabbara [in Nettler & Taji-Farouki, 1998]; Khalidi, 2001; Nasr, 2002; Nettler, 1999; Yahya, 2002; Ozalp, 2004; Akbarzadeh & Yasmeen, 2005; El Droubie, 2006; Hirsi Ali, 2006; Lovat & Samarayi, 2008). This work cuts both ways in terms of building or destroying bridges between Islam and non-Islam but, either way, it is vital work for the global community to know. In either case, there is potential for all, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, to engage in the kind of self-reflectivity that leads to the enhanced communal effects of people who know themselves better, in the ways connoted by Habermas. In Australia, there are several school-based ventures in religious and values education that are worth highlighting in this context.

Religious Education

In the band of subjects that are offered in the New South Wales (NSW) Higher School Certificate, there are two that include potential for an adequate to thorough-going study of Islam. *Society and Culture*, a modern sociologically oriented subject, includes a depth study, *Belief Systems*, as one of three options that need to be chosen for study duration of approximately 14 weeks each. The birth of this subject in 1985, complete with the option of an in-depth study of religion, originally titled *Religion and Belief*, marked the beginning of a new era for the public curriculum in NSW, one in which there would be a progressive return to the possibility of those explicit religious curricula envisaged in the Public Instruction Act (1880) that set out the charter for public education in NSW. This turn in the curriculum of a system, so clearly indisposed to religious attention for most of the twentieth century, might ultimately be judged to be of enduring value to a generation faced with the challenge of education in an increasingly multicultural and multi-faith society. For the first time in NSW, a syllabus was designed that included an explicit goal to enhance cross-cultural tolerance of religious difference and to be primarily for its social rather than merely individual benefit. Hence, the original aims of the depth study, as constructed in the 1985 syllabus, read as follows:

... to provide students with a better understanding of the part played by religion and belief in their own lives and those of others. It aims to arouse in students an awareness of the importance of religion and belief in shaping human behaviour, both individually and collectively, and to enable them, irrespective of their own religious beliefs (or lack of them) to identify and assess sympathetically the nature and consequences of belief in others (NSW, 1985, p. 33).

The popularity of the depth study in question justified the development of a discrete HSC subject focused on religion and belief, with similar though expanded intentions. In 1991, the original *Studies of Religion* syllabus was unveiled with the following objective:

... to promote an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the nature of religion and the influence of religious traditions, beliefs and practices on societies and on the individual, with an emphasis on the Australian context (NSW, 1991, p. 7).

Beyond the obvious emphasis on Aboriginal spirituality and Christianity on the development of Australian spirituality, the new syllabus was explicit in dealing with the more recent influences of other major religious traditions, ‘new’ spiritualities and the growing statistics around non-belief that were progressively showing up in the national census data.

The updated syllabus (NSW, 2005) reveals a development of thought around the subject and its potential to contribute to harmony and understanding in a multicultural setting. In the rationale, it states:

The Studies of Religion syllabus . . . enables students who live in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society to progress from a broad understanding of religious traditions to specific studies within these traditions. (It) enables students to come to an understanding that each religious tradition has its own integrity and contributes to a well-ordered society (p. 6).

Both of these syllabi continue to provide good opportunities for students to make a study of Islam, both as a general instance of the kinds of new religious influences that characterize Australia since the 1970s and, moreover, as a specialized study in itself. Both syllabi include the notion of a ‘depth’ or ‘focus’ study that allows for more intense study of a particular instance. In the case of *Studies of Religion*, Islam is one of five major religious traditions recommended for intense study and, especially in recent years, it has become common to find schools choosing this option. In the case of *Society and Culture*, there are two ways in which Islam can be studied intensively. The *Belief Systems* depth study has its own focus study built in, and Islam is recommended as a high priority and particularly topical option for intensive study. Additionally, *Society and Culture* includes a ‘Personal Interest Project’ that is worth 15% of the final combined mark for the subject. This project comprises a ‘4,000–6,000 word’ minor research dissertation that the student works on in the last 2 years of school. It is intended that the project will demonstrate the development of sound research skills and their application to a contemporary societal issue. Again, no doubt because of the issues of the day, it has become more common of late to find this project being directed towards some aspect of Islam.

The template for a focus study on Islam in *Society and Culture* is provided in Donnelly et al. (2008). It follows a generally recommended pattern for focus studies, attending to items that include its history and contemporary status, its main theological emphases around key people, places and texts, issues of power and dissent, gender, technological impact, issues of continuity and change, likely and possible futures and, finally, a section on peace and conflict.

The opening historical section places the birth of Islam squarely at the centre of Muhammad’s inspiration by Judaism and Christianity amidst the essentially Arabic world of his birth. It identifies monotheism as essential to this inspiration and emphasizes Islam’s intersection with its fellow ‘religions of the Book’ in developing its own account of monotheism. In spite of this intersection, it characterizes Islam as an outgrowth and development of its sibling religions. It pays particular attention to the ways in which Muhammad contrasted the beliefs and contribution of Moses and Jesus with the religious practices of the Jewish and Christian establishments of his day. The study focuses on the testimony provided by the *Qur’an*

in clarifying the distinction between these holy founders and the traditions that had grown up in their names and of the *Ummah*, or 'community', that developed as the Muslim version of the 'People of God' promised by God since the time of Abraham. In managing the content in this way, Islam is presented to the student as a natural and essential outgrowth of the major Western religions but as one that has its own distinctive focus and inbuilt critique of them. This approach helps the student to understand where Islam fits in the wider scheme of the world's belief systems while, at the same time, establishing the grounds for understanding some of the inevitable conflict surrounding Islam's relationship with the West.

The study builds on the opening content to explore the major people, places and texts of Islam. The majority of its foundational heroes, apart from Muhammad himself, are seen to be shared with Judaism and Christianity. Abraham is depicted as the most common link, so justifying the expression of the 'religions of the Book' as being collectively the 'Abrahamic Tradition'. In this sense, Abraham can be characterized as being Muslim and Christian, as much as he is Jewish (or Hebrew). However, Moses is also characterized as being authentically Muslim because it was he who mediated the 'Torah' which sits at the foundation of the Muslim 'Pillars of Faith'. At the same time, the image of Moses to be found in the *Qur'an* might be said to be more Muslim than Jewish, and his encounter with God to be more clearly a divine directive to establish a community of faith than in any way a kingdom of the sort that the Jews would eventually establish after their conquest of the land of the Canaanites (effectively Palestine, an Arabic precursor to a Muslim state). In this way, the original Islam is seen to build on, yet to be critical of, the old Jewish order.

Jesus ('Isa') was a special hero in early Islam who was honoured for his distinctive role as a fulfilment of the prophetic tradition. Indeed, Jesus can be seen to be the most important of the prophets who preceded Muhammad's own (greatest) prophetic role. Research by Adang (1996) and Khalidi (2001) has shown, however, that the Jesus who inspired Muhammad in his establishment of Islam, and who would go on to become a hero in early Islam, was not so much the Jesus of Christianity's canonical gospels as a Jesus of the 'apocryphal canon'. In many ways, this Jesus is heard to be critical of the way in which the Christian church had turned him into a God, whereas a truly theological understanding of the Christ event would have always maintained his status as a prophet rather than a God. Again, this content serves to highlight the firm link between Islam and its fellow 'religions of the Book' yet to be, at the same time, an original critique of those same sources and therefore to be inevitably contentious in its relationship with them.

The contentiousness theme is taken up through an exploration of continuity and change in Islam, where issues of gender relations, the impact of technology and Islam as a global force are dealt with in some depth. The syllabus encourages the grounding of these themes in live and contemporary events that have some relevance to the students. Media analyses, debates, excursions and guest speakers representing a range of views are standard pedagogical tools in dealing with these themes. This section of the syllabus culminates with a dedicated focus on the future of Islam where a 'scenario planning' approach is encouraged. By this means, students are

challenged to consider the possible ways in which Islam might develop, depending on an array of independent variables, such as its ongoing relationship with the West, the control or otherwise of radical Islamism, the success or otherwise of various moves by women to claim increased rights in their religion, true unifying or otherwise of Islam across sectarian and ethnic boundaries, and the role that education might or might not play in developing better understanding by Muslims and non-Muslims of Islam's authentically verifiable heritage.

Whether through *Society and Culture* or *Studies of Religion*, students in NSW have much increased opportunity on those in former years to come to a fairly sophisticated knowledge and understanding of Islam. This knowledge and understanding is beyond descriptive knowing of the details about Islam's history, creeds and morality. The pedagogy, impelled by an explicit epistemology that distinguishes between technical, interpretive and reflective knowing, aims to engage students in learning that challenges their own beliefs and life-worlds and that can therefore make a difference in the way they approach Islam, either as their own faith or as the faith of the other.

Values Education

The Deweyian and Habermasian epistemologies cited above are, if anything, even more explicitly relevant to the tenor of the values education efforts being pursued across Australian education systems. As noted above, their epistemologies render the notion of values neutrality in education a nonsense and non-viable. They bring to modern approaches to values education the pedagogical imperative it lacked in earlier manifestations. In other words, Deweyian and Habermasian epistemologies demand a values-laden pedagogy that saturates the learning experience both in a values-filled environment and in explicit teaching that transacts about values, and so works towards induction of students into personal empowerment over their own stated and lived-out values. In earlier times, values education was conceived of as a moral option among various approaches to education. It was often seen therefore to be more relevant to religious schooling and, conversely, shunned by public systems on the basis of their purported 'values-neutrality'. This is now coming to be seen widely as a dated perspective.

The demands of Dewey and Habermas have been vindicated by modern research into quality teaching and effective pedagogy. In a variety of ways and across vastly different research regimes, it has been demonstrated that a values approach to education is no mere option if the fullest effects of learning are to be achieved, including but not limited to academic learning. It was the Carnegie Corporation's 1994 Task Force on Learning (Carnegie Corporation, 1996) that in many ways impelled the modern era of quality teaching. It represented a turning point in the dominant conceptions placed on the role of the school and, in turn, on the power of teaching to effect change in student achievement. It utilized an amassing body

of research knowledge that showed flaws in earlier conceptions around the limited power of schooling to impact positively on student development, on the basis that heritage and especially disadvantage were its most powerful determinants (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Coleman et al., 1966; Plowden, 1967; Jencks et al., 1972; Reynolds, Hargreaves, & Blackstone, 1980). While student achievement in this context was largely defined in academic terms, similar conclusions had been reached regarding all manner of personal and social education. Indeed, if research seemed to reveal the fragile nature of optimism that teachers and schools could influence change in academic prowess, the only conclusion to be drawn about attempts to influence personal, moral or character development was that it was on even more fragile grounds (Leming, 1993; Lickona, 1993). This resulted in a *de facto* values-neutral stance being taken by schools. This stance was based on the belief that educational interventions in values were both ethically inappropriate and educationally doomed.

In recent times, these forms of pessimism regarding the power of educational interventions, both on students' academic achievement and on their moral formation, have been challenged by the seemingly powerful effects of quality teaching, and by an attached recognition of the implausibility and inadequacy of a values-neutral approach being taken to such an inherently values-filled endeavour as education. In this regard, the Carnegie Task Force was also crucial in its definition of the range of learning skills that should be seen as constituting student achievement. By this, it began to blur the boundaries between what would normally be regarded as academic achievement and other core learning pertinent to education. Beyond the more predictable aspects of intellectual development, the Task Force report introduced, for the modern era, notions of learning concerned with communication, empathy, reflection and self-management. It was also explicit in making the point that while heritage and upbringing could make a difference to the ease with which these forms of learning could be attained, they were in no way certain predictors of success. Consistent with the era of quality teaching which the report in some ways ushered in, the final onus was placed on the school and the teacher to make the difference.

Pointing to the inadequacy of surface learning, the Carnegie Report emphasized that effective learning unleashes within the learner the cognitive, affective and moral energies that engage, empower and effect learning of genuine depth. The nature of such a learning experience was elaborated by Newmann and associates (1996; Newmann, Marks, & Gamoran, 1996) whose work focused on the pedagogical dynamics needed to engage students at sufficient 'intellectual depth' in order to motivate and empower their learning. This would mean restructuring the whole learning environment for the benefit of student achievement and would involve the following: pedagogical strategies and techniques used by teachers; catering for the diverse needs of students; organizing of schools for the express purpose of student achievement (school coherence); professional development of teachers; and the creation of a trustful, supportive ambience in the school. In a word, effective pedagogy entailed a range of teacher knowledge and skills and was essentially, inherently and inextricably associated with a values approach to learning.

Extensive evidence-based research, literature searches and meta-analyses over the last decade have repeatedly demonstrated that the quality of the teaching and learning environment has huge potential to overturn the effects of disadvantage related to an array of variables, including family background, socio-economic status and even disability of sorts (e.g. Scheerens, Vermeulen, & Pelgrum, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Avery, 1999; King, Schroeder, & Chawszczewski, 2001; Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2004; Rowe, 2004). Furthermore, allied research like that of Noddings (1997), Willms (2000), Deakin-Crick & Wilson (2005), Carr (2005, 2006), Hawkes (2005, 2007), Clement (2007) and Deakin-Crick & Joldersma (2007) has shown what power a quality teaching and learning environment, embedded in an explicit values framework and pedagogy, can have in matters of self-esteem, security and well-being. Hence, evidence is building that indicates that the potency of quality teaching is not restricted to pedagogical techniques solely concerned with subject content and academic processes, but that its efficacy also lies in attending to the affective and moral dimensions of teaching and learning, and to all the attachments to this concerned with the coherence, ambience and relationships that characterize the learning environment.

It is this array of research on which the Australian Values Education Program (DEST, 2005) is based. It is explicitly premised on the link between values education and best practice pedagogy, and the various projects that have emanated from it have demonstrated the link even further (Lovat & Toomey, 2007, 2009). Within the key project named *Values Education Good Practice Schools* (VEGPS), 316 schools organized into 51 clusters across the country have engaged in a variety of approaches to values education, all based on the central premise that values education and best practice pedagogy are inextricably interrelated. Findings from stages 1 and 2 of VEGPS (DEST, 2006; DEEWR, 2008) have shown that a sound values education can be a powerful ally in the development of best practice pedagogy, including in purely academic terms. Many of the reports from the cluster projects identified improved academic diligence, strengthened intellectual engagement and settling into work more readily and calmly as routine effects of the ambience created by values education. Moreover, the wider categories of learning enumerated by Carnegie were also seen to be enhanced. Many reports identified improved communicative capacity between teachers, students and each other as common outcomes. Similarly, reports spoke of students broadening their sense of social justice issues, within and beyond the school, and setting out to address these in practical ways, so showing a clear development of empathic character. Other reports spoke of demonstrable outcomes that connoted greater reflectivity, self-management and self-knowing, in ways characteristic of both the Carnegie categories and Deweyian and Habermasian epistemology.

The schools in the clusters were drawn from across the various systems, public, private and religious. Among the latter were a number of Muslim schools conjoined in clusters with public and other religious schools. Some of these schools engaged in values education projects that had as their central focus a broadening of understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures, and included schools that were

representative of the divide. Beyond learning targeted at understanding the 'other' within the school, these clusters engaged in an array of organized excursions that took students out of their own environment and placed them in the environment of the other, complete with pedagogical attachment that ensured engagement with the other. The clusters in question attracted considerable public interest because the array of schools was not only representative of the divide between Muslim and non-Muslim but were also connotative of a particular event in 2005 that saw the forces of the divide pitted against each other in a summer-time riot on one of Sydney's better-known holiday destinations. This event served as a focus for the values education projects in question, providing a particularly sharp example of what can transpire when the goals of the project are not attempted, and a mixed community is left without communicative capacity, empathic character, self-reflectivity and the like.

The Australian Government has been active in organizing events and projects relevant to addressing the pressing issues around Islam and its integration or otherwise in Western societies (DEST, 2007; 2007a). As in many Western societies, Islam is now a major religious force in Australia, being significantly larger than a number of traditional Christian denominations and growing exponentially faster than any Christian denomination (Trewin, 2007). One initiative related to Islam and Australian schooling, spurred directly by the London bombing of 2005 but indirectly also from the Bali bombings of 2002 and 2005 and even less directly from '9/11' and other acts of major notability emanating from Islamist (as opposed to Islamic) terrorism. Because profiling done on the London bombers showed the drift to a radical cleric or mosque as being significant, sometimes preceded by an unhappy school experience or at least one ineffective in enhancing social integration, the Government initiated a project designed to examine the experiences of young Muslims in Australian schools, with a view to improving them wherever possible. Findings from the project were disseminated in the form of a showcase wherein the project investigators outlined key findings and teachers and pupils involved in the education of Muslim youth, in public, religious and specifically Muslim schools, conveyed their experiences.

Among those conveying personal experiences was a young Muslim pupil who spoke of some of her earlier unhappy experiences in a school that had not been so sensitive to intercultural issues, least of all to dealing with them. She contrasted these experiences with more recent ones in a school that set out to address her needs as a young Muslim in a polyglot society and used the National Framework in Values Education (DEST, 2005) to do this work. Hence, values concerned with acceptance, respect, care, integrity and social responsibility were targeted for attention by way of modelling and transacting, and the issue of Muslim/non-Muslim dialogue was managed in this context. The result for her was an increased sense that her culture was respected and she as an individual had something distinctive and of value to add to her polyglot society. In a word, she had no need of radical Islamism to provide a security or identity that was not guaranteed by her wider society. The words that summarized the role that the school might play in providing such a guarantee were around the notion that schools are places where individual and societal futures are rehearsed. They are, among other things, 'engine rooms' of multiculturalism and

integration, sites where we learn not only the grammar of formal literacy but also the ‘grammar’ of respect and cooperation.

Words such as these provide the perfect counter view to those earlier beliefs that the school was inherently limited in what it could achieve owing to the overwhelming power of heritage and disadvantage. In contrast, these words match the findings of updated educational research about the power of quality teaching, school ambience and especially values education to make a difference in the lives of all student cohorts, including those suffering the negative effects of being from a minority and often misunderstood religious culture. Among other things, they are words that illustrate the potential of values education, like religious education, to be crafted to address effectively some of the major and most relevant issues of learning that confront our schools.

Conclusion

The chapter set out to show how religious and values education can be utilized in addressing a major social issue like that of the integration or otherwise of Islam in a society like Australia. The chapter has illustrated through live examples ways in which religious and values education is being used for this wider social purpose. It has also attempted to demonstrate that religious and values education, and indeed any education, can only play this role when impelled by and grounded in the most comprehensive epistemology and updated pedagogy.

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A Common Word: Building Global Goodwill

Barney Zwartz

The Document's Origins and Contents

In the remote Jordanian desert, miles from any landmark or human traces, stands a solitary bhutum (pistachio) tree which has stood there some 1,500 years. There are no other trees for kilometres in any direction. Under that tree, tradition has it, Islam and Christianity first met 1,400 years ago when a Christian monk observed the tree lower its branches to shield a 9-year-old boy from the desert heat. The monk, Bahira, politely questioned the boy, Muhammad bin Abdullah from the clan of Hashem, and identified him as a future Prophet to his people.

Under this same tree in September 2007 was dedicated perhaps the most important harmonious contact between the two great monotheistic faiths in centuries. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal of Jordan visited the tree and prayed under it before launching *A Common Word Between Us and You* on October 13, 2007. This initiative, coordinated by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute of Islamic Thought in Jordan, is an invitation signed by 138 Muslim leaders from across the theological and geographical spectrum to the Pope and other Christian leaders to work together for peace, justice and harmony based on two foundational principles of both religions, love of God and of neighbour. The breadth of signatories is unprecedented, including the main branches of Sunni, Shi'ite and Sufi Islam, the president of Cairo's Al-Azhar University, the Grand Muftis of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Oman, Bosnia, Russia and Istanbul, and even the Jordanian director of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Reflecting on this venture a year later, Prince Ghazi said, "I do not think it is an exaggeration to say it has become the world's leading interfaith dialogue initiative between Christians and Muslims."¹ The 138 signatories had swelled to more than 300 in little more than a year, with a further 460 Islamic organisations endorsing

B. Zwartz (✉)
The Age newspaper, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: bzwartz@theage.com.au

¹A Common Word Between Us and You, Theological Motives and Expectations, address by Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad to the Eugen Biser Award ceremony, 22 November 2008. <http://www.acommonword.com/en/Ghazi-Biser-Speech.pdf>. Actually, the speech was delivered by

it. In that time, more than 60 Christian leaders have responded warmly, including Pope Benedict XVI, Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, world Lutheran head Bishop Mark Hanson, Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexi II and many American Protestant leaders. There have been important international conferences of Muslims and Christians at Yale University, Cambridge University, Lambeth Palace (home of the Archbishop of Canterbury) and the Vatican, and grassroots community responses across the globe. Importantly, many of these have emerged with concrete plans for the future, particular initiatives to improve understanding and harmony. So though this work is in its infancy, it is developing a momentum that may indeed reduce fear and suspicion among communities of both religions and may promote better understanding and social justice among both. As Prince Ghazi said, “one may fairly say that in its first year *A Common Word* achieved – by the grace of God, Al-HamduLillah – historically unprecedented ‘global traction’, and is hoping in its second year – with the Will of God, in sha Allah – to achieve historically unprecedented ‘global trickledown’.”²

Its immediate genesis was one of the less promising interactions between the two faiths: Pope Benedict’s 2006 address at Regensburg University in which he quoted Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus: “Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached”.³ It was a peripheral part – almost an aside – of a speech about faith and reason, but it was highly inflammatory, and the Pope later apologised to Muslims, emphasising that it did not reflect his own view. Although most Muslims responded gracefully and proportionately, there were also violent responses, with churches in Asia and the Middle East being firebombed, and a nun murdered in Somalia, enabling critics to highlight the paradox of rebutting accusations of violence by acting violently. A much more irenic response came from a group of 38 Muslim scholars, led by Prince Ghazi, who wrote an open letter to the Pope. The only answer from the Vatican was “a perfunctory courtesy visit to me, a month later, from some Vatican officials” (Ghazi, 2008) the prince said. So a year later, the scholars tried again, adding another 100 signatories to symbolise that they were many and were serious. They also hired a public relations company and worked with Christian friends to create momentum.

The need for such an initiative is obvious, some would say desperate. The “clash of civilisations” thesis propounded by Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington seems to many to be developing an inexorable inevitability, fuelled by Muslim political grievances against the West, mounting Western hostility and suspicion (especially after the September 11, 2001, attacks), difficulties in integrating large

the Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Mustafa Cerić, after the expected closure of Munich airport due to bad weather forced Prince Ghazi to abandon his travel plans.

²A Common Word Between Us and You, Theological Motives and Expectations, address by Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad to the Eugen Biser Award ceremony, 22 November 2008. <http://www.acommonword.com/en/Ghazi-Biser-Speech.pdf>.

³<http://www.zenit.org/article-16955?l=english>.

and often economically disadvantaged Muslim communities into Europe, rising religious fundamentalism (on both sides) and ancient mistrust and misunderstandings. Yet at the same time growing economic, social and cultural interdependence in a globalised world make it clear that former geographical and cultural boundaries can no longer apply. Perhaps a third of Muslims now live in non-Muslim majority countries, especially in India but increasingly in the West.

The Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Mustafa Cerić, put it elegantly and clearly in his address to the Catholic-Muslim Forum at the Vatican in November 2008.⁴

What is the purpose of our age? Is it the clash or alliance of civilisations? Is it violence or reconciliation? What are the fears of our time and what are the hopes? . . . The fears are many. Ours is a time of grave sins, such as wealth without effort, pleasure without conscience, education without morality, business without ethics, politics without principles, science without responsibility, faith without sacrifice and religion without compassion . . . But there is hope and great opportunities.... The need for the Muslim-Catholic dialogue is obvious, not only because of our claim to the common heritage of Abraham, but also because of our heritage of a historical interaction that could not be avoided in the past and a historical responsibility that cannot be ignored in the future. It is precisely in this historical unavoidability of the encounter between Catholicism and Islam that we see the reason for the advancement of A Common Word Between Us and You in many areas of mutual concern such as war and peace, justice and injustice, hunger and poverty, and the trust and prosperity of the world.

The document itself notes that Muslims and Christians make up well over half the world's population, and without peace and justice between these religious communities there can be no meaningful peace. "The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. The basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God, and love of the neighbour".⁵

It is a substantial document, 15 pages long (though this was mostly signatures), filled with Qur'anic and Biblical references and discussion establishing these twin principles. There are sections on love of God, love of God within Islam, love of God as the first and greatest commandment in the Bible, love of the neighbour, love of the neighbour in Islam, love of the neighbour in the Bible and an invitation to a common word. The document recognises that some of the formal differences between the two religions cannot be minimised, but suggests that the two greatest commandments are an area of common ground between the Qur'an, the Torah and the New Testament. It concludes that finding common ground is not simply a matter for polite ecumenical dialogue between selected religious leaders.

With the terrible weaponry of the modern world; with Muslims and Christians intertwined everywhere as never before, no side can unilaterally win a conflict between more than half of the world's inhabitants. Thus our common future is at stake. The very survival of the world itself is perhaps at stake. And to those who nevertheless relish conflict and destruction for their own sake or reckon that ultimately they stand to gain through them, we say that our very eternal souls are all also at stake if we fail to sincerely make every effort to make peace

⁴<http://acommonword.com/en/conferences/20-rome-november-2008/106-address-by-his-eminence-mustafa-ceric-grand-mufti-of-bosnia.html>.

⁵<http://www.acommonword.com/index.php?lang=en&page=option1>.

and come together in harmony . . . So let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to (one) another, and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual goodwill.

Jordan's Prince Ghazi, the initiative's chief architect, told the Yale conference in July 2008 it represented "an extended global handshake of religious goodwill, friendship and fellowship and consequently of inter-religious peace".⁶ He further explained the motives and expectations of the Muslim scholars in a speech in Germany in November 2008, saying they had only one motive: peace.

We were aiming to try to spread peace and harmony between Christians and Muslims all over the world, not through governments and treaties but on the all-important popular and mass level, through the world's most influential popular leaders . . . We wanted to stop the drumbeat of what we feared was a growing popular consensus (on both sides) for worldwide (and thus cataclysmic and perhaps apocalyptic) Muslim-Christian jihad/crusade. We were keenly aware, however, that peace efforts required also another element: knowledge. We thus aimed to try (to) spread proper basic knowledge of our religion in order to correct and abate the constant and unjust vilification of Islam, in the West especially (Ghazi, 2008).

Response from Yale

Many of the Christian leaders addressed responded quickly and warmly, including Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist and Churches of Christ leaders, and leading academics from Yale, Princeton, Harvard and Cambridge universities. Indeed, Yale Divinity School published an effusive reply as a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* on November 18, 2007, written by four Yale theologians – Miroslav Volf, Harold W. Attridge, Joseph Cumming and Emilie M. Townes – and signed by more than 300 leading Christians, including many Evangelicals. The respondents not only were "deeply encouraged and challenged" by the historic Muslim open letter, which they received as "a Muslim hand of conviviality and cooperation extended to Christians worldwide", but also sought forgiveness from the All-Merciful One and the Muslim community around the world for past and present sins against Muslims, such as the crusades and excesses in the war on terror.⁷ They called the Muslim letter courageous, heartening, deeply insightful and a source of hope. They agreed that the common ground of love of God and of neighbour should be the basis of interfaith dialogue, saying "in the generosity with which the letter is written you embody what you call for. We most heartily agree. . . . Given the deep fissures in the relations between Christians and Muslims today, the task before us is daunting. And the stakes are great". The Yale letter said the next step should be for leaders at every level to meet to determine how to fulfil the requirement to love God and one

⁶http://www.yale.edu/faith/downloads/Yale_Comm_Word_Conf_2008_Open_Stmt_HRH_Prince_Ghazi.pdf.

⁷<http://www.yale.edu/faith/acw/acw.htm>.

another. “We commit ourselves to labour together in heart, soul, mind and strength for the objectives you so appropriately propose.”

Indeed they did, hosting a conference in July 2008 for 140 Christian and Muslim scholars. It produced a Final Declaration with four points of agreement.⁸ First is the unity and absoluteness of God, whose merciful love is infinite, eternal and embraces all things. Second is the recognition of rights, including freedom of religion. It notes: “No Muslim or Christian should deny the other these rights, nor should they tolerate the denigration or desecration of one another’s sacred symbols, founding figures or places of worship,” a formula which covers Muslim concerns about denigration of the Prophet Muhammad by critics of Islam and Christian concerns about persecution and lack of freedom to worship for Christians in many Muslim countries. The third point commits both sides to furthering these principles through continuous dialogue, and the fourth deplors threats against those who engage in interfaith dialogue (without indicating where such threats come from).

The Response: Archbishop of Canterbury

The Anglican response was also warm, if a little more measured. Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, aided by scholars from many Christian traditions, prepared a 17-page response entitled *A Common Word for the Common Good*⁹ which, like Yale, welcomed the Muslim generosity of intention but expressed more modest expectations while seeing it as a pathway to better mutual understanding. In this response, published in July 2008, Dr Williams writes that some have read the invitation as an insistence that Muslims and Christians should be able immediately to affirm an agreed and shared understanding of God. But such an affirmation would not be honest to either tradition. It would fail to acknowledge the reality of the differences that have been the cause of deep and even violent division.

We read your letter as expressing a more modest but ultimately a more realistically hopeful recognition that the ways in which we as Christians and Muslims speak about God and humanity are not simply mutually unintelligible systems. We interpret your invitation as saying ‘let us find a way of recognising that on some matters we are speaking enough of a common language for us to be able to pursue both exploratory dialogue and peaceful co-operation with integrity and without compromising fundamental beliefs’.

Dr Williams says the invitation should spur further discussion within the Christian family and within the Muslim family as well as between the two faiths, because it invites all to think afresh about the foundations of their convictions.

He suggests five areas which might be fruitfully followed through. First, *A Common Word’s* focus on the love and praise of God underlines a shared commitment – the fixed intention to relate all reality and all behaviour intelligently,

⁸http://www.yale.edu/faith/downloads/Yale_Common_Word_Conf_2008_Final_Decl.pdf.

⁹www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/media/word/2/j/A_Common_Word_for_the_Common_Good.doc.

faithfully and practically to the God who deals with us in love, compassion, justice and peace. There are differences as well as similarities in the ways the two faiths understand and express the love of God and of neighbour, and these could be explored. Second, the commitment to love of neighbour that is rooted in the love of God suggests both faiths have a passion for the common good of all creation. This has practical implications for future relations with each other and the rest of the world. The third area is both faiths' emphasis on sacred texts. The concern to ground what each says in its Scriptures shows a desire to meet not at the margins of their historical identities but speaking from what is central and authoritative for each. The faiths differ slightly in the role they accord their Scripture, Dr Williams writes, but for each faith Scripture provides the basic tools for speaking of God. Therefore it is in attending to how they use their holy texts that each can learn most truly the nature of each other's faith. The fourth area of promise is the way *A Common Word* encourages the faiths to relate to each other from the heart of their lives of faith. "However much or little 'common ground' we initially sense between us, it is possible to engage with each other without anxiety if we truly begin from the heart of what we believe we have received from God; possible to speak together, respecting and discussing differences rather than imprisoning ourselves in mutual fear and suspicion." The fifth area the archbishop identified is the sense of shared calling and shared responsibility that flows from the focus on love of God and neighbour. "We acknowledge gratefully your recognition that the differences between Christians and Muslims are real and serious and that you do not claim to address all the issues. . . . In our response, it is this search for a common awareness of responsibility before God that we shall seek to hold before us as a vision worthy of our best efforts."

A Common Word for the Common Good then engages in extended analysis of the concept of the one God who is love, suggesting a theological model by which Muslims can understand the Christian concept of a triune God who is nevertheless one, a unity. This model is built around the Christian concept of God as love, and Dr Williams suggests that how much this has in common with the vital Islamic conviction that God is the Compassionate, the Merciful is a significant area for further work. But the Muslim letter and Christian responses make it clear, he says, that the two faiths do have a basis on which they can explore together in a spirit of "truly neighbourly" love. The Anglican response then considers what is involved in responding to God's gift of love, what is involved in loving one's neighbour and how to seek the common good in the way of God. This is important particularly because it tackles the problem of religious violence. In a footnote, Dr Williams extensively quotes Colin Chapman, an Anglican expert on Islam, who says both sides need to recognise several important factors. Over 1,400 years of sometimes difficult relations, both faiths have at different times and in different places been associated with conquest and empire, and conflicts have left their mark on the collective memory of both communities. They should understand that there is a wide variety of reasons for tensions in different situations today. Although there are some common factors where Muslims and Christians live side by side, nevertheless there is also in each situation a unique set of political, economic, cultural or social factors that contribute to the tensions. Furthermore, both faiths have large numbers living as a minority. In

such contexts, both Christians and Muslims face similar dilemmas and may have more in common with each other than with secular neighbours. Chapman also cites Israel–Palestine as a vital issue to both sides, where both have a responsibility to work for a just resolution. He believes the concept of love of the neighbour could help address many of these immediate issues around the world. Both faiths teach the Golden Rule (do to others as you would have them do to you; love for your brother what you love for yourself):

This must mean in practice, for example, that when Western Christians try to put themselves in the shoes of the Christians in Egypt and reflect on how they would like to be treated in that minority situation, this should affect the way that they think about Muslim minorities in the West. The principle of reciprocity seems to many to be a natural expression of love of the neighbour, since it means wanting for our neighbours what we want for ourselves. Its acceptance by both Christians and Muslims would help to resolve many of the tensions experienced by both Christian and Muslim minorities.¹⁰

Dr Williams writes that religious violence suggests an underlying religious insecurity, often expressed as the need to “protect God’s interests”. Expressing it in such terms shows how absurd it is, because the eternal God cannot need “protection” by the tactics of human violence. Trying to compel religious allegiance through violence is really a way of trying to replace divine power with human – that is why the Qur’an insists there can be no compulsion in religion. But religious identity has often been confused with cultural or national integrity, with structures of social control, with class and regional identity and with empire, and it has been imposed in the interest of these and other forms of power. Despite Jesus’ injunction, Christianity has been promoted at the point of the sword and legally supported by extreme sanctions. Despite the Qur’an, Islam has been supported in the same way, with extreme penalties (up to death) for abandoning it and civil disabilities for those outside the faith. “There is no religious tradition whose history is exempt from such temptation and such failure,” Dr Williams notes. “What we need as a vision for our dialogue is to break the current cycles of violence, to show the world that faith and faith alone can truly ground a commitment to peace which definitively abandons the tempting but lethal cycle of retaliation in which we simply imitate each other’s violence.” In another extensive footnote, Dr Williams cites important reflections by Australian Jesuit theologian Daniel Madigan, who notes that it is easy to overestimate the threat of inter-religious violence and that in fact people who shared a faith have historically proved far more lethal than Muslims to Christians or vice versa. “More Muslims are killed daily by other Muslims than by Christians or anyone else. The huge numbers who went to their deaths in the Iran–Iraq war of the 1980s were virtually all Muslims.” (To which I add, Muslims are by far the chief victims of Muslim suicide bombers.)

Scarcely any of the tens of millions of Christians who have died in European wars over the centuries were killed by Muslims. The greatest shame of the last century was the killing of millions of Jews by Christians conditioned by their own long tradition of anti-Semitism and

¹⁰A Common Word for the Common Good, footnote 30, p. 12

seduced by a virulently nationalist and racist new ideology. The last 15 years in Africa have seen millions of Christians slaughtered in horrendous civil wars by their fellow believers. So let us not be misled into thinking either that Muslim-Christian conflict is the world's greatest conflict, or even that war is the most serious threat to the human future.¹¹

Dr Williams continues by suggesting that the unconditional and self-sacrificial love of neighbour promotes peace by taking people beyond a bland affirmation that they are at peace with those who are at peace with them, to a new place where their religious convictions can help create peace where there is none. This approach does not require either Christianity or Islam to water down its core convictions.

Far from being a cause for concern, holding fast to our truth claims whilst rejecting violence does two very positive things at once. First it affirms the transcendent source of faith: it says that our views are not just human constructions which we can abandon when they are inconvenient. Second, by insisting that no other values, no secular values, are absolute, it denies to all other systems of values any justification for uncontrolled violence. Transcendent values can be defended through violence only by those who do not fully understand their transcendent character.

Furthermore, religious plurality helps social unity.

Where diverse groups exist together, they have a shared interest in common security. We learn that we best defend ourselves by defending others. In a plural society, Christians secure their religious liberty by advocating the liberty of people of other faiths to have the same right to be heard in the continuing conversation about the direction and ethos of society.

This insight goes yet deeper into the realm of social justice. If we are in the habit of defending each other we should defend other groups and communities too. Together we can speak for those who have no voice or leverage in society, including migrants and minorities, Dr Williams says:

Our voice in the conversation of society will be the stronger for being a joint one. If we are to be true to the dual commandment of love, we need to find ways of being far more effective in influencing our societies to follow the way of God in promoting that which leads to human flourishing – honesty and faithfulness in public and private relationships, in business as in marriage and family life; the recognition that a person's value is not an economic matter; the clear recognition that neither material wealth nor entertainment can secure a true and deep-rooted human fulfilment.

As Muslims and Christians deepen their engagement, they should seek three main outcomes, Dr Williams suggests. Maintain and strengthen the momentum of interfaith encounter; find safe spaces within which the differences, as well as the convergences, between Christians and Muslims can be properly explored; and expand the influence of interfaith encounters into local communities and those engaged in the wider realities of our societies. To keep the encounters focused and effective, they need to establish broad priorities, Dr Williams says. Each faith tradition urgently needs to be educated about the other, to overcome prejudice and

¹¹A Common Word for the Common Good, footnote 33, page 13.

misunderstandings inherited from the past and often perpetuated by media stereotyping. Opportunities for interfaith encounters need to be multiplied, on many different levels and in different settings – especially educational projects, working towards the Millennium Development Goals, and working for reconciliation in situations of conflict and historic enmities. And if these encounters are to be sustainable, all participants need to commit to the process and to each other. “Such a commitment, growing into affection, respect, collegiality and friendship, will be an expression of love of neighbour; it will also be done in love for God and in response to God’s will.”

Dr Williams’ paper was warmly received by Muslims. Professor Ibrahim Kalin, spokesman for *A Common Word*, called it the most extensive, profound and comprehensive of the Christian responses:

The Archbishop has reciprocated our call for a serious and sincere dialogue . . . We are deeply appreciative of the fact Dr Williams’ response is extremely thoughtful and engaging, its spirit and tone reflecting a seriousness and erudition which one needs in order to engage in result-oriented and constructive dialogue.¹²

He particularly appreciated the theological contribution that showed the possibility of explaining some of the most difficult theological issues, such as the Trinity, in ways that could build bridges between the two communities rather than alienating them, and also the suggested guidelines for deepening dialogue.

The paper was followed by a Christian–Muslim conference at Cambridge University and Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s official London residence, in October 2008 involving some 40 Muslim and Christian clerics and scholars – according to the communiqué at the end, the most significant gathering of international Muslim leaders ever held in the United Kingdom, with Christian participants of similar stature. That forum was being held at the same time as renewed and strengthened persecution by Islamists of the ancient Christian community in Mosul, Iraq, was receiving media attention, and the communiqué – issued in the names of Dr Williams and Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa – addressed it directly:

As we were meeting together we were deeply troubled to learn of the situation in Mosul where threats to the Christian community have further added to the tragic Iraqi refugee situation. These threats undermine the centuries-old tradition of local Muslims protecting and nourishing the Christian community and must stop. We are profoundly conscious of the terrible suffering endured by Iraqi people of every creed in recent years and wish to express our solidarity with them. We find no justification in Islam or Christianity for those promoting the insecurity or perpetrating the violence evident in parts of Iraq. We call upon the religious, political and community leaders to do all in their power to promote the return of all persons and communities, including the ancient Christian communities, and ensure a stable environment in which all citizens can flourish. We unequivocally declare that, in Iraq as anywhere else in the world, no person or community should be persecuted or threatened on account of their religious faith. We must all have a particular concern for religious minorities in our midst.¹³

¹²Footnote 33, page 13.

¹³<http://www.acommonword.com/index.php?page=misc&item=ibrahim-kalin>.

The plight of the Assyrians did not noticeably improve, but it was an important development nevertheless. Western critics of Islam have often complained that Muslims are highly sensitive to the suffering of the Ummah (global Muslims) but seem indifferent to the suffering of non-Muslims, especially if caused by Muslims, and have called for just such statements as this. When it came, it could scarcely be more definite or authoritative – a powerful example of interfaith initiatives directed at improving social justice.

The severity of the global financial crisis was also becoming obvious at the time, after a period of limited optimism that coordinated international interventions might minimise the damage, and the communiqué addressed this too, pleading with the international community not to forget the disadvantaged as they battered down the hatches:

We live in an increasingly global world that brings with it increased interdependence. The closer we are drawn together by this globalisation and interdependence, the more urgent is the need to understand and respect one another in order to find a way out of our troubles. Meeting at a time of great turbulence in the world financial system, our hearts go out to the many people throughout the world whose lives and livelihood are affected by the current crisis. When a crisis of this magnitude occurs we are all tempted to think solely of ourselves and our families and ignore the treatment of minorities and the less fortunate. . . . It is out of an understanding of shared values that we urge world leaders and our faithful everywhere to act together to ensure that the burden of this financial crisis and also the global environmental crisis does not fall unevenly on the weak and poor. We must seize the opportunity for implementing a more equitable global economic system that also respects our role as stewards of the earth's resources.

The communiqué noted the generous spirit and collegial processes underlying the Muslim invitation and the Archbishop of Canterbury's reply, saying it had enabled them to begin exploring areas of potential agreement as well as difficulties that have sometimes become the focus for misunderstanding and hostility. They discussed the understanding of scripture, shared moral values, respect for foundational figures, religious freedom and religiously motivated violence. They were also eager to identify specific ways to broaden and deepen the interfaith encounter, and set themselves four tasks for 2009. These were to identify and promote educational materials, for all age groups and in many languages, that both faiths accept as providing a fair reflection; to build a network of academic institutions, linking scholars and resources, and establishing teams to work on shared values; to find money to facilitate exchanges between people training for leadership within the religious communities; and to translate significant texts from each tradition for the use of the other.

The Response from the Vatican

The Vatican was more cautious, and it took more than a month for the Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, to reply to Prince Ghazi of Jordan on November 19, 2007. He conveyed Pope Benedict's gratitude to the signatories and agreed that Christians and Muslims – without downplaying their differences – should look to

what united them, especially belief in the one God, the provident Creator and universal Judge.¹⁴ He said the Pope had emphasised from the start of his pontificate that the life of every human was sacred, both for Christians and for Muslims, and that there was plenty of scope for the two faiths to act together to promote fundamental moral values. Cardinal Bertone said the Pope would be most willing to receive Prince Ghazi and a group of the signatories, and said this delegation could meet the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to set up a further meeting. Prince Ghazi was also comparatively restrained in his reply, on December 12, 2007, accepting in principle the dialogue and arrangements. He reminded Cardinal Bertone of the purpose of dialogue, as expressed by Muslims at an interfaith conference in Naples in October 2007:

Dialogue is by definition between people of different views, not people of the same view. Dialogue is not about imposing one's views on the other side, nor deciding oneself what the other side is and is not capable of, nor even of what the other side believes. Dialogue starts with an open hand and an open heart. . . . Its purpose is to see where there is common ground in order to meet there and thereby make the world better, more peaceful, more harmonious and more loving.¹⁵

Prince Ghazi said the Muslim motive for dialogue with the Vatican was to seek goodwill and justice, and trusted that the Vatican had a similar general attitude to dialogue, quoting the famous words of St Paul on love in 1 Corinthians 13: 1–6. He said: “I mention these last things only in view of some recent pronouncements emerging from the Vatican and from Vatican advisors – which cannot have escaped the notice of Your Eminence – as regards the very principle of theological dialogue with Muslims. Howbeit, although many of us consider these pronouncements as having been superseded by your letter, we nevertheless wish to reiterate to you that we, like you, also consider complete theological agreement between Christians and Muslims inherently not possible by definition, but still wish to seek and promote a common stance and co-operation based upon what we do agree on.”¹⁶ Pope Benedict is regarded as taking a somewhat more astringent line on relations with Islam than his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, who was an ardent advocate of interfaith dialogue. Benedict has identified it as an important challenge for the Catholic Church, but emphasises “reciprocity” — the idea that Catholic (and other) minorities should be given the same rights in Muslim countries that Muslims receive in the West. In a speech to the Roman Curia on December 22, 2006, he said:

In a dialogue to be intensified with Islam, we must bear in mind the fact that the Muslim world today is finding itself faced with an urgent task. This task is very similar to the one that has been imposed upon Christians since the Enlightenment, and to which the Second Vatican Council, as the fruit of long and difficult research, found real solutions for the

¹⁴http://www.campchabad.com/roman_curia/secretariat_state/card-bertone/2007/documents/rc_seg-st_20071119_muslim-leaders_en.html.

¹⁵<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/184641?eng=y>.

¹⁶Respected Italian journalist Sandro Magister published the full text of both letters on his online column on January 2, 2008, along with interesting commentary. <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/184641?eng=y>.

Catholic Church. It is a question of the attitude that the community of the faithful must adopt in the face of the convictions and demands that were strengthened in the Enlightenment. On the one hand, one must counter a dictatorship of positivist reason that excludes God from the life of the community and from public organisations, thereby depriving man of his specific criteria of judgment. On the other, one must welcome the true conquests of the Enlightenment, human rights and especially the freedom of faith and its practice, and recognise these also as being essential elements for the authenticity of religion. . . . The content of the dialogue between Christians and Muslims will be at this time especially one of meeting each other in this commitment to find the right solutions. We Christians feel in solidarity with all those who, precisely on the basis of their religious conviction as Muslims, work to oppose violence and for the synergy between faith and reason, between religion and freedom.¹⁷

The gulf between the Vatican and Islam was clearly wider than that felt by the American signatories to the Yale letter.

Nevertheless, in March 2008 a delegation came to the Vatican and set up the Vatican's first Catholic–Muslim Forum, held from November 4 to 6 that year, with 24 participants from each religion, plus a few advisors. Seyyed Hossein Nasr – an Iranian who is a professor at George Washington University in the United States and is respected in both Western and Islamic circles – gave a key address, repeating that only with peace between the two religions could there be peace between peoples and nations. It is remarkable, he observed, how theological positions in one tradition have their correspondence in the other. Both religions have created major civilisations, both claim universality for their message and both their histories have been intermingled with periods of violence, which has sometimes been legitimated by religious authorities. He made no apology for the discrepancy between religious freedom in countries with a Christian history and Muslim countries, suggesting that Christians in their position would be the same.

You and we, we both believe in religious freedom, but we Muslims do not allow an aggressive proselytising in our midst that would destroy our faith in the name of freedom any more than would Christians if they were in our situation. The encounter of Christianity with modernism, including secular humanism and rationalism associated with the Age of Enlightenment, has also been very different from the experience of that encounter with Islam. Perhaps we can each learn something from the other in this very significant matter. We should join together in the battle against the desacralising and anti-religious forces of the modern world, and joining effort should bring us closer together. Secularism should certainly not be a source for the creation of further distance between us.¹⁸

This plea must have registered, because later that month the president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, thanked Muslims for putting God back into European public discourse. In a speech printed in the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano*, Cardinal Tauran said religion was now talked and written about more than ever before. "It's thanks to the Muslims. Muslims, having become a significant minority in Europe, were the ones who

¹⁷http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20061222_curia-romana_en.html.

¹⁸http://acommonword.com/en/attachments/107_Nasr-speech-to-Pope.pdf.

demanded space for God in society.”¹⁹ Tariq Ramadan, a leading European Muslim and forum participant, writing in the *Guardian* newspaper on November 3, the day before the forum opened, observed that the West has been shaped by Islam, as Islam has been shaped by the West. Like the Archbishop of Canterbury, he insisted that critical internal reflection must happen within the West and separately within Islam, to reconcile themselves to their respective pasts. And for interfaith dialogue, a constructive conversation on shared values and ultimate goals is “far more vital and imperative than our rivalries over the number of believers, our contradictory claims about proselytism, and sterile competition over exclusive possession of the truth. Those dogma-ridden individuals who, in both religions, claim truth for themselves, are in fact working against their respective beliefs”.²⁰ Whether he regarded Pope Benedict, guardian of the Catholic magisterium, as a dogma-ridden individual is unclear (and probably mischievous speculation by me). In any event, Pope Benedict addressed the forum on its last day, November 6. He said the great interest the forum had sparked was an incentive to ensure that its fruits were not limited to the participants and experts but were passed on as a precious legacy at the service of all, to bear fruit in people’s daily lives.²¹ He was pleased that the forum had adopted a common position on the need to love their fellow men and women disinterestedly, especially those in need, for it was part of the tradition of both faiths. There was a vast field in which both faiths could act together to defend the moral values they shared, starting with the dignity of each human being and fundamental rights to freedom of conscience and of religion:

The discrimination and violence which even today religious people experience throughout the world, and the often violent persecutions to which they are subject, represent unacceptable and unjustifiable acts, all the more grave and deplorable when they are carried out in the name of God. God’s name can only be a name of peace and fraternity, justice and love. We are challenged to demonstrate, by our words and above all by our deeds, that the message of our religions is unfailingly a message of harmony and mutual understanding. It is essential that we do so, lest we weaken the credibility and the effectiveness not only of our dialogue, but also of our religions themselves. . . Dear friends, let us unite our efforts, animated by good will, in order to overcome all misunderstanding and disagreements. Let us resolve to overcome past prejudices and to correct the often distorted images of the other which even today can create difficulties in our relations; let us work with one another to educate all people, especially the young, to build a common future.

The forum produced a final declaration containing 15 points of agreement, including important statements on religious freedom and rejecting terrorism which attracted the media’s attention, but also other points including a joint commitment to ensuring that human dignity and respect are extended equally to both men and women.²² It

¹⁹http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2008/11/28/worldupdates/2008-11-28T184158Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-367653-1&sec=Worldupdates.

²⁰<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2008/nov/03/catholicism-islam>.

²¹http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20081106_cath-islamic-leaders_en.html.

²²<http://www.zenit.org/article-24175?l=english>.

noted that love of neighbour included the right of individuals and communities to practise their religion in private and public. Point six says: "Religious minorities are entitled to be respected in their own religious convictions and practices. They are also entitled to their own places of worship, and their founding figures and symbols they consider sacred should not be subject to any form of mockery or ridicule." This was an important agreement for both sides covering (as noted with the Yale document) Muslim concerns about slandering the Prophet Muhammad in the West (the issue behind the Danish cartoon crisis of 2006) and rising Islamophobia, plus difficulties for both sides in establishing places of worship. Muslims in the West have sometimes found it harder than other groups to get planning permission for mosques or schools due to local prejudice, while Christians in most Muslim countries face considerably more obstacles. The declaration affirms that no religion or its followers should be excluded from society, and that both faiths have a duty not only to educate their followers in civic, religious and moral values but also to promote accurate information about each other's religion. Point 11 says: "We profess that Catholics and Muslims are called to be instruments of love and harmony among believers, and for humanity as a whole, renouncing any oppression, aggressive violence and terrorism, especially that committed in the name of religion, and upholding the principle of justice for all." Point 12 calls for an ethical financial system which takes into account the poor both as individuals and as indebted nations.

Muslim participants wanted a joint crisis management plan for when tensions flare up between the religions, arguing that violence in Muslim countries after the Danish cartoon crisis might have been averted if Christians and Muslims had spoken together against both the provocation and the unrest. Reuters quoted Sohail Nakhouda, editor of the Amman-based *Islamica* magazine which has been an important advocate for *A Common Word*, that a joint group would also speak out against religious persecution, such as the oppression of Iraq's Christians. "We have to look out for each other," he said. Professor Ibrahim Kalin said cooperation between churches and mosques in the Netherlands defused tensions before far-right politician Geert Wilders released his anti-Islam film *Fitna* in 2008. "That was the first fruit of the kind of co-operation we want to have," he said, according to *Reuters*. The final declaration of the Catholic-Muslim forum noted that both sides had agreed to explore the possibility of establishing a permanent Catholic-Muslim committee to coordinate responses to conflicts and other emergencies. It said a second seminar would be convened in 2010 in a Muslim country yet to be determined.

Hostile Responses

In some Christian quarters, the Common Word invitation received a cool and suspicious response. (No doubt some Muslims, especially Islamists, were also hostile, but my language deficiencies and especially lack of Arabic mean I am greatly restricted in investigating that.) But, as I reported in *The Age*, Melbourne, a couple of days after it was released, Hal Lindsey of World Net Daily viewed the overture as an

ultimatum: make peace with us or we'll kill you.²³ In *The Times*, Simon Jenkins said the letter encouraged militarist fantasies of extremists on both sides because it implied Islam had political and military power to match the West, feeding jihadist ambition and Western paranoia. Others doubted the signatories' sincerity, seeing it as a ploy to pretend peace, or dismissed their analysis of Christian theology. Two Muslim converts to Christianity, Sam Solomon and Al-Maqdisi, produced a 107-page booklet, *The Truth About A Common Word*, calling the Muslim letter "nothing more than a 21st century version of the call to unity and peace which Muhammad issued to Byzantium before his death in the 7th century – a call which has resounded again and again since that time throughout history, just before the Islamic forces moved in to make good militarily their claims to the right to rule politically by divine decree."²⁴ Peace in Islam, they say, is possible only with submission to Islam. If Muslims genuinely want peaceful coexistence, they should declare void Qur'anic texts that discriminate against Christians and Jews, describing them as unclean, apostates, polytheists and children of apes and swine. They should discard the apostasy law which makes it illegal to convert away from Islam, make all religions equal under the law, and treat all people as equal regardless of race or religion.

One of the more important analyses came from Dr Patrick Sookhdeo,²⁵ another Muslim convert to Christianity who founded and directs the Barnabas Fund, a UK-based organisation working for persecuted Christian minorities. His response, published on November 28, 2007, suggests that *A Common Word* is a carefully multi-layered document aimed at different audiences. It is addressed to Christian leaders, but is aimed particularly at world public opinion, while certain terminology and the Qur'anic verses selected suggest it has a different message for the global Muslim audience, who are intended to understand it as *da'wa*, or an invitation to convert to Islam. The Qur'anic verses chosen to demonstrate the unity of God are the ones usually interpreted as an attack on the Trinity and the deity of Christ, Sookhdeo says. He denies that Islam has a concept of love of neighbour comparable to Christianity's, saying that love of neighbour is constrained by shari'a law: Christians and Jews are to be humiliated and brought under dominion as second rate citizens, infidels must accept Islam or be killed. Heretical Islamic sects must be annihilated. Thus "neighbour" really means only fellow Muslims of the same tradition. Sookhdeo says "a basic fallacy of the open letter is the view that Western states are basically Christian and that, when pursuing their national interests, religious Christian motivations are foremost in their minds. This is a very common Muslim misconception, and is an indication of how much more important their faith is to an 'average' Muslim than to an average Westerner". He says that although the letter looks like a well-intentioned and urgent plea for better understanding between

²³<http://www.theage.com.au/news/opinion/common-beliefs-key-to-uniting-old-religious-foes/2007/10/18/1192300950563.html>.

²⁴http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/authors/solomon/truth_about_common_word.pdf, page 13.

²⁵http://www.barnabasfund.org/news/archives/article.php?ID_news_items=342.

the faiths, it blames all wars in which Christians and Muslims are involved on the actions of Christians. *A Common Word* states: “As Muslims we say to Christians that we are not against them and that Islam is not against them – so long as they do not wage war against Muslims on account of their religion, oppress them and drive them out of their homes.” According to Sookhdeo, this implies that the war against Islamist terrorism is a global war of Christianity against Islam and that Christianity is the aggressor against Islam, which is the radical Islamist view:

There is no sense of sorrow or remorse for the wrongs Muslims inflicted on Christians historically, or indeed currently in many Muslim lands. There is no recognition that in many places things may be the opposite, with Muslims oppressing Christians and driving them from their homes (e.g. in Iraq, Sudan, Nigeria, Indonesia and Pakistan). There is no mention of the Christian communities in Muslim lands suffering other kinds of persecution and discrimination. There is no admission that Muslim actions could have played any part in the alienation between Muslims and Christians.

It is this disparity that made the plea for the Muslims’ forgiveness in the initial Yale response infuriating to some Christians. Australian Anglican priest Mark Durie published an analysis in February 2008, saying it adopts a

self-humbling, grateful tone. This is disturbing in the light of the history of Christian-Muslim relations. The classical Islamic understanding of the role of Christians as dhimmis in the Islamic state was that they should show gratitude for the generosity of having had their lives spared, and humility because their condition deserved contempt. . . . For many Christians who live under Islamic conditions, the tone adopted in the Yale Response will come across as capitulation, and it will signal abandonment of the cause of their persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ.²⁶

Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad (Ghazi, 2008) addressed some of these “strange suspicions and speculations” in his speech in Germany. He insisted that *A Common Word* was not intended to trick Christians or foist Muslim theology on them or convert them to Islam. Nor was it intended to reduce both religions to an artificial union based on the two commandments to love God and neighbour. Rather, it was an attempt to find theologically correct pre-existing common ground to avoid deep-rooted religious mutual suspicion being an impediment to behaving properly towards each other – and attempt to ensure religions are part of the solution rather than part of the problem. It was not intended to exclude or diminish Judaism, but Christianity and Islam are the two largest religions in the world and history, with 2.1 billion and 1.5 billion adherents, respectively, compared with 25 million Jews. “*A Common Word* does not signal that Muslims are prepared to deviate from or concede one iota of any (of) their convictions in reaching out to Christians – nor, I expect, the opposite. Let us be crystal-clear: *A Common Word* is about equal peace, NOT about capitulation.”

²⁶<http://acommonword.blogspot.com/2008/02/reflections-upon-loving-god-and.html>.

The Way Forward

Nevertheless, even if the suspicions articulated by Drs Sookhdeo and Durie were justified, *A Common Word* would surely still be a worthwhile project. The speed and scope of the developments in the first year provide a powerful argument. With conversation comes the possibility of understanding, even affection, whereas without it such possibilities are greatly reduced. Australia has quite a long history of deliberate interfaith dialogue, dating back two decades. It is interesting that Melbourne has a longer history and far more harmonious relationships between Christianity and Islam than Sydney, where more conservative views dominate both faiths. The reasons for this are many and varied, but a more open attitude by Melbourne religious leaders and a multitude of determined efforts to build bridges between the three Abrahamic faiths have certainly been a significant factor. Five years ago, many Christians in Melbourne had never met a Muslim, and many Muslims had never met a Jew. Face-to-face conversations over meals or at public events put a human face on the “other” and some notable ongoing friendships have been forged. Muslims, Christians and Jews have gone back into their communities and spoken about their experiences, helping to break down mistrust. Interfaith dialogue is not a universal panacea, but obviously it is far better to be talking – and listening – to each other than ignoring each other. That is true whether it is cardinals and clerics meeting at the Vatican or villagers at the grassroots.

A Common Word is important first in its symbolism, not only to the faithful in each tradition but also to onlookers of other faiths or none. Enabling people of each faith to see the other as neighbour rather than foe is even more important and, given the calibre of the leaders involved, it will surely have some impact. The trickle-down effect to the ordinary faithful, however, will take time, and that is the most important test of all. Can it improve the lives of Muslims and Christians living in difficult circumstances, can it enhance social justice? Can it reduce racism and bigotry, discrimination and violence? Can it challenge long-established patterns of hostility and suspicion? The practical steps that have emerged from the various forums are helpful. The Yale conference, for example, decided to set up a website providing approved resources to guide Christians and Muslims learning about each other’s faith and proposed a week each year during which leaders of each faith emphasise the good in the other. If this were preached in every church and mosque, it must have an impact. Cambridge/Lambeth produced plans for academic networks, educational materials and exchanges, while the Vatican forum may lead to a joint crisis response committee. Prince Ghazi highlighted “a barrage of activity” in 2009, including a documentary film, several books, a joint Christian–Muslim sensitivity manual, a political conference at Georgetown University in Washington and a large religious conference planned in Malaysia, two high-level meetings between Muslim and Orthodox Church leaders, and another between Muslims and the World Council of Churches. He mentioned a major European-based global Christian–Muslim peace institute with *A Common Word* as part of its charter, though no details had emerged at the time of writing, plus an inter-university student initiative in the United States, and even a *Common Word* Muslim–Christian string of prayer beads.

A top-level Muslim ambassador told me privately that he is optimistic about the place of Muslims in the West,

where there is an interesting and welcome revival on stressing Islam as a religion of justice. . . . There are more Muslims in important parts of the West who realise the choice isn't between living in the land of darkness (as pre-Islamic Arabia was called) or under the caliphate. Perhaps a third live in a state where they are not the majority, and a new paradigm of social involvement has to evolve. They are no longer temporary guests in the West, nor are they potential rulers. There will still be areas of friction and tension, but these will have to be negotiated. Increasingly the majority of Muslims in Western countries will find that they and wider society come to an accommodation around a significant set of common values.

The German Minister for the Interior, Dr Wolfgang Schauble, signalled an openness to Islamic views in suggesting in November 2008 that Europeans should reflect on Muslim criticisms that the Western model of society is “excessively marked by economic rationality and the relativism of values.”²⁷ We don't have to agree. But we should consider whether the process of secularisation does not also lead to the loss of certain valuable things. This can lead to a new openness towards religion and can help us see what values are intrinsic to Islam, such as a life in accordance with one's ethical convictions or the importance of the family. We will have to learn to accept Islam as part of our societies. And we should make even greater efforts to help with the process of making Muslims feel at home in Germany and Europe. By the same token, Europe's Muslims face the challenge of modernising their interpretation of faith. This process is essential for Muslims to truly become part of modern European society. Islam must become a bit more European if Muslims hope to play a greater role in their communities as European and German Muslims”. It could have been Tariq Ramadan speaking, suggesting an important consensus is evolving.

But the Muslim diplomat is less sanguine about improving social justice for minorities in Muslim countries. Given the state structures and power relationships, it is hard to know what can be done, especially as political leadership sometimes encourages repressive measures by conservative Muslims as a means of distracting them. Minorities generally lack the legal protections they enjoy in the West. A key goal for Muslims mentioned by Prince Ghazi is to end the vilification of Islam in West. This is obviously both commendable and important, but it needs to be matched by a parallel effort to correct and abate vilification of Christianity in Muslim countries, in the Middle East and Pakistan especially, where secular Western foreign policy is often perceived as a Christian war on Islam – with devastating consequences for Christian minorities. It is not well understood in many Muslim countries that Christianity long ago lost a direct influence over government policy in nearly all Western democracies. For example, Pope John Paul II and many Christian leaders argued strongly against invading Iraq in 2003 but had little influence. (The extent to which American policy may be shaped by Evangelicals is beyond the scope of this chapter.) And although the Muslim world has a strong unity, expressed in the concept of the Ummah, it is centuries since Christians had a parallel notion of

²⁷ <http://www.acommonword.com/Bundesinnenminister-Dr-Schauble-Rede-22-11-2008.pdf>.

Christendom. It was rendered irrelevant by Europe's religious wars and the rise of nation states. As *Islamica* editor Sohail Nakhlooda told an ambassadors' forum in Jordan in December 2008, "it is time for bold measures and sustained engagement to reclaim the middle ground" for Muslims against the lure of Islamist and puritanical religious groups.²⁸ In his speech, Nakhlooda identified precisely why *A Common Word* has been so significant and generates such hope:

Prior to the coming of the Common Word, Christian-Muslim relations, as we know it, in its formal set up, faced an identity crisis. There was scepticism among the Muslim and Christian laity about its effectiveness and relevance. It was an ivory-tower endeavour, an exclusive club, a meeting ground for the same people endlessly discussing the same doctrinal issues. There was no shortage of interfaith initiatives nationally and internationally but it was always a case of lots of motion but no movement. The Common Word initiative did not suffer from the same problems. It was built on consensus . . . and it brought together not marginal or ultra-progressive figures, but the most authoritative and influential Muslim religious leaders who carried enormous influence in the streets of the Muslim world and in their communities. Its significance was that it was a call from the centre and not from the periphery of Muslim discourse and so everyone had to take notice. Its message commanded attention. The Common Word took everyone by surprise. Good ideas always have an element of surprise. It captured the hearts and minds of religious leaders, academics and the wider public, and it became a formidable brand.

After its first year, the *Common Word* initiative certainly achieved remarkable things. Even so, it is only at the very beginning. As the Jesuit Islamic expert Christian Troll – a member of the Catholic delegation to the Vatican forum – told the Cambridge conference, "it needs patience and confidence, staying power and open hearts."²⁹ It requires energy and commitment and formal structures, because important interfaith initiatives in the past have petered out through a lack of such structures to keep them active. It needs to extend downwards into churches and mosques across the globe and upwards to policy-makers and politicians. Given its impetus and achievements, *A Common Word* is well placed to do that. The challenges and tensions between Islam and the West are as serious today as at any time in the life of Prince Ghazi's pistachio tree, but *A Common Word* may well bring the sort of global warming people of both faiths long for and need.

²⁸<http://www.acommonword.com/The-Significance-of-the-Amman-Message-and-the-Common-Word.pdf>.

²⁹<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/208895?eng=y>.

Fanaticism, Fundamentalism and the Promotion of Reflexivity in Religious Education

Wilna A.J. Meijer

Introduction

In its fourteenth biennial conference in 2004, that took place in the United States, in Villanova near Philadelphia, the International Seminar of Religious Education and Values (ISREV) addressed the theme of *Religious Education and Violence*. John Hull, emeritus professor in theology and religious education of the United Kingdom, presented one of the keynote papers, entitled “Can one educate out of religious fanaticism?”. So the concept of fanaticism was foregrounded, rather than other currently much-used concepts, such as religious fundamentalism and religious extremism or radicalism, which appear in often heated debates on the so-called Muslim terrorism. Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden on the one side and on the other side the “War on Terror” of the US Bush administration, officially presented as response to the 2001 9–11 attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, provide the context of such debates. Education, especially religious education and yet more in particular Islamic education, is often touched on in that connection. Clearly this recent history also inspired the ISREV conference theme of 2004 (see Astley et al. (2007) for papers of this conference).

In this chapter contributions from quite varying corners to the present debate on religious fundamentalism and radicalism and on the role of education in that connection are reviewed: first, the mentioned lecture to the ISREV conference in 2004 by the Christian theologian John Hull; second, the essay *How to Cure a Fanatic?* of 2002 by the Israeli author Amos Oz; third, the study, also of 2002, of the French Islamic scholar Olivier Roy as to the blossoming of fundamentalist Islam on the internet; and, fourth, the alternative to Muslim fundamentalism, already developed in earlier decades, by the Muslim modernist Fazlur Rahman, who died in 1988. In conclusion, the possible role of a hermeneutical religious education, providing an antidote to fanaticism and fundamentalism by furthering reflexivity, will be considered.

W.A.J. Meijer (✉)
University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands
e-mail: w.a.j.meijer@rug.nl

A Christian Theologian on Religious Fanaticism

In his conference paper, “Can one educate out of religious fanaticism?” Hull, addressing an international seminar on religious education, took a theological perspective on fanaticism. Although political, economic, psychological and other factors contribute to the emergence of a “culture of violence”, he said, a theological perspective is relevant when violence takes place in the Name of God and the involved religious believers regard themselves as called in obedience to the absolute demands of faith itself. In their eyes, criticising and relativising religion would come down to compromising or diluting the faith. Moreover, even the faculty of criticism itself, human reason, is subordinate to the divine revelation. Precisely at this point, Hull demonstrated the possibility of a fundamental shift in theological interpretation. With their finite human reason human beings can never fully grasp the truth, the finite cannot fully understand the Infinite. Religious truth is essentially unattainable for human beings. Therefore, the religious life is a *quest* for truth and not a confident *possession* of truth. Arguing from Christian theology (Paul Tillich was for example among his references), Hull discovered a parallel in the Islamic concept of the unity and greatness of God. God is always Greater. The believer is called on from unrelieved obedience to a single absolute point towards a more humble and developing discipleship (Hull 2004). In this way, Hull contrasted religious fanaticism as an attitude of “absolutism” with an attitude that accepts a fundamental uncertainty.

Psychologically, according to Hull, fanaticism can be regarded as a form of false consciousness. A fanatic is obsessed by a narrow-minded, rigid and exclusive devotion. Fanaticism is characterised by a desire for certitude and compulsion for consistency, text literalism or even fetishism, and a rejection of doubt as the assumed opposite of faith. In this line of argument, Hull further suggested that fanaticism is non- or even anti-hermeneutical, whereas most contemporary pedagogies of religion share a hermeneutical approach to religious truth. A direct connection with religious fundamentalism was given in the aspect of text literalism that Hull identified as an element of fanaticism. Generally speaking, fundamentalism in religious belief consists in taking a Holy Text from cover to cover, as literally the Word of God. A further characteristic is that fundamentalism directly applies the Holy Text in a fragmented, literal and unhistorical manner to the lives of the believers, thereby taking it as a Permanent Norm that is universal and straightforwardly applicable to any context. This is indeed in perfect opposition to a hermeneutical approach, according to which interpretation of texts is an ongoing, never-ending and essentially historical enterprise, a continuous process of contextualisation and re-contextualisation. A hermeneutical approach therefore cultivates a questioning and critical attitude, it values the *quest* for truth, to use Hull’s expression. This has clear educational implications: according to a hermeneutical approach, “good religious education” is of a reflexive nature and seeks to promote understanding of religion, as opposed to promoting faith as a form of firm and unquestioning “religious belief”. It is the perfect opposite of the fanatic rejection of doubt that simultaneously eliminates the possibility of self-criticism.

An Israeli Author on Fanaticism

In his essay “How to cure a fanatic?” the Israeli author Amos Oz addresses the same currently topical question. He speaks from personal experience, from his Jewish upbringing in Israel up to the present, post 9–11 situation in Israel/Palestine – in the use of this double name for his country he expresses his alliance with the Israeli Peace Now movement, in which he is one of the leading figures. This is how Oz’s essay opens:

So, how do you cure a fanatic? To chase a bunch of fanatics through the mountains of Afghanistan is one thing. To struggle against fanaticism is another one. I’m afraid I don’t have any particular ideas on how to catch the fanatic in the mountains, but I do have one or two thoughts about the nature of fanaticism and the ways, if not to cure it, then at least to contain it. The attack on America on September 11 was not simply about poverty versus wealth. (. . .) No, this is a battle between fanatics, who believe that the end, any end, justifies the means, and the rest of us, who believe that life is an end, not a means. (. . .) The present crisis in the world, in the Middle East, in Israel/Palestine, is not about the values of Islam. It is not about the mentality of the Arabs, as some racists claim, not at all. It is about the ancient struggle between fanaticism and pragmatism. Between fanaticism and pluralism. Between fanaticism and tolerance. September 11 was not even about the question of whether America was good or bad, whether capitalism is ugly, or whether globalization should stop or not. This was about the typical fanatical claim: If I think something is bad, I kill it along with its neighbors.

Fanaticism is older than Islam, older than Christianity, older than Judaism, older than any state or any government, or political system, older than any ideology or faith in the world. Fanaticism is unfortunately an ever-present component of human nature, an evil gene, if you like. People who blow up abortion clinics in America, people who burn mosques and synagogues in Europe, differ from bin Laden only in the scale but not in the nature of their crimes (Oz, 2006, pp. 39–41).

Oz explains that it was his own childhood in Jerusalem that rendered him an expert in “comparative fanaticism”. He describes himself in retrospect as “a Jewish Intifada child”, throwing stones at the British patrols in Jerusalem, and as “a brainwashed little fanatic”, self-righteous, chauvinistic, deaf and blind to any view different from the Jewish Zionist narrative of the time. Fanaticism often begins at home. Oz’s 1995 novel *Panther in the Basement* feeds on this childhood experience. It comes about that an experience of “friendship with the enemy”, a secret friendship with “a very sweet, ineffectual British police sergeant”, brings a sense of ambivalence to the boy’s life, inescapably. Black-and-white views have to be abandoned, the fanaticism and chauvinism of his childhood left behind. There is a price to be paid. From now on “he is no longer a child, he is a little grown-up, a small adult. Much of the joy and fascination and zeal and simpleness of life has gone away” (Oz, 2006, p. 44, 45).

According to Oz, the seed of fanaticism lies in “uncompromising self-righteousness” on which religions certainly have no monopoly. Anti-smokers “who will burn you alive for lighting a cigarette near them!”, vegetarians “who will eat you alive for eating meat!”, pacifists, environmentalist, etc. etc. – fanaticism is almost everywhere. Fanaticism is opposed to pluralism and tolerance of plurality. Fanatics are monomaniac, unwilling and unable to face and endure ambivalence, uncertainty

and plurality. They have the desire to force other people to change – rather than let them be. “Conformity and uniformity, the urge to belong and the desire to make everyone else belong, may be the most widespread if not the most dangerous form of fanaticism”. This observation brings Oz to introduce a cure against fanaticism, which is not a quick and easy remedy, but it “may help”: “injecting some imagination into people may help cause the fanatic to feel uneasy” (Oz 2006, pp. 53–54). Here he points at the significance of literature and reading, although he admits that only too often in history, stories and poems have been used to inflate hatred and nationalistic self-righteousness. But nevertheless, there are works of literature that “may help” – “in a small way, in a cautious way”, as “a partial and limited immunity to fanaticism”.

He mentions Shakespeare (“every form of fanaticism in Shakespeare ends up in a tragedy or in a comedy”), Gogol (“Gogol makes his readers grotesquely aware of how little we know, even when we are convinced that we are 100% right”), and Kafka and Faulkner (Oz, 2006, p. 62, 63). Then he comes to humour, for, indeed, literary art is the domain of humour. The human condition of finiteness and insufficiency is reflected upon in comedy as much as in tragedy. “Humor contains the ability to laugh at ourselves. Humor is relativism, humor is the ability to see yourself as others may see you, humor is the capacity to realise that no matter how righteous you are and how terribly wronged you have been, there is a certain side to life that is always a bit funny” (Oz 2006, p. 65). The ability to laugh at ourselves is part of the cure Oz proposes, as is the related ability to see ourselves as others see us. The ability to picture oneself into the situation of others, to imagine the predicament of others, is also related.

[I]n my own personal background, in my own personal life story and family story, I can't help thinking, very often, that with a slight twist of my genes, or of my parents' circumstances, I could be him or her, I could be a Jewish West Bank settler, I could be an oriental Jew from a Third World country; I could be anyone. Many years ago, when I was still a child, my very wise grandmother explained to me in very simple words the difference between Jew and Christian – not between Jew and Muslim, but between Jew and Christian: “You see,” she said, “Christians believe that the Messiah was here once and he will certainly return one day. The Jews maintain that Messiah is yet to come. Over this,” said my grandmother, “over this, there has been so much anger, persecution, bloodshed, hatred. . . . Why?” she said. “Why can't everyone simply wait and see? If the Messiah comes, saying, ‘Hello, it's nice to see you again,’ the Jews will have to concede. If, on the other hand, the Messiah comes, saying, ‘How do you do, it is very nice meeting you,’ the entire Christian world will have to apologize to the Jews. Between now and then,” said my wise grandmother, “just live and let live.” She was definitely immune to fanaticism. She knew the secret of living with open-ended situations, with unresolved conflicts, with the otherness of other people (Oz 2006, pp. 68–69).

At the end of his essay, in bringing up this memory of his grandmother, Oz nuances its beginning. I started out by saying that fanaticism often begins at home, he says, let me conclude by saying that the antidote can also be found at home. “Wait and see” and in the meantime “just live and let live” – this opposite of fanaticism,

was what his storytelling wise grandmother taught him. This is about learning to exist with open-ended situations and perhaps even about learning to enjoy diversity.

A French Islamic Scholar on Muslim Fundamentalism

Oz demonstrated that fanaticism often begins “at home”. This probably should not be taken in the most literal sense. The boy’s neighbourhood and the peer group were, for example, as much involved as his “home” in the literal sense of his parents and the family and household he belonged to. Looking at what Muslim children in the pluralist West-European societies of the present learn “at home” there is a significantly different pattern to be discovered. Muslim youngsters in these multicultural societies explicitly identify with Islam and turn to Muslim sites on the Internet for knowledge on Islam. Rather than identifying with their parents and the imams of the mosques in their new country, i.e. with the first generation immigrants, who still adhere to the Islam of the often rural cultures in their countries of origin, they turn to the net with their questions about what it means to be a Muslim.

In his book on the globalisation of Islam, Olivier Roy identifies and discusses the phenomenon of the *virtual Ummah* (*Ummah* being the community of all Muslims). The internet is teeming with web sites, created by Muslims about Muslims and Islam, and also with MSN groups and discussion forums where young western Muslims ventilate their questions about life. It is mostly highly educated western Muslims, and newly converted youths, so-called born-again Muslims, who are launching and managing these web sites – in the Islamic world itself the ITC infrastructure does not allow for participation on a large scale. The medium of communication is the national language, or else the English of a transnational, world audience. It is larded with formulae written in the Arabic of the Qur’an, which function as identity markers and no longer as the language of communication, the *lingua franca* of Islamic scholars. There are no authoritative scholars, *ulema*, here. Everyone is equally learned as the next person and the students, the *taliban*, speak for themselves. The net is pre-eminently the place for the self-appointed man of learning, the *shaykh*, and the self-taught man (Roy, 2003).

Has it really been achieved here: the individualisation and equality that was predicted for the information era, the free exchange of thoughts and unbridled creativity? ¹ As far as unbridledness is concerned, this is certainly the case: there are an infinite number of sites, interconnected by links and mutual references, by infinite citing and recycling of the same body of ideas, together forming the virtual Ummah.

¹Roy makes use of Eickelman & Anderson to paint a picture of the information revolution, as an opening in his chapter on the virtual ummah on the Internet (Roy, 2003, 153–172). Eickelman & Anderson are indeed rather optimistic about the possibilities of ICT when it comes to the renewal of Islam and the Islamic world by ‘re-intellectualising’ and an ‘emerging public sphere’, which is the undertitle of the volume they edited (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003).

However, creativity is hard to find: instead of personal thoughts and original ideas we encounter that characteristic copy/paste style, which the web seems to facilitate. A new eclecticism, as Roy calls it: fast, easy and superficial; not critical demeanour and accountability, but defective anchoring, defective sources and a poor referential system (Roy, 2003, pp. 154–155).

According to Roy, this all boils down to a trivialisation of Islam: it sends out a generalised and uniform message, in which clichés have taken the place of original insight and judgement. Rather than supporting the predicted creative, free, new interplay of opinions, the net turns out to foster clichés and a distinct tendency towards orthodoxy. Or rather, orthopraxis: for fundamentalists religion is a code of behaviour and a religious commitment, a code denoting what is allowed and what not, what is *halal* and *haram*. The western context is no more than a new area to which the code is to be applied: may you eat a Big Mac? Are you allowed a credit card? According to the Dutch anthropologist, Martijn de Koning, these are often typical “teenage questions” concerning sex, soft drugs and alcohol. For example: “When I think about sex during Ramadan, ‘does this break my fast?’ The ‘key question’ being: ‘How far can you go and still be a Muslim in the Netherlands?’”²

This does go to show that it is not all about radicalism, although that is the general concern about Muslim sites on the Internet. As of radicalism, it is true of fundamentalism, that it is “nicely simple”, as Roy put it in an interview in a Dutch newspaper in January 2005 (cf. Meijer, 2009). Pure, universal Islam, which the born again Islamic youth of the West discover through the Internet, rejects the entire intellectual history of Islam, and simply wishes to base itself directly on the Qur’an and hadith. The Islam of the Internet is therefore fundamentalist in the strict sense of the word: directly anchored in fundamental texts of the religion, the Qur’an and the tradition of the Prophet. Their eternal truth, their universal context-free validity and their pureness, go hand in hand with striking simplicity and normative unambiguousness. One is looking “for a norm that can be applied to strongly diverging contexts, or rather, a norm that can ignore context: this explains why the “Salafi” doctrine is the most suitable to inform the virtual Ummah” (Roy, 2003, p. 162). Salafism entails the wish to follow the *salaf*, in other words: the companions of the Prophet and devout Muslims of the first generations of Islam.

Fundamentalism and the orientation towards a code of behaviour makes the born-again Muslim a direct counterpart to the born-again Christian, also a common sight in the west at the current time. They are equally fundamentalistic in that they both apply a Holy Word of God to their lives in an individualistic and unhistorical manner, simply taking Holy Texts literally from cover to cover: what are the dos and don’ts of a good Muslim or a good Christian?

²De Koning in an interview in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, November 27/28, 2004. At the time, De Koning was preparing his PhD thesis that appeared in 2008.

A Muslim Modernist Alternative to Fundamentalism

In the second half of the twentieth century criticism of traditional Muslim education was clearly voiced by the Muslim modernist Fazlur Rahman. In his book *Islam and Modernity* (1982) this Muslim modernist laments the proliferation of commentaries and of “commentaries upon commentaries”, which have eclipsed the original works. Even “a vibrant and revolutionary religious document like the Qur’an” was buried under the débris of grammar and rhetoric (Rahman, 1982, p. 36), instead of itself being read again and again, also in the *madrasas* and Islamic universities of the higher education after the Qur’anic school or *kuttab*. According to Rahman the study of commentaries instead of original texts degenerated into hair-splitting and a preoccupation with irrelevant details, while fundamental questions were not being posed. Rahman’s conclusion is severe: the stagnation of intellectual culture and the culture of education in the Islamic world is a given. “From the thirteenth/fourteenth century onwards there was an era of manuals, commentaries, and super-commentaries (. . .) [I]n an overall view this literature is singularly unoriginal, pedantic and superficial” (Rahman, 1982, p. 45).

Rahman is one of the modernists to trace the line through to the Egyptian reformer Muhammad ‘Abduh, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. ‘Abduh had criticised the dominant role of memorising in traditional religious education, from the elementary level of the *kuttab* to the highest level of the *Azhar*, the famous Islamic University in Cairo dated back to the Middle Ages. From his point of view this ought to be replaced by understanding and insight. He also wanted to get rid of the rigidity of educational content and method. In order to become truly educational schooling, instead of a curious enclave, a museum of Medieval Islam, he thought it essential to keep the dialogue alive between the Islamic intellectual tradition, on the one hand, and modern western sciences, on the other. In the educational reform of the *Azhar* envisaged by Muhammad ‘Abduh, two things went hand in hand: on the one hand the introduction of new subjects, even if these originate from another, modern scientific and secular tradition, and on the other hand, allowing students to study classic, original texts within the existing Islamic curriculum, instead of the usual second-hand explanations and commentaries of lesser minds (Rahman, 1982, 66/67). The primary sources of Islam need to be dusted off.

In order to understand what Muslim modernists and reformers of traditional Islamic education are proposing, we need to know that traditionalistic, Sunni Islamic thought is regulated by the *usul al-fiqh*, the principles or sources of justice or juridical reasoning (Hallaq, 1997). The first source is the Qur’an, the second source is *sunna*, the traditions or the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad as delivered in *hadith*, the third source is *ijma*, the consensus of authoritative Islamic juridical thinking, and the fourth is *kiyas*, which is the reasoning, as a rule the reasoning by juridical analogy, that is necessary for new questions and cases for which the first three sources of juridical thought do not yet supply straightforward answers. The process of reasoning, the intellectual effort and the research of the *mujtahid*, the

Muslim scholar of law, resulting in a judgment for a new juridical case, is called *ijtihad*. In traditional Sunni Islam, there is only room for *ijtihad* in case new questions arise for which the first three sources of Islam do not yet contain ready answers. It is against this background that one can understand the call of Muslim modernists to return to the very first source of Islam, the Qur'an.

Contemporary liberal Islamic thinkers renew Muhammad 'Abduh's plea to return to the original texts of Islam, with the Qur'an at the forefront. Like Fazlur Rahman, the Muslim modernist Abu Zayd is an example here. He wishes to be rid of the orthodox Islamic restriction of the Qur'an to a text of law: why consider the part of the Qur'an which has juridical relevance as its actual message? By the traditionalist, past-oriented Islam, the entire universe "was divided into what is permitted and what is forbidden. That is a worldview which is dished out to the pupils from the first school year onwards, a worldview which divides life as a whole into permissible and forbidden acts" (Abu Zayd, 2002, p. 126). According to Abu Zayd, the Qur'an is in need of re-reading and must be freed "from all those cumulative layers of interpretations" (Abu Zayd, 2002, p. 79).

Fazlur Rahman advocated something comparable. The original powers of expression of Islam, those of the Qur'an and the prophet Muhammad, must be brought back to life and retrieved from under the dust of the "conformities en deformities" of the history of Islam. Ironically enough, it seems as if Muslim modernists and Muslim fundamentalists are arguing the very same point, Rahman says, viz. "that Muslims must go back to the original and definitive sources of Islam and perform *ijtihad* on that basis" (Rahman, 1982, p. 142). However, on closer examination there is a crucial difference of orientation between modernists on the one hand and fundamentalists on the other. Rahman declares Muslim fundamentalism intellectually bankrupt. Its greatest weakness, according to him, is the total lack of Islamic learnedness and the replacement of true intellectuality by dealing in clichés. This does Islam an extreme disservice. Fundamentalists do say, and according to Rahman there is much to say for this, that the learnedness of the conservative traditionalist *ulema* has caused Muslims to turn away from the Qur'an, instead of directing them towards it. However, the way in which fundamentalists themselves read the Qur'an boils down to selecting isolated fragments with which Muslims may distinguish themselves from "the modern west". In comparison with the traditionalist *ulema*, who undeniably manage an imposing heritage of learnedness, the fundamentalists are extremely superficial. They are unfamiliar with the Islamic intellectual tradition, and their repeated claim that the original Islam excels in simplicity and pureness is ill considered.

In his *Islamic Methodology in History* published as early as 1965, Rahman gives a characteristic translation of *ijtihad*: re-thinking, and elsewhere in the same study: fresh thinking (1965, p. 105, 149, resp.). Just like Abu Zayd, judging by the title of his oration to mark his acceptance of a professorship at the University of Humanistics in Utrecht in 2004: *Rethinking the Qur'an*. To put it concisely, these reformers link *ijtihad* directly to the re-reading and re-interpretation of the Qur'an. The interpretive frameworks put forward by tradition and intellectual consensus, *hadith en ijma*, are thus overcome. At the same time the restriction to a juridical

reading of the Qur'an is overcome: it is no longer the object to read the Qur'an as a mere book of law, as a book of rules for what is permitted and what is forbidden, halal and haram. This implies, furthermore, that the interpretation of the Qur'an can no longer be the monopoly of the *ulema*, the traditional Islamically educated jurists or *mujtahids*.

Abu Zayd and Rahman wish to re-read, to re-think the Qur'an without limiting themselves to the margins of interpretative freedom that hadith and classic jurisprudence would grant them. This, by the way, definitely does not imply that they neglect and ignore Islamic tradition and intellectual history, quite to the contrary. Their knowledge of this history is excellent and they take it extremely seriously, although not just affirmatively, as a normative, indicative framework, but rather as *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of effects) in the sense of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960, 1989), the Western hermeneutical philosopher, who is no stranger to either of these two Muslim intellectuals. In other words, they see it as a history of interpretation, not to be continued as a matter of course, but perhaps actually deserving awareness, critical reflection and possibly also dismantlement, in order to clear the way for a renewed reading and interpretation of the Qur'an.

In contrast with the fundamentalistic, Salafistic presupposition that the Qur'an is directly accessible and can simply be taken literally, hermeneutics advocate a methodical approach, aiming at freeing the view to allow for a renewed, liberated reading and interpretation of the Qur'an. If Islam is considered a living tradition, also to be relevant to the new context of current western societies, then that should be able to follow from the re-reading and re-interpretation of primary sources. This would include lively and critical interchange about differences of interpretation. It is obvious that there is a role for education here. The atmosphere accompanying the search for meaning and understanding, in which differences of interpretation requiring critical reflection inevitably appear, is an ideal climate for education. In *Islam and Modernity* Rahman states: "To insist on absolute uniformity of interpretation is therefore neither possible nor desirable" (1982, p. 144). This ideal educational climate, characterised by intellectual vitality, was lost in the traditionalist madrasa, and current-day fundamentalism, or "Revivalism" as Rahman calls it, also by no means provides it. In characteristic concise wording Rahman expresses it as follows:

The traditional educational system of Islam had become so narrow, barren, and starved of any originality that it was inconceivable that any great problems would be posed or any new intellectual adventures undertaken. Indeed, so far as education (i.e. the formation of the mind of the coming generations) is concerned, the Revivalists, by simplifying the curriculum (i.e. by 'purifying' it from the intellectual disciplines developed over the medieval period, and retaining for the most part only the Qur'an and the Hadith, without developing any methodology of how, for example, the Qur'an was to be taught and understood) represented a terrible retrogression from the medieval madrasa (Rahman 1979, p. 319).

The outcome of fundamentalism (Revivalism) was even greater intellectual poverty. When it comes to the content of their views there is often very little difference between the traditional *ulema* and the neo-fundamentalists who claim freedom of *ijtihad*, but do not live up to this. Although they reject the authority of the *ulema* and the medieval heritage, they in fact often actually confirm the consensus of that

intellectual heritage. Their Salafistic principle, wishing to return to the pure Islam of the first centuries, the age of the Prophet and the Companions, is not supported by a method that would make it possible to detach that original Islam from the consensus of the *ulema* that developed later on in intellectual history, and allow it to speak once more. And so they are destined to continue that tradition unconsciously and uncritically, in spite of appearances to the contrary, in the light of their pretence of following the Salaf.

Finally, modern higher education, for example in western universities, also fails to apply the, according to Rahman, much-needed historical hermeneutical approach to Islam. Western islamologists approach Islam from the outside, “merely as a historical datum, as a dead body, so to say, to be analysed” (1979², p. 252). Although this has yielded valuable knowledge and insight, the crucial question of the validity and the power of expression of the tradition in the current context cannot be answered in this way, and that very question constitutes the intellectual challenge for Muslims. What Islam is about: that is what has to be re-thought through and re-articulated for a new cultural–historical context.

In the epilogue of the second printing from 1979 of his book *Islam*, originally published in 1966, Rahman anticipates a subsequent book, which he announces under the title *Islamic Education and Modernity*.³ He states that it would be a mistake to think of the interpretation of Islam and its sources as a task that only falls to the elite of the *ulema*. Of course it is worthwhile to offer education on the subject of the Qur’an and its historical context of origin and the history of its interpretations, and to systematically study such matters. This is in fact vital for encouraging critical and reflexive reading habits. But that is not the monopoly of an elite. In an intellectual culture in which, although *ijtihad* is indeed directed towards achieving *ijma*, *ijma* on the other hand does not restrict the scope of *ijtihad*, critical questions are in place, whoever asks them.

Furthermore, it is according to Rahman not the task of the *ulema* to make laws, but to offer leadership to the Muslim community – through the sermon, and also through education and public debate:

The Ulama’s real creative direct link is only with the public. If there is more than one opinion on a certain issue – and there is bound to be difference of opinion on most issues – let the public be persuaded through discussion and debate, for there is no other way in a democratic society (Rahman 1979², p. 261/262).

What Islam needs in the current context is such an intellectual culture. Basic assumptions can be found in hermeneutics, and this also applies to the kind of education that might be part of such an intellectual culture. Compare the words with which Rahman ends his introduction to *Islam and Modernity*: “the process of questioning and changing a tradition – in the interests of preserving or restoring its normative elements – can continue indefinitely (...) there is no fixed or privileged point at which the predetermining effective history is immune from such

³Rahman 1979², p. 260. The new book announced here is published in 1982, under the new title *Islam and Modernity*.

questioning” – and this continuous questioning is essentially “what is required for an adequate hermeneutical method of the Qur’an” (Rahman 1982, p. 11).

The Hermeneutics of the Text in an Educational Perspective

Based on their familiarity with Islamic intellectual tradition, Abu Zayd and Rahman have both seen potential in the hermeneutics of the western philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960, 1989). His work, together with the kindred work of Paul Ricoeur (1983, 1985, 1988), is especially intriguing for educational thinking, for this hermeneutical theory allows scope to be read educationally, that is to say as a theory of education. The fact that ideas concerning the quality of Islamic education turned out to be an integral part of Rahman’s views on hermeneutics and historicity in Islamic thought points to the same connection. Nor is it a coincidence that Gadamer, at the outset of his principal work *Wahrheit und Methode*, translated as *Truth and Method*, does not choose the method or methodology of science as a guide, but turns to the concept of *Bildung*, (liberal) education, originating in the humanistic tradition (1990, 15 ff.). Both *Bildung*, the key concept of cultural educational theory, and interpretation, the key concept of hermeneutics, have to do with human reality as historical-cultural reality. Culture is passed on from generation to generation. Inevitably, throughout this process questions arise concerning meaningfulness and meaning, and that certainly applies to periods of rapid cultural change and cultural diversity. The model of the reader and the text can be presented as the paradigmatic case of how questions of meaning and significance are, and can be dealt with.

Reading is looking ahead: in the here and now of reading a certain sentence there lies an expectation, a direction, a self-evident anticipation of how the story will continue. That is the primary orientation of the reader. However, in the second instance, reading requires one to constantly look backwards, to re-read sentences and passages – which of course are fixed and will not have changed, to re-read, read again, giving a different reading and ascribing a different meaning. This process is conscious and directed by a question evoked by an unexpected turn in the course of the narrative. It forms a contrast with the self-evident, primary understanding of “looking forwards” and “reading on”. At that moment in time the interpretation of the text, which has already been read and which had been self-evident up to then, becomes conscious, reflexive: obviously everything must now find new meaning, be read differently than was previously simply taken for granted. Reflexive reading is conscious, directed by an explicit question concerning meaning, in the realisation that various readings are possible.

Interpretation, the attempt to discover the meaning of the text, is situated in the dialectic or interplay of looking forward and looking backward, of reading on and reading back, of reading and re-reading. In other words, reflexivity is essential to the reading process. Reflexivity, bending back on oneself and one’s own history, learning to ask new questions and to open new perspectives when familiar responses

no longer hold, belongs to the opposite side of the coin, to historicity, to living in time and history. It is the prerequisite to the possibility of personal initiative and personal responsibility in spite of the inevitable historicity of existence in time, in history, being inescapably enveloped by time and history, and also to being determined and formed by it. Being determined and formed by the past obviously is not merely a question of one's own individual life experience and personal memories. Individuals stand at a point in a history, which was already under way, long before their individual existence. The concept of tradition is in place here. And when important books play a role in a tradition, also Gadamer's concept *Wirkungsgeschichte* or history of effects, the concept already touched upon in the previous section. This concept gives cause to return once more to the model of the text and the reader, this time with the hermeneutical philosopher Paul Ricoeur to the linguist Hans Robert Jauss who again uses Gadamer's concept "history of effects" in his reception-aesthetics (Ricoeur 1988, p. 171 ff.; cf. Jauss 1982a, 1982b).

Only a text that is read, has meaning, influence, effect (*Wirkung*). The concept of *Wirkungsgeschichte* or history of effects calls attention to the influence of the fact that a work, a text, a book, has often been read by many generations. According to Jauss the *Wirkung*, the influence a text has had in history must be embodied within the boundaries of the text itself and be taken into account and included in the process of interpreting the text. When someone reads a text with such a history for the first time, it is not a matter of starting from scratch. One begins to read on the basis of a certain horizon of expectations: one really already knows what one is going to find in the text. The starting point of the reader, who has been brought up in a certain tradition, is a natural familiarity with the text, with which one is at home. Perhaps we might even state that certain readings and interpretations of a text are already gained "naturally" before one has even seen and read the text itself. Cultural literacy is, after all, not just a matter of knowing the alphabet and being able to decode texts literally. Years before learning to read in this strictly "alphabetical" sense, the acquisition of cultural literacy begins: it starts at birth and proceeds from there, in the natural process of early childhood socialisation and enculturation.

Thus, the educational relevance of hermeneutics comes into view. Conscious and reflexive reading and interpretation of a text are secondary, as a rule, and have to do with breaking with certain "natural" expectations and primary familiarity. All reading, but certainly reading works of great significance within a certain tradition, originates in a *Wirkungsgeschichte* or history of effects, which manifests itself as a self-evident "horizon of expectations" with which the "first" reading commences. Re-reading and re-thinking, breaking with the pre-given familiarity, and then reflexively re-reading on the basis of new, real, current and actual questions, is thus really already present from the first reading of the text. Re-reading is all about breaking open the perspective on the text, which has been passed down from the past, and about finding new openings, starting points for a new reading. In order to be able to experience the text as new, full of expressiveness and relevance for the present, it is necessary to rupture and overcome the initial familiarity of already knowing what a text has to say.

It is essential in education to stimulate critical reflection on the familiar and so to cultivate an attitude of reflexivity towards one's own tradition. A reflexive form of cultural transmission is, therefore, not *Bildung* in the sense of "formation", furnishing a permanent, fixed "Bild" or "form", but aims at reflexivity, which is the fitting response to inevitable historicity. And so education is the beginning of life-long self-education: the reflexive and responsible determination of one's own position, time and time again, within a perpetually changing historical, cultural context.

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The Gülen Educational Movement and Its Contribution to Global Peace and Tolerance

Ismail Albayrak

Introduction

In this age of globalisation, distance is no longer a problem. Mass communication technologies allow the local to become global. Thus, local areas are facing rapid change in various ways. While the cry for democratic values, human rights and intercultural dialogue is frequently heard, the global threat of war, terrorism, the increased gap between poor and rich, famine, malnutrition, global warming and pollution, and many other social and cultural problems pose a real challenge for present citizens of the globe. To tackle these challenges is the prime concern of today's intellectuals and politicians. Despite the existence of some pessimists, there are a number of initiatives working for the common good and expending great effort to eradicate these problems.

The Gülen movement is one of the most influential initiatives which should be taken into consideration in this context. Fethullah Gülen is a Turkish Muslim scholar whose ideas have inspired and influenced many Turkish intellectuals, educators, students, businessmen, politicians and journalists inside and outside Turkey to establish schools and educational and intercultural centres in more than 90 countries. After summarising some important features of globalisation briefly, this chapter provides brief biographical information about the life of Fethullah Gülen and then focuses on a general description of the movement and its main characteristic in the formation of an ideal person who is capable of internalising the qualities of self-discipline, dialogue and the notion of *hizmet/khidmah* (service for humanity).¹ The question

I. Albayrak (✉)

Study of Islam and Muslim-Catholic Relations, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Australia; Sakarya University, Adapazari, Turkey
e-mail: i.albayrak@patrick.acu.edu.au

This chapter is based on a previous draft paper presented at the Seventh Annual Conference of *Globalisation for the Common Good: An Interfaith Perspective* 30 June–4 July 2008, Melbourne.

¹Gülen talks about a triangle (military camp, *madrasah* (school) and *zawiyah* (darwish lodge)), which students need for their proper training. Here the military camp represents discipline, the

of how the formal and informal educational activities of the movement contribute to the solution of local and global problems is the second concern of this chapter. Finally, as an extension of the movement's global educational activities, the chapter deals with Gülen's approach to cultural and religious diversity and their relationship in modern societies.

Globalisation

Today, one of the most frequent words we hear is "globalisation". Globalisation is multidimensional; therefore it is not easy to define. This undefined character of globalisation is strongly related to the economic, political, social, cultural and ethical values of the globe. For some, the process of globalisation is a real nightmare which causes various problems. They consider it a great threat to local traditions and cultures by weakening the conventional borders or internal cohesion of communities to create super economic and social structures (Steger, 2003). This homogenisation is seen by many critics of globalisation with great anxiety, fearing that the local is losing its meaning and values, and is melted into the global. For them, this is another way in which the local is victimised. They strongly believe that if it continues uncontrolled, the powerful effect of globalisation will eliminate various rivals. Shutting down many big firms or factories, undefined business and marketing laws and daily loss of jobs in great numbers are part of the consequences of this unavoidable instrument, namely globalisation. The worst scenario for them is the association of globalisation with a superpower of the world, Americanisation (Steger, 2003). This association raises many questions and makes people more suspicious of globalisation.

The main reason for this mistrust lies in the economic imbalance among the nations of the world. For rich and developed countries, globalisation is a revolution, a great success of Western civilisation to be spread all over the world, but for others it is an ideology to be prevented. According to this second group, this ideology accelerates the speed of change in societies and increases violence and war for the seizure of power and control or to impose authority over others.² The underdeveloped countries seem to have no role to play in this one-way project of globalisation. The economic indicators of these countries together with their instability make them weak when trying to survive in this global competition.

For others, globalisation is a unique way to go forward. It should be accepted that this is an irreversible process that no one can avoid. It is enough to examine only at the development in information and mass media technologies to realise how people

school represents scientific knowledge and the darwish lodge represents morality (and ethics) (Gülen, 1992).

²To see the result of this judgement, it is enough to look at gradual increase of armed conflict in the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

are involved in this inevitable process. Today, people are now communicating in a global language.³ Through the internet, they daily transact large amounts of money from one country to another. The impact of intergovernmental relations grows rapidly. This great potential of globalisation makes people aware of their common problems. People who are very optimistic about globalisation believe that this process, with its great technological progress, will bring wealth, freedom, good political arrangements and democracy for all beyond the local concern of nation states. In addition, growing authoritarian programmes of nation states and their extreme reluctance to embrace every member of their own citizenship make globalisation more desirable (Swyngedouw, 2004). It should also be remembered that people who are longing for globalisation argue that contemporary common problems can only be solved by global initiatives and enterprise.

Between these two radical understandings of globalisation, there are various discourses which pronounce more cautious approaches. “Glocalisation” (Swyngedouw, 2004, 33), I think, is one of the important representatives of this middle way. While the society preserves its own local values, it also supports, actively participates in and contributes greatly to global values. When we take a Muslim’s discourse of globalisation into account, it will be seen that it is not very different from the modern discussion of globalisation. There are extreme sceptics who consider it a major threat to Islam and a conspiracy against Muslims all over the world. Especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the vast tragedy of September 11 2001, criticism of and attacks on Islam everywhere lead many Muslims to mistrust the global discourse of globalisation. In addition, because the Muslim world is weak,⁴ powerless and very passive in the globalisation process, it makes no significant contribution to either contemporary problems or the globalisation process. Consequently, it prefers to stay away from the process where it has no influence. It also expresses its dissatisfaction with a globalisation which lacks spiritual and ethical dimensions. This quite narrow understanding makes many Muslims focus on only their own localities or societies in the globe. I think, because of its inability to embrace the whole world in this global age, many activities and policies of this insufficient approach will not be able to continue for long.

³It is important to note that today 80% of Internet content is in English. This is good for understanding each other but alarmingly dangerous for the preservation of local cultures and languages. A declining number of local languages in different parts of the world points to the power of globalisation. In the 1500s there were 14,000 languages spoken around the world, in 2000 we have approximately 7,000 languages (Steger, 2003). Clearly there is a diminished number of languages, and this decline is still in effect.

⁴Muslim countries constitute around 10% of total world trade. 2/3 (nearly 70%) of petrol is produced in Muslim countries but their income, with few exception, is very low. Among 50 Muslim countries, 24 have very low income, 13 have lower middle income and only 7 have upper and high income. The ten richest people in Great Britain have the equivalent wealth of 23 of the world’s poorest countries. The wealth of the three richest families in the world is equal to that of 600 million people living in the world poorest countries (Mohammadi, 2002).

There are also Muslim intellectuals who welcome globalisation without any hesitation. In contrast with the above-mentioned group, these intellectuals express their complete trust in and appreciation of Western cultures and values. Because they believe that their present situation is not compatible with modernity, they zealously prefer a form of globalisation from above to modernise their own communities. This confidence allows them to accept what they can get from the countries who lead the world in globalisation. However, it seems that their unquestioned acceptance of globalisation marginalises them among their own community. It is also important to note that their surrender to globalisation does not mean that they are truly aware of all of its various dimensions.

Living in a world which is in constant and rapid change, it is easy to imagine that there will be many other approaches to globalisation with which to contend. At this time, we are not in a position to say which of these will dominate, on the basis of this changeable nature of our globe. However, when we talk about the Muslim world it is important to note that there are different versions of these approaches to globalisation. Unfortunately, the disgrace brought about by occupation, and the fragile nature of the war against terrorism, creates many reactionaries to globalisation among Muslims. The situation also forces many Muslim movements to establish political or military powers which do not seem to last long. The Gülen movement,⁵ in this respect, is unique in its approach to globalisation. It is open to change but also respects its own traditional values and identities. In other words, the Gülen movement does not display an antiglobalist reflection (it is not reactionary), but it has produced a counterglobalisation (proactivist) view which bears its own seal. Now this chapter concentrates on Gülen himself and the main features of his movement.

Fethullah Gülen and the Gülen Movement

Fethullah Gülen is a Muslim intellectual, thinker and religious scholar. He was born in Erzurum, eastern Turkey, in 1941, and grew up in a very religious environment; his first teachers were his parents. He mastered the Qur'an at a very early age. First, he took Arabic language courses from his father and then continued his traditional *madrassa* (school) education in different villages of his home town. Beginning at home and continuing at the knees of a famous religious leader of the

⁵I come across different naming of the movements in recently written books and articles. Some describe the movement as a civil-society, social conservative or Anatolian Islam of faith-based movement (Barton, 2005), pietistic activism (Özdalga, 2000), civil cosmopolitan movement, (Hendrick, 2006), while others name them as an ethic-oriented or text-based movement (Yavuz, 2003). There are others who describe the movement as educational Islamism (Agai, 2003), or a desecularisation and glocalisation or regularisation movement (Voll, 2003). I think none of these descriptions do justice to the broad definition of the movement. Gülen's own definition 'A movement originating its own model' (Gülen, 2004).

time, Muhammed Lutfi Efendi, his spiritual and religious training has never ended. While in school, he met students of Bediüzzaman Said Nursî and was introduced to the *Risale-i Nur* collections, in one respect a “complete” and “contemporary” Islamic school that contributed a great deal to his intellectual and spiritual formation. Meanwhile, he privately continued his “modern” education in science and philosophy, literature and history. While gaining a deep comprehension of the main principles of modern sciences from physics, chemistry, biology and astronomy, he read various works of Western philosophers together with other Eastern, Islamic and non-Islamic philosophers from their primary sources.

In 1959, when he was about 20 years old, Gülen moved to Edirne (a city near Balkan’s border) to work as an *Imam*. After his military service and following his years in Edirne he was appointed, in 1966, as a Qur’anic teacher to Izmir, the third biggest city in Turkey. These years were very fruitful for him. Besides teaching the Qur’an and Arabic, he also travelled a lot in the Aegean part of Turkey to deliver speeches concerning religious, social and ethical issues. He went on Hajj in 1968. In the 1970s he became very well known as a preacher and respected scholar in Turkey. After the military coup of March 12, 1971, Gülen was arrested under suspicion of changing the social, political and economic bases of the regime in Turkey, and of founding an association and secret community for this purpose, thus taking advantage of the people’s religious feelings. Six months later he was released without being punished by the court, and he returned to his official position. He was sent to different cities and finally to Bornova/Izmir, where he worked until September 12, 1980. After his retirement in 1980, he restarted his regular sermons unofficially in 1986 and continued up until the beginning of the 1990s. In 1994 he initiated the “Foundation of Journalists and Writers” Organisation’, a group that promotes dialogue and tolerance among all social strata, and has received a warm welcome from people in almost all walks of life. He visited the Vatican and had a meeting with the Late Pope John Paul II in 1998. In 1999 he went to the United States for medical treatment, and since then he has lived in the United States of America.

A small group formed around his opinions, and began a service of others based on Gülen’s teachings. Now, many people from all walks of life continue this service, serving without thought of material reward. They preach, teach and establish private educational institutions and intercultural dialogue centres all over the world. They also publish books and magazines, as well as daily and weekly newspapers, participate in television and radio broadcasts, and fund scholarships for poor students. The companies and foundations set up by people of different world views who agree about serving people, especially in the field of education, have founded and are operating about 500 secondary and high schools, and six universities from England to Australia, the United States and Russia, and South Africa. Gülen’s understanding of service permits no expectation of material or political gain. Sincerity and purity of intention should never be harmed or contaminated by these expectations (<http://en.fgulen.com/content/category/148/160/10/>). This picture indicates clearly that, with thousands of followers inside and outside Turkey, the Gülen movement is a global one.

Main Characteristics of the Movement and the Importance of Education

As we have noted, many movements among Muslim countries in the modern period did not last long due to their short-sighted, dominant political engagement. Bearing in mind the colonised and oppressed position of many countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Muslims generally produced various types of anti-Western and anti-modernity discourses in reaction to Western powers. Thus, liberation from the West was the primary requirement, and many Muslims have tried to seal themselves off from Western influence (Barton, 2005; Roy, 2004). The case with the Gülen movement is quite different. As many researchers have pointed out, the movement originated in Turkey where the cultural and religious (together with mystical) richness of the uncolonised Ottoman state have still been preserved (Gülen, 2004). This makes it different, not only among other Muslim states but also among numerous Turkish and non-Turkish Islamicly oriented movements. Although religion and culture play significant roles in the Gülen movement, it is neither a fundamentalist reaction to the West and modernity nor a complete acceptance of it. As argued later, the Gülen movement represents a middle and more balanced way in many respects. It is open to recognise the contribution of others; indeed it is extremely positive about the use of mass communication technology in human service, and very conscious of how globalisation removes the borders among nations and brings people together. The question of how Muslims can be involved in and contribute to this process lies in their understanding of humanity and of serving humanity in a global way. In order to summarise their overall approach to humanity we have to first look at Fethullah Gülen's philosophy and its perception.

For Gülen, the value of our ancient earth originates from its noble inhabitants, namely humankind. To serve this honourable resident is our most honourable earthly duty (Gülen, 2004). The question of why the human being is very important, according to Gülen, lies in his full trust in and dependence on God. Because we love God, we should love and respect His best creation. If a person loves God, they feel a deep inclination towards His every creature (Gülen, 1998). This love is not a static proclamation or an abstract notion; it is in fact a transcendental immersion which comes directly from Gülen's understanding of Islam. He believes that love is the strongest and most powerful weapon in the universe (Unal, 1998). The dream of this universal love can only be realised by the "person of ideals". The "person of ideals" constitutes the ideal society. This is a virtuous circle; the ideal society produces people of ideals, and people of ideals produce the ideal society. Gülen says that their common feature is to love God fervently and to ask themselves questions about the meaning of life, existence, death, servanthood, their relationship with God and other creatures, the nature of sin, reward, why humanity is suffering and where humankind is going. Ultimately these are the ones who will serve humanity truly by their distinctive morals, spirit and reason (Gülen, nd).

Gülen sees the realisation of the person of ideals as the ultimate aim of human existence. He calls them a "golden generation" and sees their activities on a global level as a sign of hope for the salvation of all humanity. Because they equip

themselves with values such as faith, love, a balanced view of science, free thought, freedom and consultation (Kuru, 2003), Gülen believes that they will do their best, until finally the world becomes paradise.

The key term in the realisation of the golden generation as a whole is education. Gülen has spent more than 40 years encouraging and inspiring the people around him to invest materially and spiritually in education. For Gülen, education is a sublime duty that manifests the Divine name *Rabb* (Pedagogue, Upbringer, Sustainer) (Gülen, 2002). This is a very important notion which connects human beings with God. Real life, says Gülen, is only possible by knowledge. Whoever neglects teaching and learning could be considered dead. For Gülen, the reason we are created is to learn, communicate and teach (Gülen, 2004). In his many writings he draws attention to the differences between humans and animals by underlining the importance of education. He says that animals are created with potential talent but a human being's journey in the world starts with impotence and a miserable position. Humans are weak, in great need and must wait for everything from others (Gülen, 2002). Thus, their need for knowledge is immeasurable.

Gülen is insistent on education for several reasons. Not only does it train individuals, but it is also the most vital factor for positive social change. In addition, he sees education as the most effective tongue for relations with others. Education is the aim of the aims. Therefore no one can be unconcerned with or uninterested in the education of their children. In his own words, the people who are educating their young today are actually investing in the next 25 years (Gülen, 2004). Nonetheless, despite the existence of a wide range of schools everywhere, Gülen, like his predecessor Said Nursi, expresses many times his dissatisfaction with the existing system of schooling. There are numerous state and private schools, but they fail to take all of the needs of children into consideration. Gülen frequently repeats that people who are responsible for the education of youth in the modern period have not developed a holistic approach to education. This failure results in the creation of a young generation with no ideals, as if they were animated corpses (Gülen, 2004). The pressure of globalisation in this process cannot be denied. Educational institutions have come under pressure to focus more on meeting the demands of the economy, rather than more sublime aims, and education merely for employment blinds many people to raising spiritually and bodily healthy children. In conclusion, value-free, job-oriented education in global competition meets children's physical needs but it never meets their spiritual or ethical potential.

This is the gist of Gülen's educational philosophy. For Gülen, training the body of children is easy, but very few train the minds and hearts of the pupils at the same time (Gülen, 2004). For him the distinction made between the mind and heart of students in modern school systems is a calamity for all. Today, according to Gülen, this mistake is still being repeated. Despite the production of many great scientists from contemporary schooling systems, modern men and women across the globe fail to establish real happiness. In fact, this one-sided education increases the crises in societies and produces only youth with no ideals. Thus, there is a great need for new and fresh approaches to current education systems (Gülen, 2004). It is also urgent to redefine the frame of knowledge. Gülen thinks that in the modern period,

knowledge is limited to empty theories and unabsorbed pieces of learning which arouse suspicion in minds and darkness in hearts, is a heap of garbage around which desperate and confused souls flounder (Gülen, 2004). Nonetheless, he sees Nursi's approach as a sole prescription for this dilemma. The purpose of education is to make knowledge a guide in oneself and in others. To achieve such an aim is to see education as the illumination of the mind in science and knowledge and the light of the heart in faith and virtue. According to Gülen, this understanding of education, which makes the students soar on two wings in the skies of humanity and seek God's approval through service to others, has many things to offer (Gülen, 2004). Thus, in terms of a healthy intellectual and spiritual enlightenment of the students, inner and outer knowledge should not be separated.

This is the middle way that Gülen wants to promote everywhere. He takes this heritage directly from the teachings of Nursi and he also finds Qur'anic references to this concept (Gülen, 1995). He wisely interprets the Qur'anic term (1:5) *al-sirat al-mustaqim* (straight path) as a middle way to use in a wide variety of social and ethical issues. This middle way can be described as an extreme emphasis on avoidance of excesses and deficiencies while finding a balance between materialism and spiritualism, rationalism and mysticism, worldliness and asceticism, heart and mind, tradition and modernity (Kuru, 2003). This is the sole way to prevent young people from fanaticism and atheism. However, for Gülen, the acceptance of the middle way on the above-mentioned issues is not a blind action. This understanding has been based on both religious and scientific knowledge. There are two laws (law of nature/religious law) which come from the Eternal which are not in conflict. Indeed, one aspect of the notion of *taqwa* (performing what God has commanded) is to learn how God's true religion and natural law (sciences) can be combined. In brief, both advise moderation and balance (Hendrick, 2006). This middle way opens the doors of education for many hesitant, conservative parents who face great difficulties in allowing their children to receive a modern education at the risk of losing their faith, or keeping their faith but suffering from losing their chance to achieve a high standard of education in modern secular schools. Moreover, Gülen's philosophy of education also prevents Muslim students and others who live as a minority outside Turkey from experiencing cultural shock or complete assimilation, and also from alienation or ghettoisation from the dominant cultures.

To fulfil such an important goal, Gülen, in contrast with many Muslims, has put education with a special emphasis on ethics at the centre of his own movement. Education is the most effective way to compete with others on a global scale. His educational model does not exclude anyone from participation. In fact, its universally accessible nature empowers many marginalised groups to continue their education in this model. This is one way to bring an equal and just educational system to everyone, rather than the unequal and unjust nature of global education, and therefore to improve the conditions of the poor. Bearing in mind the existence of schools in nearly every part of the world and in various environments and different social conditions, as described above, their main focus is on the development of ethical understanding of global issues rather than teaching religion.

This stress on the universal dimension of humanity's common virtues allows the movement's educational model to be more globalised and to embrace a diverse number of nations. For this reason the Gülen movement has prioritised schools rather than the mosque, which is chosen by many Islamicly oriented movements. This shift from mosque to school also enables the movement to see the world as a whole place of service (*dar al-khidmah* – in Turkish: *hizmet*), where one can serve the common good of humanity. In other words, serving the community is a kind of worship, and the school in the modern period is the best place to serve the community. The content of the mosque as a place of worship is transferred to the school, where the lost soul is being saved. In this context, teachers replace the Imams of the mosque and they (teachers) are understood by Gülen to be subjectively the equivalent of holy men or women (Gülen, 2002). Furthermore, in order to elevate the job of the teacher to a very noble status, Gülen associates the profession of teaching with the task of the prophets and many other Muslim saints (Cetin, 2006). Like the prophets, the teachers of the movement focus on communal salvation rather than individual happiness. So teachers, according to Gülen, become major figures in building the happiness of our globe. The trust in and expectations of the teachers are great. In Gülen's words, teachers' source of energy is the incredible faith and excitement in their hearts that seethes like magma. On the horizon is the happiness of humanity, contentment and pleasure (Gülen, 1998). These self-sacrificing and influential teachers play a significant role in the education of the new generation.

It is also important to note that Gülen makes a clear distinction between the educator and the teacher, stating that educators are very limited in our modern world (Gülen, 1996). Despite their openness to new developments and the contribution of others, educators in the Gülen movement also share a common pedagogic vision, similar curriculum⁶ and human and material resources (Michel, 2003) based on networks of advanced information and communication infrastructure. This collective consciousness is a unique attempt to respond to and confront the challenging nature of globalisation. They are very patient in reaching their goal and prefer to use a logical way to persuade students rather than forcing or imposing on them. The aim is not to use the students for their own purposes but to train them for the benefit of humanity. The adoption of this self mission is of prime importance in this educational project; therefore teachers consider every individual as a different world and try to find a way to their hearts (Gülen, 2004). In this process, the notion of *tamthil* (representation; *temsil* in Turkish) comes to the fore. *Tamthil* means to teach values through example. Gülen believes that this is the most effective way to prepare students for the future. Proper action is more influential than words. In this way, he believes, both the teacher and student internalise the core values of education. Put another way, they not only teach but also show how to use knowledge. Such a high achievement in the quality of education, and the exemplary moral character of

⁶Every year many meetings are being held by teachers to develop and bring new material to their teaching. It is observed that the curriculum they use has never been static.

teachers and its impact on the student's behaviour, make this school more attractive in the modern period.

Once again, in Gülen's project this interaction is not one- or two-sided (teacher-student) but is multidimensional, and includes family, school environment and the mass media. Gülen argues that the desired result can only be achieved by the cooperation of these different sides. Otherwise, the existence of opposing tendencies among these vital institutions will subject the students to contradictory influences that will distract them and dissipate their energy. In particular, mass media should contribute to the education of the younger generation by following the education policy approved by the community (Gülen, 2004). This is the dream of Gülen; therefore, as a leader of a giant movement, he guides his followers to establish various institutions to satisfy this global need. This is an ongoing process and the institutions never stop. Within this process, teachers as well as parents and other people need to be educated constantly. Every stratum of the community should be taken into consideration and real energy should be expended for the salvation of the community. Interestingly enough, Gülen interprets being a good (*taqwa*) person not only on the basis of avoidance of sin but also as active participation in the improvement of society (Yavuz, 2003). Thus in this global educational project not only men but also women have a great role to play. Women's educational aspiration in this movement is paved globally. Not only do women teachers and students share this aspiration but also many housewives and women workers in different institutions share in it.

Towards Global Peace and Tolerance

As well as education, another important activity initiated by Gülen in the cause of global peace is his unlimited emphasis on the notion of tolerance, dialogue and intercultural and interfaith relations. As Ergene (2005) has pointed out, dialogue activities are an extension of Gülen's global educational struggle, and they also serve the education of humanity. Although he has been severely criticised by some people, he bravely argues that dialogue is primarily concerned with religion and is thus a religious duty (Ergene, 2005). Gülen constantly insists on the religious nature of the meetings, because the basic Islamic sources advise Muslims to engage in dialogue with representatives of other faiths. Thus, Gülen says that dialogue is not his invention or innovation, but a revival of the most neglected aspect of Islam. His constancy in this regard is very sincere. He has said that even if the sensitive political balance of the world changes a thousand times he will never stop the dialogue meetings for the Islamic sources do not allow him to do so.⁷

First of all, he believes that pluralism in our modern society is a fact, not a problem. Religiously speaking it is the duty of believers to preserve this tension between sameness and difference in the emergence of global homogeneities. A Qur'anic

⁷www.herkul.org

verse (49:13) clearly rejects cultural homogeneity propagated by dominant globalisation: “O mankind! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct (*taqwa*). . .” It is safe to assume that one of the essential words of the Qur’an concerning plurality lies in this verse. In fact, the Qur’an sees diversity as one of the most important human strengths. *Taaruf* (mutual recognition) should be reconsidered in the context of the need to find common grounds for the coexistence of diverse religious and cultural varieties. It is a key that can open the door to interfaith dialogue. Here the Qur’an draws attention to equality in regard to biology and to a dignity common to all. Thus no one can be justified in boasting of an inherent superiority over others. Furthermore, the idea of superiority is criticised in another key verse (4:123) in the Qur’an, which says “It will not be in accordance with your desires, or the desires of the People of the Book. He who does wrong will have the recompense thereof, and will not find against Allah any protecting friend or helper.”

Thus for Gülen, one of the prime functions of education is to foster intercultural understanding.⁸ Failure to take into account the diverse nature of society in education feeds the homogeneous and monocultural dominance in many host cultures. Denial or disregard of the diversity which already exists in society leads to misrepresentation of others. This partisanship is the root of every turmoil and social conflict. In a world becoming more and more globalised, one has to know who will be one’s future next-door neighbour. Furthermore, like neighbours, nations also need each other in a global scale. One of the most important factors here is to eliminate causes that separate people, such as discrimination based on colour, race, belief and ethnicity. Education, Gülen says, can uproot these evils (Williams, 2000). Having held firmly to this belief, the Gülen movement works very hard to promote tolerance both inside and outside Turkey. For Gülen, dialogue and tolerance mean accepting every person, irrespective of their status, and learning to live together. In this regard, education is considered an island of unity. Tolerance and dialogue need to be taught in schools. Teaching differences and giving an accurate picture of the unfamiliar other give opportunities to move on. Gülen thinks that this is a key for the improvement of relationships among the world’s nations. Religiously speaking, in the understanding of Gülen, what is good for all is also good in Islam (and other

⁸Nursi’s influence on Gülen in this regard is unlimited. Nursi places particular emphasis that Muslim–Christian co-operation was the result of many Prophetic reports that indicate that Muslims will enjoy peace with the pious Christians at the end of time. This unity will ensure security, and together they will fight against the common enemy, namely irreligiosity (Nursi, 1996; 1992). To encourage this common endeavour, Nursi re-formulates the expression *ahl al-kitab* (the People of Scripture or Book) as *ahl al-maktab*, which means ‘the Literate People’ (Nursi, 1993). This original re-interpretation should not be seen as a simple semantic contribution. Nursi, with utmost sincerity, calls the Christians the people literate in modern science, whose knowledge enables them to fight against the disbelief that stems from an extreme secularism rooted in modern science. Thus Nursi believes in close dialogue with Christians and thinks that real humanity, dignity and justice can only be established by a mutual understanding based on co-operation between these revealed religions.

religions). Education is the way to transmit these universal values. Education about tolerance also contributes to the solidarity of nations and their willingness to live together.

In the Gülen movement schools, education for tolerance is being practised energetically, and it is fair to say that diversity is part of their existent schooling system. In many countries students from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds study in the same peaceful atmosphere of these schools. For example, in Bosnia, Croatian and Serbian students – even though their numbers are small – study peacefully alongside Bosnian students, in spite of the brutal war. This is a powerful indication that the Gülen movement's schools have succeeded in establishing a non-sectarian atmosphere in their educational system without neglecting to respect cultural and religious differences.

Today's global discourse teaches us that one's happiness depends on the other's happiness, and many crises in the globe can be overcome only by the promotion of tolerance and dialogue. For Gülen, dialogue is a must. However, it does not mean that it is a compromise or negotiation. In addition, dialogue and tolerance do not mean passive acceptance of others. For Gülen, tolerance is a religious duty and a virtue to be gained. It is an indication of sincerity in the engagement of cultural relations. Gülen repeats several times the importance of forgetting revenge for the past, disregarding the polemics and the elimination of hatred from the vocabulary. Gülen asks his followers to see their own mistakes and be blind to the mistakes of others (Gülen, 2004). It is not wise to dictate what you believe, but it is meritorious to listen to others, to understand them or learn from them. So respecting cultural, religious and social differences is crucial in the education of tolerance. Gülen sincerely believes that the existent cultures and religions have this potential to contribute to world peace provided people take education for tolerance seriously.

Today, in every school system, education for tolerance is being provided in a comprehensive way, including in the interaction of both students and teachers and their families. Similarly, it is being taught through good examples which pave the way to mutual and respectful relations. Having internalised the value of tolerance education, teachers transmit this understanding to their students. In addition to schools, the last ten years have seen a great explosion in the establishment of cultural and interfaith centres to promote dialogue and tolerance. Bridge builders of Gülen movements have felt the need for general training in intercultural activities and have gone beyond schools to meet this need. These centres play a complementary role to school education and have had a great impact on the internal cohesion of societies. In addition, these centres also contribute to the integration of minorities in different countries without losing their own identities and cultures. Gülen describes such an approach with an example from Mawlana's saying: "Like a pair of compasses, with one end in the necessary place, the centre and with the other one in the seventy two nations" (Sevindi, 1997).

Gülen is optimistic for the future of these activities and their contribution to global peace. However, he is also very cautious not to name the dialogue activities of his followers. He argues that this is an unceasing process and the future will show how beneficial it is. He is also confident that people will be very hopeful to

see the future, common work of the three Abrahamic religions which come from the same root (Gülen, 2004). So, for Gülen this is a global responsibility and the followers of these great traditions should come together and try to build common ground among diverse societies. This common ground, tolerance, dialogue and peace, will heal most of our present wounds as a global nation. Like his predecessor (Said Nursi), Gülen sees three great illnesses in front of humanity: ignorance, poverty and internal schism. Knowledge, capital work and unification can struggle against these. However, among them ignorance is the most serious sickness. It must be opposed with education, which has always been the important way of serving one's country. Now that we live in a global village, education is the best way to serve humanity and to establish a dialogue with other civilisations. Without education we are not able to make any progress with the struggle against poverty, and it is almost impossible to create an environment where multiculturalism can be practiced.

Nonetheless, one never misses the ethical tone in this universal call for education. Again, Gülen reminds us of his mentor's evaluation of modern civilisation which has neglected the happiness of all in great detail. Modern civilisation has been founded on five negative principles:

- i. It is founded upon power; force tends to oppression.
- ii. It aims at the realisation of individual self-interest; pursuit of their self-interests causes people to rush madly upon things in order to possess them and gives rise to pitiless rivalry and competition.
- iii. Its principle in life is struggle; struggle causes internal and external conflicts.
- iv. It seeks to unify people on the basis of racial separatism; this service brutalises people.
- v. It incites lust and passion and gratifies desire; transfers man into beast.

Gülen argues that these approaches will never contribute positively to humanity's well-being. We need a just and balanced approach to our existence. He, like Nursi, suggests that we have to develop a new understanding, like putting truth against force to lead the people to justice and harmony. Instead of benefit, the aim of our existence should be virtue to lead people to real love. Instead of racism and negative nationalism it is important to develop a sincere brotherhood which leads every community to mutual assistance. Finally, he lays great emphasis on spiritual advancement (Nursi, 1993).

Today, despite many good works of self-sacrificing people all over the world, there are still many who control by force, and there is intolerance among different intranational and international groups. After 9/11, Islam and Muslims in particular have been greatly affected by this global disinformation. The war against terror is being transformed into a war against Muslims, and most Muslims are being seen as terrorists or most terrorists are being seen as Muslims. Similarly, Islam becomes a subtitle of terrorism and associated with violence. The efforts of some mass media and the mistakes of some individuals further diminish the image of Muslims and Islam around the globe. What we are facing today is really a clash of ignorance rather than the clash of civilisation. Gülen sincerely believes that if one wants to

win the hearts of suppressed people, and wants to solve the conflict, the most secure shelter is education and dialogue. Unfortunately, violence nourishes violence. This is an experimentally proven fact. It is easy to destroy but it is very difficult to rebuild. Today our multicultural societies' cohesion depends on this mutual understanding, engaging proactively in cooperation between communities and respecting each other. According to Gülen, this is a religious duty and we are responsible for the preparation of our future world in this regard. In its hundreds of schools and many intercultural centres the Gülen movement tries to establish a common language for better understanding.⁹

Conclusion

It is now an accepted fact that the last two centuries have brought people together to communicate more actively. This formation is known today as globalisation. Because of incredible development in various fields in our modern world, everybody has to take the notion of globalisation seriously. In the Muslim world, the Gülen movement represents one of the best examples in this regard. Being aware of the importance of globalisation, it also prepares itself against the danger of fallacies in understanding globalisation. Thus it is not reactionary to any global or modern development, and equally it is not passive or easily influenced under the dominant nature of global activities.

As summarised briefly above, the middle way is the main characteristic of the Gülen movement. The movement is aware of global issues and problems and believes sincerely that these problems can be solved only by global cooperation. Here, it tries to develop a sense of culture based on Turkish Islam and Anatolian Sufism to preserve their own identity, but at the same time they are ready and open to new changes. At this juncture, education, moral development, spirituality and tolerance-dialogue play a significant role. A lack of any of these concepts may lead a very civilised movement to power or tyranny. Unfortunately, many authoritarian programs could not bring peace and material-spiritual developments to the world. Systems which recognise no ethical values and depend solely on power have nothing to contribute to the global progress of all humanity. Continuing wars at the beginning of the third millennium have shown that it is impossible to control people by killing or suppressing them. Thus what is needed is the development of a global movement

⁹The Gülen movement finds this universal language. There is a very nice narrative from Mawlana's *Mathnawi* to describe this situation. A man gave one coin to four men. One said 'I will buy with this money an *engur* (which means grape). There was an Arab among them and he objected to buy *engur* (grape) but he wanted to buy '*inab* (which also means grape). The third one was a Turkish man and said this coin is mine and I did not want to buy '*inab* but I want to buy *üzüm* (which means grape). Finally, there was a Greek man who told them 'leave all these things we just want to buy *israfil* (which means grape too)'. And then they started fighting each other. Mawlana says if there were a wise man who knew all these languages he would have solved their problem as long as they had accepted his authority.' (Mevlana, 1990, II.283)

which covers or surrounds a person's every dimension. To do so, there is no instant solution. Gülen and his followers have chosen education and intercultural gatherings in the formation of a new man and woman (ideal human/*al-insan al-kamil*). This is not a rigid educational movement. Laying prime stress on representation (*tamthil*), teachers in the movement expend great effort in showing students how to internalise values of morality and tolerance. Because lack of faith and ethical values are the cause and root of every conflict and problem in the world, the Gülen movement's *raison d'être* is to establish an environment where the student's heart and mind are simultaneously satisfied. So the movement tries to domesticate excessive positivism with emphasis on the inner and spiritual dimensions of Islam. This is not an exclusivist approach, although it takes its power from the Islamic faith. As regards globalisation, their motto "Because we love the Creator we love all His creatures" (Ergene, 2005, p. 17) is the starting point. Every Muslim is considered a religious brother and representatives of other faiths are considered as brothers and sisters in creation. So the number of sister schools and dialogue centres in more than ninety countries, together with various interactions, are the best way to serve the citizens of the globe. They are practising globalisation vividly and contributing to contemporising and modernising Muslims without losing their faith in any way, and without any hidden political or ideological agenda. Because human beings are potentially respectful creature and they are able to achieve, the Gülen movement is very optimistic for the future of the globe. As long as we preserve a civil, just and free atmosphere to pave the way for the education of advantaged and disadvantaged people, there is no barrier to transforming the world into paradise. The movement has potentially global and universal values that can build bridges between the East and the West.

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Peace Education in Multiethnic/Religious Settings: NESNIM as a Possible Model

Emmanuel B.J. Kallarackal

Introduction

Human societies in the postmodern world are increasingly becoming multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious. With such pluralism, there arise misunderstandings and conflicts. No postmodern societies seem to be spared from these pluralistic conflicts. In this context of unrest and chaos, peace education is a concern of every person and organization interested in the future of humanity.

According to Aram (2005),

Why is it that peace education is needed particularly for the youth? The fact is that youth of today are brought up in the world of violence. It is not just the Gulf wars glamorously telecast worldwide but also other aspects of television such as serials which bank heavily on violence. So much so that television programming washes away what is learnt in schools and colleges. At places, militancy and other forms of violence are right at one's doorsteps. Children and youth are more vulnerable to violence and hence they should be given special attention. There are occasions when educational institutions themselves reflect a culture of violence. Also, youth of today are tomorrow's leaders and hence there is a need to mould them in a pacifist mindset to have a peaceful future. (Aram, 2005)

Galtung (1996) developed a new meaning of peace as he discarded the traditional one. The traditional idea of peace is a synonym for harmony or the absence of organized, collective violence. According to Galtung,

Most people would agree with the definition of (negative) peace as absence of direct violence, but not necessarily with an additional definition of (positive) peace as the presence of symbiosis and equity in human relations; nor with the thesis that positive peace is the same as the absence of structural and cultural violence. These and others are matters of informed dissent, with schools forming around different definitions and theses. (Galtung, 1996, p. 14)

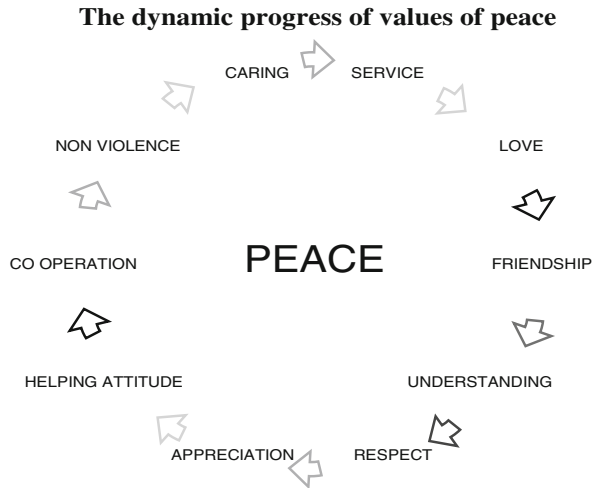
The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines violence as unlawful exercise of physical force. Hicks defined violence as "acts of aggression with the deliberate intention of causing pain or discomfort to others, directly or indirectly" (Hicks, 1998, p. 6).

E.B.J. Kallarackal (✉)

Holy Cross College, Agartala, India

e-mail: emmanuelcsc@yahoo.com; emmanuelcsc@gmail.com

Fig. 1 The dynamic circle of the values of peace (Kallarackal, 2007, p. 40)



Very often violence not only causes discomfort and pain but ends in loss of life too. On the other hand, “peace can be defined as (1) the absence of personal violence (direct: assault, riot, terrorism, and war) which can be seen as negative peace and (2) the absence of structural violence (indirect: poverty, hunger, discrimination, and apartheid), which can be seen as positive peace” (Hicks, 1998, p. 6). The positive definition of peace is harmony or tranquility among persons and within communities. Archbishop Thomas Menamparambil of the archdiocese of Guwahati in northeast India, who has written extensively on the subject of peace, writes as follows:

Peace does not mean inaction. It does not mean apathy before public causes. It does not permit uncommitted stances, tolerance of unfairness, complacent ‘do nothing’. Peace really means a radical commitment to all genuinely human causes. However, peace equally means an absolute belief in the ineffectiveness of violence and in the power of non-violent means for social transformation. (Menamparampil, 1997, p. 9)

What the world needs today is a culture of peace, which can be set in place if the world leaders follow the path of non-violent struggle and use the power of love as a means to achieve peace and harmony in the world. Few sensible humans would deny that love is more powerful and permanent compared to the power that comes from fear and punishment. As the Indian scholar and writer Aram (2005) asserts:

What we need today is a culture of peace. A culture of peace is embedded in the Indian culture. It is not only expounded in the philosophical stream of Indian thought but has been effectively put into practice as well. In particular, Mahatma Gandhi led the nation to Independence through a non-violent struggle. According to him, Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than one derived from fear of punishment. . .Strategic non-violent action is an essential element of peace building. Both violence and non-violence are strategies to balance power. Violence usually spirals into a

cycle and creates new victims. But non-violent approaches to conflicts ripen the conditions for transforming relationships and structures while stopping the cycle of violence. (Aram, 2005)

The North-Eastern Students' National Integration Movement (NESNIM)

Faced with the reality of violence in everyday living while working for the betterment of the people of northeast India, and having understood the importance of peace education among youth, the Congregation of Holy Cross in northeast India created NESNIM on September 29, 2001. The underlying belief was that peace and harmony could be achieved by bringing together youth representatives from various ethnic/religious groups in the region that seemed to be hostile to each other, for a live-in educational experience and exposure in an atmosphere of cordiality. The program included classes, workshops, sports activities, cultural activities, and a Peace March. An evaluative study has determined that NESNIM has been effective to a large extent as a peace education program and has helped to break down prejudices between various ethnic/religious groups. Over 2,000 students and 200 teachers went through this program from the year 2001 to 2005 and the program continues to take place every year. This chapter will present some of the significant findings of an evaluative study of NESNIM and propose NESNIM as a possible model of peace education in multiethnic/religious settings.

The Context

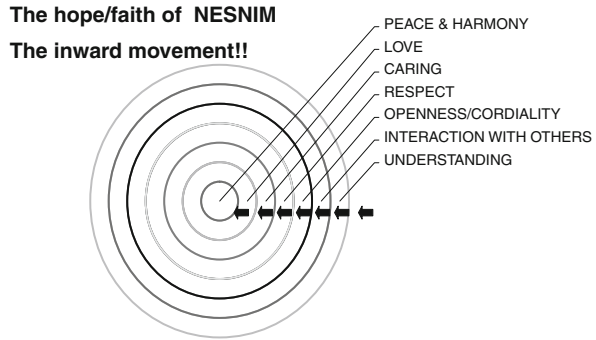
The state of Tripura in northeast India, like many other states in the region, has been experiencing escalating ethnic and communal violence for almost four decades. Many have succumbed to the guns of the terrorists. There is hardly a day when the media does not report violence in its various shapes and forms. It is to be assumed that there are many prejudices among the ethnic groups (tribal and non-tribal) in the region, which seem to perpetuate the region's violent scenario.

The Philosophy

The basic philosophy of the peace education program NESNIM seems to be in consonance with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), which brought out a document on Education in June 2007. In the document, they stated (CBCI, 2007):

Education to peace does not mean merely propagating some pacifist slogans, holding some peace-seminars or courses. It means earnestly working on various forms of *prejudice-reduction*: prejudices against persons of other castes (both higher and lower), tribes, languages, political affiliations, ideologies and theological points of view, regions and religions...education to peace includes teaching youth to deal respectfully with people of other

Fig. 2 The inward movement
(Kallarackal, 2007, p. 14)



convictions, cultures and civilizations, even with those who seem to be opposed to them. It means learning to dialogue with people with whom they have conflicting interests. (CBCI, 2007, p. 4)

The philosophy/faith/hope of the organizers of NESNIM is described in Fig. 2. Genuine peace is the result of an interaction with others in a cordial spirit of openness to others which would lead to greater understanding. This understanding would lead to respect for others and their differences, which would eventually lead to genuine care, love, peace, and harmony.

The Objective

The aim of the peace education program NESNIM was to reduce prejudice and negative impressions by teaching youth to deal respectfully with people of other convictions, cultures, ethnicity, and civilizations; even with those who seem to be opposed to them. The educational approach of NESNIM was grounded in spiritual, ethical and moral values, which has broad implications for life in the postmodern society. It has been anonymously stated that “the greatest truths are the simplest”. The underlying belief of NESNIM was that peace could be achieved by bringing together students from various ethnic groups that seemed to be hostile to each other, for a live-in educational experience and exposure to strangers in an atmosphere of cordiality.

The aim of peace education is a just and peaceful society and world. Educating the hearts and minds of the young people in the way of peace could legitimately lead to a tomorrow with reduced societal violence and hatred. Peace education should seek to sow seeds of peace in young minds. Peace educators should teach FOR peace and not just ABOUT peace.

Violence can be experienced directly or indirectly. When a society legitimizes violent responses to conflict and aggression and teaches their young to respond violently and with hateful prejudices, one could legitimately expect the violent scenario to perpetuate. However, when one responds to violence in a non-violent way, it

seems to break the cycle of violence. Refusal to respond to violence with violence, no matter the extent of consequential sufferings, makes violence impotent and paves the way for reconciliation and healing. There are numerous success stories of non-violent struggles in the world both in the past and in the present. NESNIM sought to educate youth in the ways of nonviolence so that they could respond to violent provocations and prejudicial treatments with the weapons of love and nonviolence.

Although peace is a condition desired by everyone in the world, the experience of peace is infrequent among the billions of human inhabitants on the earth. Isn't it paradoxical that human beings are both constructors and destroyers? Even the most peaceful people may admit to the experience of anger, hatred, jealousy and revenge, even if they may not always admit to acting on those feelings. The capacity of human beings to inflict pain and destruction on one another seems limitless, as has been witnessed throughout the ages of human history.

Because the youth today may be exposed to violence more than ever before, peace education is necessary. Also, since the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow, there is a great need to expose them to the dangers of violence in order to curb their violent instincts and ensure for them a peaceful and harmonious future.

The root of all violence seems to be "the understanding that 'the other' is *different* and distinct – radically separate from me, and is of little or no intrinsic value" (Holy Cross Justice Office, 2007, p. 3). This process of "distancing" oneself from others – forgetting the interconnectedness of all human beings in the society – creates disharmony. Peace is the experience of harmony or tranquility first of all within oneself and among persons and within communities where their interconnectedness is valued and recognized. This would involve *openness* to others and their differences in ethnicity, language, and culture. Such openness could lead to greater *understanding*, *respect*, and *appreciation* for others. This could lead to *caring* for others as friends in a spirit of *love* and *service*.

The Evolution of NESNIM as a Peace Education Program

NESNIM is an annual, 5-day live-in educational experience for youth/students in northeast India. Even though initiated by the Congregation of Holy Cross, other nongovernmental groups/agencies and more than 15 educational institutions have also joined the program. Figure 3 illustrates the process of evolution of NESNIM.

NESNIM attempted to foster respect and love for one another and one's cultures among the students of selected schools in northeast India. NESNIM could be described as an inter-cultural/religious integration program, which is an inter-school activity, organized by the Holy Cross Educational Foundation (HCEF) in collaboration with the Association for Social and Human Advancement (ASHA). This annual event intended to create awareness among the students and the public of the need for peace and harmony in the northeast.

NESNIM participants belonged to various ethnic/religious groups that were often hostile to one another. This program seemed to have made strong ripples of peace in

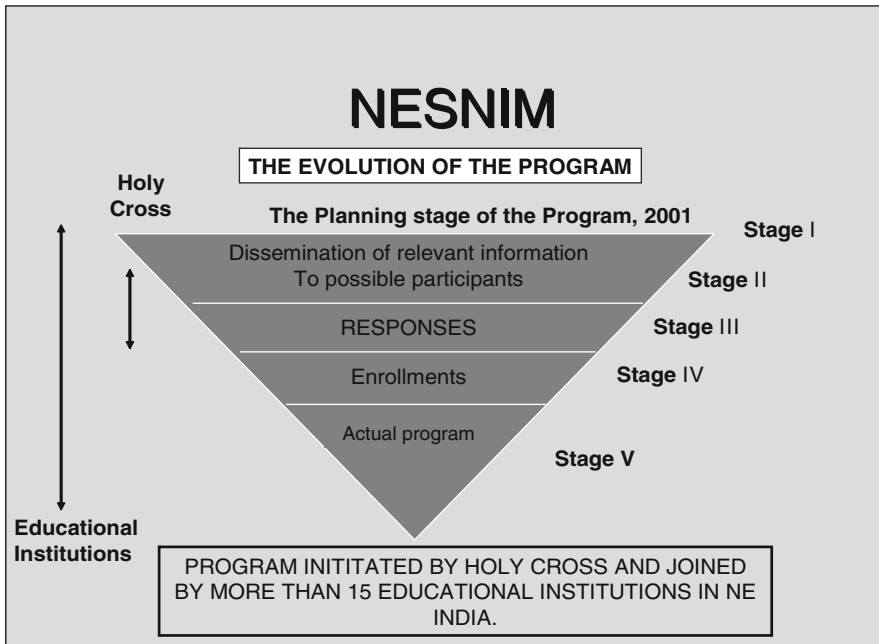
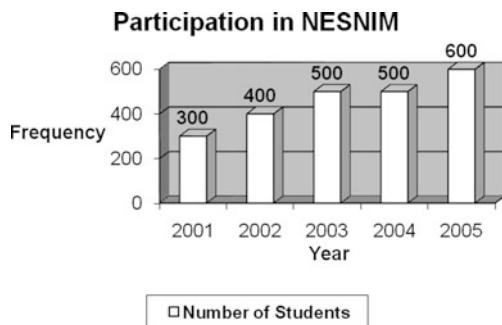


Fig. 3 Evolution of NESNIM (Kallarackal, 2007, p. 10)

Fig. 4 NESNIM participants' frequency (Kallarackal, 2007, p. 12)



the region as observed by some individuals who work in that region. The following chart illustrates the growth in student participation in NESNIM from 2001 to 2005. The numbers are rounded up for easy computing.

NESNIM created opportunities for young people from different ethnic groups to come together, live together under the same roof, play together, eat together, work together, learn together, and entertain together. Watching one another and experiencing the richness of the cultural diversities of various ethnic groups from close

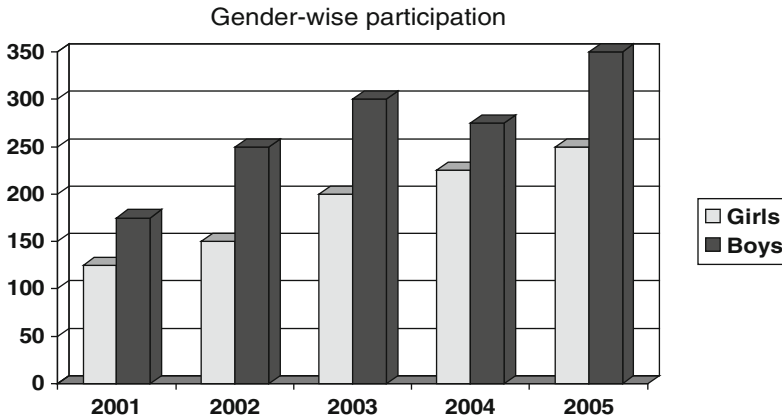


Fig. 5 Gender-wise participation in NESNIM (Kallarackal, 2007, p. 13)

quarters probably helped participants shed their prejudices against one another and better appreciate one another’s culture and ethnicity.

The program was coeducational, but it should be noted that there were more boys than girls, as illustrated in Fig. 5.

NESNIM: An Evaluation

The author conducted an evaluative study of this peace education program. A qualitative research method was used through in-depth personal interviews of 30 purposefully selected students and one resource person who had participated in NESNIM. The interviews were video recorded and transcribed. Two focus group discussions were also held, one among the teachers and the other among the students. There were six teachers who had participated in NESNIM and there were six students who were chosen from the 30 in-depth interview participants. They were chosen since they were “information rich” cases using the strategy of *maximum variation sampling* (Merriam, 2002, pp. 62–63).

There were 18 females and 13 males in the interview sample and they were from 6 selected schools in northeast India. For the sake of anonymity, the names of the schools are withheld and numbers are used instead.

The sample size and spread are shown in Table 1.

The students who participated in the in-depth interviews were studying in grades IX through XII. This is described in Fig. 6.

The participants belonged to various ethnic and tribal groups like Debbarma, Reang, Jamatia, Darlong, Halam, Tripura, and Bengali. This is represented in the following Fig. 7.

Table 1 Sample size and spread (Kallarackal, 2007, p. 28)

Centers	Males	Females	Total
School 1	04	04	08
School 2	03	03	06
School 3	02	03	05
School 4	00	02	02
School 5	02	03	05
School 6	02	03	05
Total	13	18	31

Fig. 6 Grade-wise participation in NESNIM (Kallarackal, 2007, p. 28)

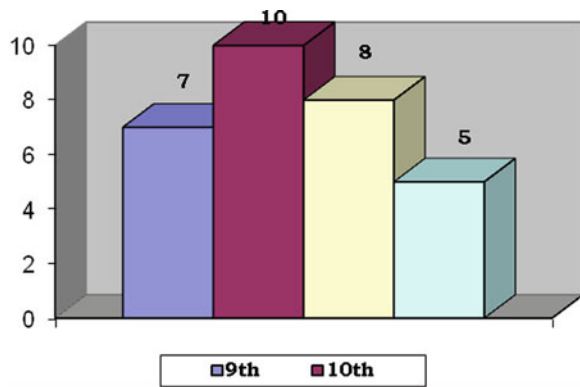
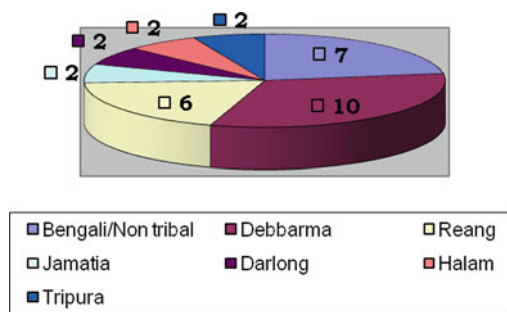


Fig. 7 Ethnicity of evaluation participants by frequency (Kallarackal, 2007, p. 29)



Evaluation Through Depth Interviews

The open-ended in-depth interviews that were used in the research provided the participants with a framework in which to discuss their thoughts, perceptions, and experiences. Patton describes a number of sampling strategies that serve purposes (*purposeful sampling*) other than representativeness or randomness. Basic to all these is the importance of selecting *information-rich* cases from which one can learn much about issues that are important to one’s study. According to Patton (2002),

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term *purposeful sampling*. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations. (Patton, 2002, p. 230)

The Framework of Data Presentation

The data from the interviews and focus group discussions were organized under the following five headings. The “cause–effect” framework was used in ordering these sections.

1. Causes of Violence in the Region.
2. NESNIM as Regarded by the Youth of Tripura in northeast India.
3. Influence of NESNIM Participants on the Peace Process in the region.
4. Influence of NESNIM Participants on Other Youth in the region.
5. Influence of NESNIM in Shedding Negative Prejudices.

Each framework of the study conveys one aspect of the experiences of the participant. As an integrated whole, the frameworks enabled the author to develop a comprehensive understanding of the impact of NESNIM in bringing about peace in the region. The presentation and discussion of the results and analysis protected the anonymity of the interviewees by using disguised names, inclusive language, and participant numbers.

The Major Components of Peace Education

The major components of peace education as emerged from the study are the following: (a) *Moral education*, which would mean overcoming prejudices and selfishness and developing an attitude of respect for others different in ethnicity, religion, and culture. (b) *Spiritual formation* or spiritual enhancement, as one develops a sense of acceptance and tolerance and strives for harmony in one’s surroundings. (c) *Community formation*, as one feels belongingness to a larger community of human beings, equal in status in the eyes of God and the secular laws of the society. (d) *Communication skills*, as barriers would break down with genuine communication, and relationships would begin to grow and develop. (e) *Commitment to justice*, as there cannot be true peace without justice; since justice and peace are two sides of the same coin. Wherever there is injustice, there is unrest and disruption of peace. (f) *Commitment to economic development*, as there cannot be lasting peace without eradication of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and unemployment.

Presentation of Research Data

A number of ideas emerged from the study that highlights the impact of the peace education program NESNIM on the youth participants of northeast India. These are as follows.

Causes of Violence

The first major framework dealt with the causes of violence in the multiethnic settings of northeast India. Deprivation of political and economic power; manipulation by political parties; deprivation of land; intrusion from neighboring countries; unfair treatment by the government; inferiority complex among the tribal groups; ill-treatment of the minority group by the majority group; the double standard of the government; selfishness and blindness of the majority group to the needs of the minority groups, hurt, rejection, and feelings of insecurity; wrong representations by the media; misunderstanding between the people and the government; illiteracy and lack of educational facilities; wrong policies of the government; unemployment; poverty; revengeful attitude; the experience of power of the gun by youth; injustice done to minority groups; prejudices and misunderstandings between the various ethnic groups as well as the historical–political situation of discrimination by the majority population in the area were seen as major causes of violence in the region.

The following are some sample responses from the interviews. According to one participant,

Political parties make use of the youth. What I hear is that each of the political parties has got its own wings of the militants. In the villages they are killing and eliminating their own men not knowing that they are mere puppets in the hands of one political party or the other. They are destroying their own intellectuals and leaders. (Interview #31)

Considering intrusion as one of the causes of violence, one participant responded as follows:

What I feel is that if someone enters your house, and has gone into your bedroom and is lying there without your permission, you start hating it. That same thing has happened with all the other people coming into the northeast. The original inhabitants are very good people. They realized that somebody has taken away their homes and things. That might be one of the reasons for the unrest. They feel unsafe and insecure in their own home, and they react to intrusion. (Focus group discussion, #32, P#06)

Explaining that the tribal villagers are unjustly deprived of the facilities, one participant commented as follows:

For health care and education. . .all buildings are there. But there are no doctors and no teachers. The roads are there, but no buses. No one wants to go to a tribal area. The tribal people are unjustly deprived of the facilities. (Focus Group discussion, #32: P#03)

Yet another participant was of the opinion that it is illiteracy or lack of education that is the cause of misunderstandings and violence:

Lack of education is one of the reasons of such misunderstandings. If they think that the government is not helping them, they can take the government out of power through elections. But they don't. Why do they vote for the government if they think that the government is not helping them? So, education is lacking among the villagers. (Focus Group discussion, #33: P#01)

NESNIM as a Peace Education Program

The second major framework was concerned about the peace education program itself. Many of the participants of NESNIM had come with much excitement and positive expectations. They wanted to have some fun, to learn about peace, to make new friends from other schools and states, to broaden horizons, and to build cordiality among them. Many of those expectations were fulfilled by NESNIM, as related by the participants.

There had been some who had some anxieties and fears about the program and its participants, the type of people the participant would mix with, whether he/she would be accepted by others, and whether he/she would be able to like them and make them friends. They too seem to have had positive experiences and through interactions and the experience of cordial atmosphere they found their fears and anxieties diminish.

Many participants came to NESNIM not because they were interested, but because of the influence of friends or teachers. Some came for the sake of having some fun and an easy time away from their parents, but they too were surprised that they learned much from NESNIM. There were also some who came with the real motivation to learn how to be a peacemaker. Some others found it more beneficial when they attended the program a second time.

The positive experiences that were felt were those of cordiality and friendliness, the encouraging attitude of the participants, the helping and sharing attitude of those who were once total strangers from other ethnic groups and schools, the experiences of the group discussions and the peace march, the realization that all are human with the same concerns and same fears, and the awareness that all are brothers and sisters even though they belong to different ethnic groups.

The lessons learned from NESNIM were many. Some said they learned about peace and peacemaking; friendship among different cultures; the awareness that without an attitude of love there cannot be peace; the value of being together; the need to understand, appreciate, and communicate with others; the need to respect others and to cooperate with others; and the value of unity. Some others learned the art of sharing, which is essential to building friendships. One of the participants came to an important realization in his/her life that everyone is equal as they are human regardless of color, race, language, or religion.

In the opinion of one of the resource persons, NESNIM originated out of a felt need to do something for peace in a violent scenario prevalent in the region. He/she said,

NESNIM started with the deep awareness of the need for peace, because when the peace education program started, the region was very much disturbed with a lot of violence. . . and events of various types. . . even losing the life of a young Holy Cross Priest, and blinding another dynamic young priest of his left eye as bullet splinters damaged his eye, in a violent shoot out. It had an influence on all of us. All of us felt that something has to be done. (Interview #31)

One of the participants shared his/her positive experience as follows:

When we had the Peace Rally, we went in groups. There was a time when one of my non-tribal friends, who belongs to my ethnic group, fainted. I was a bit far and I could not go there as I could not break the line. There were students of my school who didn't help but there were tribal students who came forward and helped. Those students were human and humane! I was very impressed with that. (Interview #01)

Narrating the experience at NESNIM which has made him/her more open-minded to accept others from different cultures and ethnicity, participant #14 said the following:

We used to have group discussions where we used to discuss about peace. It was a great experience. I learnt to love other cultures and to think about peace. Understanding others is important. I was a little shy. . . but I realized that they were a little shy too. I used to think that the people from other states would be very different. But now, I know all are similar. We are brothers and sisters. I have opened up more to people now. (Interview #14)

Participant #17 seems to have experienced change in him/her because of NESNIM. He/she explained this experience as follows:

According to me, if we want to bring about peace, first and foremost we should love one another. Because I believe without that we cannot bring about peace. Though situations in the region have not changed. . . because of NESNIM, we ourselves are changed. If every one can change even a little, then there will be a greater possibility of change. . . . I need to play my part in order to have peace. (Interview #17)

Speaking about the experience at NESNIM and how it broadened his/her outlook, one participant expressed:

Closer contact with people can change your impressions about them. Everyone has friends, everyone has fears. Everyone is the same regardless of color, race, language or religion. Everyone is human. I did not learn this from my family. I only learnt it from NESNIM. (Interview #09)

Influence of NESNIM on Northeast India

The third major framework was concerned about the influence of NESNIM participants on the peace process in the region. The opinions varied regarding the influence of NESNIM from much to no influence at all. Some participants expressed the opinion that they have experienced less tension and more cordiality in Tripura (one of the states in northeast India) after the launching of the peace education program. This could be considered an effect of NESNIM to a small extent. Another opinion

was that NESNIM had helped positively in building up cordiality among students of various ethnic groups, which was not the case before the launching of NESNIM.

Some participants noticed an enhanced sense of community, tolerance, and harmony in the region since those were the values taught in NESNIM. Many of the participants of NESNIM had made commitments to be peacemakers which could enhance the process of peace in the region. In the opinion of many participants, the Peace March (Rally), which was an integral part of NESNIM, also helped to impart effectively the message of peace and unity to the public, thus enhancing the peace process.

Some sharing by the participants summed up NESNIM in a few words. The following is a good example:

NESNIM had been an interactive process. This process helped us in making friends. Also, I understood that there is more than one way to bring about peace. What he thinks of peace is not what I think of peace. We had different opinions and we were fighting on those opinions all connected with peace, but at the end we understood what it means to be a peace-maker. (Focus group discussion #33: P#01)

Some other participants also had come to the conviction that peace is their business as much as it is someone else's business. Establishing peace may be an overwhelming task, but the participant seems to be convinced that "it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness". So it was with one, who said:

I plan to be a peace maker by talking about peace and by interacting with others with the focus of peace. This can help me to be a peace maker. In other words, by thinking that peace is not somebody else's business, but it's my own business. After attending NESNIM, I have come to an understanding that even though achieving peace is a huge task, it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness? (Interview #24)

Influence of NESNIM on Youth in the Region

The fourth major framework was dealing with the influence of NESNIM on youth in the region. Those who participated in the peace education program NESNIM clearly describe changes in themselves at the end of the experience. Some were influenced much and some were influenced less, but all of them were influenced positively to a certain degree.

Many participants developed convictions about peace and committed to become peacemakers in their surroundings, school, state, and region. For some of them it had become a real need to become peacemakers while others considered it as a duty. Some wanted to organize peace clubs in their schools and villages, and some female participants wanted to organize women in their villages to be a peace force in their villages.

Some students came to realize that they should be slow in judging others as they do not know them. Since these are young people and future citizens, this should have some effect on the future of the region, especially in the northeastern states of Tripura, Mizoram, and Meghalaya, from which these youth hailed.

Many came to the realization that peace occurs with respect for others. They also realized that peace has to begin with oneself and peace is desired by all, regardless of whether they are engaged in violent activities or not. This realization is certainly a good starting point and a common ground to begin the process of negotiation. According to some others, violence is never a solution for problems, as it only breeds more violence. Only peaceful solutions have long-lasting effects.

Everyone seems to desire peace. Some of the participants affirm that in the heart of even the hardcore terrorists who are violent and sadistic, and who take the lives of others, there is a deep desire for peace. For example, one opined,

My conviction is that even the most violent people want to be in peace with others. . . at least some body. Through out their lives they cannot go on thinking only of violence. They realize at certain times the helplessness of any other means and violent means seems to give quick results, though not lasting results. But because of these terrorist groups, the exploiting groups have some fear, and restrain themselves a bit. . . as they are too dangerous. (Interview #31)

After NESNIM, some participants made the resolutions to be peacemakers in their school. Even if others think this is a poking of nose in the business of others, this participant thinks he/she has an inner call to be a peacemaker, and suggests the following:

I have made some resolutions to be an agent of peace and a peace maker. Even in my class, when there are small conflicts, I go for it! Some say that I should not be poking my nose where I don't need to. But when I think I need to, I do! I look at it as an initiative for peace. (Interview #01)

Participant #29 wanted to take the initiative to bring about peace by being an example by practicing self-control and showing that he/she loved peace:

After my participation in NESNIM, I want to be a peace-maker. I will take some initiative...to bring about peace. First of all I will try to be an example. I will control myself if some one is fighting with me and I will show that I love peace. Others may be able to see that. I will also share the education I had about peace, with others. (Interview #29)

NESNIM seems to have well equipped another participant to be a peace builder and make him/her confident to play his/her role in the society as a peacemaker. The participant concluded the following:

After my NESNIM experience, I think I could be an instrument of peace by really helping people. I cannot do big things but I can do small actions. If I go to villages, I can share my experience and educate them. I could say that NESNIM has equipped me well to be a peace-builder so that I am feeling more and more confident to play my role in the society as a peace-maker. This conviction is very strong in me. (Interview #21)

There was a great awareness in another participant that to be a peacemaker, one has to be humble and be a servant to all. He/she also realized that people may be different but they are all human. He/she expressed this awareness accordingly:

The important lessons I learned from the program were the awareness that in order to be a peace maker, we have to be a servant to all. People are different but they are all human. I want to be a peace-maker and I want to practice some of the things I have learned at NESNIM. (Interview #22)

Influence of NESNIM in Shedding Negative Prejudices

The fifth major framework looked at the influence of NESNIM in shedding negative prejudices. Even though dealing with prejudices is not easy as it is an emotionally sensitive area, many of the participants were open to the question. As per the testimony of the participants, many of them came with negative ideas, fears, and bitter feelings about youth belonging to ethnic groups other than theirs and they were able to leave them behind as they returned to their respective schools, villages, and states at the end of the 5-day peace education program. Most of the participants of the interview also testified to the fact that they had made many new friends from students and peers of ethnic groups and schools other than their own.

Some thought that NESNIM could be considered a good starting point for breaking prejudices but not more than that as prejudices are very deep seated. There were some participants who were able to change their impressions of others after the experience of NESNIM. For example, one said,

Before the NESNIM experience, I would not talk to students from other schools, thinking they are bad and all. But in NESNIM, I talked to others and found out they were more friendly. I was able to change some impressions through NESNIM. (Interview #27)

Children hear a lot of prejudicial statements from their elders in the school, village, or home and this contributes to building up hatred toward others and divisions among themselves. One participant confessed to this experience as follows:

Some times they tell us, in the school, home or in the village, things that are negative. They are dividing us, all the things they tell make me feel that they are jealous of us, some partiality can be seen. They are partial to their own tribes. I feel that this is not good. Some are good who have come from other parts of northeast. They behaved properly with us. Slowly, we come to know and appreciate each other. (Interview #22)

Participant #07 had heard different things about other people but the experience taught him/her that the reality is different, as indicated below:

Before I came to NESNIM, I thought that the students from other schools and states will not even talk to me. But my experience was different. I had heard people say that people from the town are better. Someone told me they are proud. But when I came here, I found them to be friendly with me. (Interview #07)

It is apparent that participant #04 had come to a reverse understanding after the experience at NESNIM. He/she used to think that the students coming from rural areas were not very smart as they did not have good education and described how his/her feelings changed:

Earlier, I used to think that people from rural areas did not have good education. But I realized that they asked lots of questions and interacted with teachers. Maybe they were better than us. This happened through interaction. We got to know about each others' opinion about life. When we grow up together, we could banish the differences. (Interview #04)

Participant #11 also confessed to having prejudices and gave testimony to how it got changed due to the experience at NESNIM. He/she was able to treat others as family as he/she understood all are human with same basic needs, anxieties, and

talents. Speaking about the positive experiences at NESNIM, this participant stated as follows:

First was the interaction with the people from other states. I could make many friends. I experienced a lot of prejudice as I was growing up. But after the NESNIM experience of staying together and interacting with others, I don't think it makes an impact on my life. It becomes clear to me that everyone is equal. I realize they are just like my family members. They have the same anxieties, same talents and needs. They are also human. (Interview #11)

Participant #01 was very philosophical when he/she realized that it is nature that has made differences in human beings. He/she called upon the others to celebrate the differences. In his/her opinion, NESNIM was a celebration of the differences:

It is through nature that we have been made different. So, instead of fighting over our differences, we need to celebrate the difference. That is so important. I feel that is what NESNIM is doing. (Focus group discussion, #33: P#01)

According to participant #14, generalizations can be wrong and misleading. NESNIM seems to have opened his/her mind to look at reality as it is than to go by preconceived ideas about others and the reality around him/her. He/she said,

Till now, I have heard many things. I used to think what the people around me and my family tells me is true. But as I grow, I meet people and I understand that it is not like that. I heard that some of the tribes are very jealous. But all of them are not like that. Such generalizations are misleading. NESNIM helped me to realize that people from other states are not much different. (Interview #14)

Participant #06 had the realization that there were no basic differences between students belonging to different ethnic groups. When there is greater understanding, friendship will grow according to him/her. This was described as follows:

I thought the people of other groups would be very different from me, but I discovered they were the same. I always thought they would be better than me. I thought that the students from the town would be better dressed and they would be smarter. But I found that there was no difference among us. I think that we can be friends if we understand each other. (Interview #06)

According to participant #30, NESNIM made him/her realize that there is goodness in others and that whatever he/she had heard earlier about people was not true. This was described as follows:

When I came to know others a little more, through NESNIM, I came to realize that whatever I have heard about others is not true. NESNIM made me realize that there is goodness in others, that they are like me and they too desire friendship, and they too desire peace. (Interview #30)

Most of the participants had a lot of good things to say about NESNIM and some of them were so convinced of the need for peace in the region that they were willing to be instruments of peace, ready to take the risk to be peacemakers, and joining with other like-minded peacemakers. Many also related that peace has to begin with them and they considered themselves fortunate to be part of NESNIM.

All these testify to the fact that the peace education program NESNIM seemed to create an atmosphere of goodwill and fraternity, which could help pave the way for harmonious living and peace in the violence-torn region of northeast India.

In the world of today, one experiences conflict between the spirit of love and the forces of destruction on an everyday basis. Nations are in conflict for ideological, economic, military, and religious reasons. Societies are in conflict for supremacy, control, and material gains. Individuals are in conflict for emotional, psychological, and egoistic gains. Humans hate each other because of fear and distrust. It appears that love and respect for life have disappeared from many lives.

In the light of these thoughts, the study revealed the participants' views of the causes of bitterness, hatred, and violence in the region of northeast India. According to the opinions expressed in the study, the causes for violence are many, but the most basic and underlying causes may be human selfishness and greed. Even though the above-mentioned elements are presented as the causes of bitterness, anger, hatred, and violence in the multiethnic and multi-religious region of northeast India, these could have universal applicability, since basic human nature seems to be the same anywhere in the world.

The Effectiveness of NESNIM as a Peace Education Program

Even though NESNIM cannot be considered as a panacea for the violent scenario of northeast India or any where else in the world, nevertheless, it appears to be effective in its own way as a peace education program. All the participants who were interviewed had many positive experiences to share after their experience of NESNIM.

According to Betty Reardon, Director of Peace Education, Columbia University, "Education is that process by which we learn new ways of thinking and behaving, a very significant component of the transition–transformation processes. Education is that process by which we glimpse what might be and what we ourselves can become" (Reardon, 1999, p. 202). The participants of NESNIM seemed to have picked up many positive values which have motivated them to be peacemakers in their surroundings. It seems to me that there has been a transition–transformation process in them as they learned new ways of thinking and behaving and pondered over what they were and what they could become.

Many had arrived with prejudices against others, but the experience of living together in close proximity and communicating with others brought a greater understanding between them. Some learned that all are human with the same needs, fears, and capabilities; hence all should be respected and loved as brothers and sisters. Looking at the influence of NESNIM on the youth who had the privilege of that experience, NESNIM could be considered as an effective program of peace education.

From the sharing of the participants in the interviews, it was also clear that after the launching of the peace education program, the region was less tense and more

cordial. It is possible that this is more than a mere coincidence. The message of peace was communicated through the Peace March and through the participants of NESNIM who became peace agents as they returned to their respective areas.

NESNIM as a Model of Peace Education

In the postmodern world, children are so exposed to violence that they have become more accepting of violence in their lives. Children have been identified by their race, ethnicity, tribe, or religion. Such situations are reported from around the globe like Rwanda, Iraq, Palestine, Israel, Afghanistan, and many other countries in the world.

If NESNIM had been able to break the cycle of violence, and create a taste for peace, and nonviolence (even for a short while and in small measures), it can be considered to be effective as per the testimony of the participants. It is possible that NESNIM could be taken as a model of peace education in Palestine, Israel, Kenya, and Rwanda; clearly it could have as much relevance in Africa and in the Middle East as it has relevance in northeast India.

Peace education, as presented in this paper, is deeply rooted in the context of the diversity of human beings with unique cultures, languages, ethnicity, faith, and outlooks on life. Peace education takes place when individuals with varied backgrounds, ethnicity, and culture interact with one another in a genuine spirit of openness, respect, love, and understanding.

Communication is the key to peace education. Where there is genuine communication, barriers break down and relationships begin to develop and grow. NESNIM brought strangers together and had them part as friends. Friendship between groups that are prejudicial and inimical could be considered as an achievement of NESNIM. Thus, the findings of this research may be helpful in providing a framework for peace educators and peacemakers all around the world.

Conclusion

NESNIM seems to have been effective to some extent in promoting communication, cordiality, harmony, and peace in the region of northeast India, judging from the personal experiences of the participants of the study. All the participants were unanimous about continuing NESNIM, as, in their opinion, it has been effective in promoting peace in the region.

It can be stressed that education for peace through activity-oriented programs can be very effective among the youth. It has been the experience of the participants that lasting effects in the society can be brought about only through non-violent and peaceful means.

It is an undisputed fact that prejudices, revengeful attitudes, and bitter feelings lead to violence. Hence, a peace educator should find ways and means to at least minimize them, if not get rid of them completely among the fighting parties.

In the opinion of many participants, NESNIM can also be considered as a good starting point for educating the young in the ways of peace, but there should be effective follow-up in the local, grassroot units and inclusion of peace education in the school curriculum for it to be truly effective as a peace education program. It appears that NESNIM has had its impact in the region as a peace education program as there are at least some convinced young men and women who are determined to be peacemakers. As was stated by one of the participants of the in-depth interview, “Any effort towards peace, however humble it may be, deserves much appreciation” (Interview # 31). NESNIM may be a very humble effort like a drop in the ocean toward establishing peace in the troubled region of northeast India, but it stands out as a “candle in the darkness” and the effort is truly worthy of praise.

Since similar situations of unrest, prejudice, violence, and hatred prevail in other parts of the globe, NESNIM could be taken as a model of peace education. The cordiality and harmony that seemed to have been promoted through NESNIM speak for itself. NESNIM as an activity-oriented, youth-oriented, and community-oriented education program may be seen as an effective and strategic instrument in promoting and instilling long-lasting peace in the hearts and minds of the youth in any part of the globe.

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Interreligious Education and Dialogue in Japan

Dorothea M. Filus

Current State of Religious and Interreligious Education in Japan

Public Schools

Because of the separation of state and religion, as proclaimed in Article 20 of the 1947 Constitution of Japan, religious education is not allowed in Japanese public schools. A heated debate has continued for the last few years on the revision of the Constitution. However, at this stage it is doubtful that Article 20 will be revised. While the conservative politicians advocate moral/religious education modelled on the pre-war moral education (*shushin*, which stressed Confucian values of loyalty, filial piety, subservience to authority, the cult of the emperor and nationalism), the public is suspicious of a hidden agenda behind the proposal to teach religion at school. Some critics argue that it will only serve the interests of the politicians to manipulate the religious sentiments and the social disappointments of the Japanese people. Parents in general oppose religious education and are cautious even about some aspects of the current moral education, allowed at public schools since 1958.

The current public school curriculum offers a fair amount of knowledge on the history of religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and even Jainism, especially in the liberal arts programme that secondary schools offer. However, as teachers do not possess the necessary knowledge adequate to cover material on various religions, they often skip such lessons and use them for other activities or as preparation time for various exams. In the event that the classes on the history of religions are performed, they offer only factual knowledge and do not aim at inculcation of traditional moral and religious values, which is a fact bemoaned by the conservative politicians.

D.M. Filus (✉)
Monash University, Australia; Seijo University, Tokyo, Japan
e-mail: Dorothea.Filus@arts.monash.edu.au

Private Schools

The Japanese Constitution stipulates a separation of state and religion and, consequently, forbids religious education in public schools but it allows religion to be taught in private schools due to the proclamation of religious freedom in Article 20. Private religious schools are allowed to conduct religious education, but they usually refrain from doing so. There is enormous pressure on such schools to prepare their students for entrance exams to institutions of higher education. Students and their parents choose a school based on its academic ranking with little or no interest in the religious teachings of the organization that runs the school. As religious education is not an examination subject, neither students nor parents have much interest in classes in religion (Filus, 2006, p. 1041).

Some private religious schools actually conduct religious education but, in such cases, they conduct classes exclusively in relation to their own religion. Thus, for example, Christian private schools usually teach courses on the Bible and Buddhist schools teach courses on the life and teachings of Buddha Sakyamuni and on the founder of their own sect, for example Shinran, the founder of Jodo Shin (True Pure Land) Sect, or Nichiren, the founder of Nichiren Sect of Buddhism. Consequently, there is no interreligious education in private religious schools in Japan.

The most comprehensive interreligious education that I have encountered in Japan is not offered by a Japanese school but by a foreign school, namely the British School in Tokyo. The school follows the British curriculum and offers religious education based on three volumes of a textbook titled “Skills in Religious Studies” by J. Fageant and S.C. Mercier. This school, which provides education for international and Japanese students, is an interesting example of a global community.

Revision of the Fundamental Law of Education and Religious Culture in Education

While the debate over the revision of the Japanese Constitution is ongoing, the government, under the leadership of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party, pushed for the revision of the Fundamental Law of Education. The new Fundamental Law of Education was eventually promulgated on December 22, 2006, after 190 hours of Diet deliberations (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2006, Establishment of the Revised Basic Act on Education). A new phrase, which reads as follows: “General education on religion should be pursued” (my translation, in Japanese it reads as follows: *Shukyo ni kansuru ippantekina kyoyo*), was incorporated into Article 15 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d., p. 8).

Thus this opens the door to the possibility of teaching some aspects of religion in public schools. However, as for designing a new curriculum based on the revised Law, it will take a few years and at this stage it is not clear in what form religion will be taught. Taking into account the stipulation of the separation of state and religion, it is doubtful that a new subject “religious education” will be added to

the current curriculum. Rather, the present proposal suggests teaching “religious culture” (*shukyo bunka*) within currently taught subjects, such as history, geography, English, art, music, science and so on. The major obstacle in the implementation of a religious culture education is the teachers’ lack of knowledge and skills. Thus, the most urgent need is creation of courses at tertiary institutions to train instructors.

Recently the Japanese Ministry of Education, in accord with the revised Fundamental Law of Education, offered a generous grant over a period of three years to the Japanese Association for Religious Studies and the Japanese Association for the Study of Religion and Society in order to institute a tertiary system enabling teachers to obtain the qualifications necessary to teach religious culture within the current system. There are some 30 universities affiliated with both associations, which participate in this task under the leadership of Kokugakuin University of Shinto affiliation and Taisho University of Buddhist affiliation (numerous personal communications with Professor Nobutaka Inoue of Kokugakuin University, the leading proponent of “religious culture education”).¹

The content of the courses on religious culture remains an issue. The general idea is to teach students the importance of religion through its influence on culture and society. The courses will not be much concerned with doctrines of a particular religion, but rather with its social aspects, such as cultural differences in religiosity, knowledge of religious festivals, customs and observances, such as abstinence from certain foods and activities, ethical codes of behaviour, and so on. Such knowledge will hopefully lead to a better understanding of people of different religions. It can contribute to the appreciation of the religious beliefs and sentiments of others and to the development of empathy, which is an important task in the era of globalization (cf. Inoue, 2002, pp. 15–16; Inoue, 2004, pp. 7, 13–15).

It is hoped that courses on religious culture will lead to smooth international cooperation and intercultural exchange. Knowledge of codes of behaviour, etiquette and dietary restrictions, as influenced by religious beliefs, is important especially when doing business in countries where they play an important role, mainly in countries where Islam and Hinduism have a large following. Muslims and Hindus constitute one-third of the world’s population; so knowing their religious beliefs is crucial for appropriate marketing. Executives who have appropriate knowledge of their business partners’ customs, etiquette and manners are much more successful in business dealings. Such knowledge allows companies to avoid embarrassment, such as that of the Japanese company, Ajinomoto, a company that manufactures flavour-enhancing products. Ajinomoto marketed its pork-based monosodium glutamate (MSG) in Indonesia, the predominantly Muslim country, in 2001. This enterprise proved a total fiasco. Consequently, 3000 tons of the flavour enhancer had to be retracted (Deming, 2005, p. 8).

Knowledge of religious culture will also be useful in everyday dealings among members of multicultural societies. In order to live peacefully in global society, it is important not to cause friction by disrespecting other people’s beliefs or customs.

¹I am a member of Kokugakuin University research group led by Professor Nobutaka Inoue.

However, knowledge of customs will not explain the motivation behind action, for example, the September 11 attack, Bosnian–Serbian or Israeli–Palestinian conflict and other interreligious incidents of violence and wars. Therefore the study of customs and behaviour without adequate knowledge of teachings and rhetoric, which motivate that behaviour, does not lead to resolution of conflict caused by different religious values and does not offer guidance regarding reconciliation.

Interreligious Dialogue: A Substitute for Interreligious Education

Introduction

As discussed above, there is no interreligious education in Japanese schools. However, in contemporary Japan, interreligious dialogue and cooperation display a high level of ecumenism. Dialogue, understood literally as discussion, has been promoted predominantly by Christianity, which has been preoccupied with debating doctrines and other theoretical issues. Japanese religions, on the other hand, tend to emphasize interreligious cooperation, as expressed in the anti-nuclear, disarmament and peace movement, human rights movement and charity. In general, it is at the level of leadership that the dialogue, cooperation, social and political engagement are conducted. Ordinary members become educated in interreligious issues through reading books written by their leaders, through attending lectures, participating in conferences and through the engagement in social and charity activities organized by their religions.

Let us first examine the long history of the interreligious dialogue in Japan, which, before achieving its peaceful state of religious coexistence in contemporary Japan, had rather violent record, from which some valuable lessons can be learnt and be useful for the interreligious dialogue in the twenty-first century.

History of the Interreligious Dialogue in Japan

When did interreligious dialogue begin in Japan? Most scholars mention the 1960s as the beginnings of dialogue. The question corresponds to a similar one, namely, when did globalization start? The term “globalization” apparently first appeared in 1981. However, whenever a religion migrated to a different country, it brought with it foreign culture, and thus religion acted as a means of globalization of culture. Therefore, if we understand globalization as diffusion of culture, including religion, then it had started thousands of years ago. In this sense, it may be argued that interreligious dialogue in Japan has begun with the arrival of Buddhism and Confucianism in Japan in the sixth century from China via Korea.

Minegishi (2008, pp. 18–20) argues that in order to proselytize, one needs to understand the potential convert and, thus, proselytization always starts with dialogue. In the sixth century, dialogue first took a violent form between the proponents

of Buddhism (Soga family) and the protectors of the indigenous faith, Shinto (Mononobe and Nakatomi families). As the victorious ruling faction supported Buddhism, it soon became the state religion. Both Buddhism and Confucianism were used for political reasons to unify Japan under the leadership of the emperor. They also aided in promoting cultural advancement of the Japanese nation (Tamaru, 1996, p. 49). Apparently, articles one and ten of the Seventeen-Article Constitution of Japan, promulgated in 604, postulate dialogue and harmony (Kitagawa, 2006; Aston, 1998, Vol. 2, pp. 128–133).

For the first few centuries, Buddhism remained the religion of the nobility. Its popularization began in the late twelfth century. The new socio-political environment of the Kamakura period (1185–1333) created by the rise to power of the samurai (military) class contributed to the emergence of the Pure Land (Jodo), Zen and Nichiren sects. The Pure Land sects are further divided into the original Jodo and its offspring, Jodo Shin (True Pure Land) Sect. The Zen sects are divided into Rinzai and Soto. These Kamakura sects all had their roots in Tendai Buddhism; their founders were all monks of Tendai sect, founded in 805. In order to establish themselves and to prove the superiority of their teachings, the leaders of these religious movements became involved in polemics with monks of Tendai and other religions. This was a form of interreligious dialogue, which however did not lead to reconciliation but to eventual schism from the parent religion, Tendai, and development of independent teachings, rituals and gaining followers who secured financial support.

The doctrine of Tendai is a synthesis of teachings of various Buddhist schools. However, the new sects of the Kamakura period were created through the founders' emphasis on one aspect of Tendai, such as the Jodo sect's emphasis on faith in Amida Buddha, the Nichiren sect's emphasis on the Lotus Sutra and the Zen sect's stress on meditation. The founders of this new tradition emphasized exclusive practices in the pursuit of enlightenment and salvation. In this sense, the leaders of these new religious movements broke the golden rule in Japan, i.e. religious pluralism, for which they were persecuted. The founders were banished from Kyoto, the capital, their disciples were persecuted and some were even executed, their temples were burnt and this state of affairs continued for a few centuries until the end of the sixteenth century. When Christianity arrived in Japan in the mid-sixteenth century during the so-called Country in War Period (*Sengoku Jidai*), it took advantage of the civil wars and fighting of the military leaders against religious uprisings.

Davis (1992, p. 33) argues that while in the European tradition harmony in the community was achieved through the emphasis on monopraxis (single religious practice) and monotheism, in Japan it was achieved through syncretism and polytheism. Thus, in Europe "it was heresy (or pluralism, as it is called today) which seemed to threaten the unity of Christendom, in Japan, it was monopraxis. . .that posed the greatest spiritual menace to the traditional integration of society" (Davis, 1992, p. 33). Consequently, in Europe it was pluralism that was suppressed throughout European history, and in Japan, it was monopraxis. In both European and Japanese history there have appeared religious movements that endangered the unity of the community and/or society but they were either destroyed or forced to accommodate to the existing ethos. Sometimes the ethos changed in order to accommodate the

movements, as in the case of the Protestant sects in Europe. Sometimes the sects went underground as was the case in Japan during the Tokugawa period with religions such as Hidden Christians (Kakure Kirishitan), Hidden Jodo Shin sect (Kakure Nembutsu), and Hidden Nichiren sects (Kakure Daimoku and Fujū Fuse sects, cf. Davis, 1992, pp. 74–75).

In Japan, if monopraxis religions wished to be tolerated, they had to give up their exclusiveness and accede to the role of supplementing rather than substituting the existing religious system. Monopraxis religions such as Jodo Shin or Nichiren Buddhism eventually assimilated themselves into religious matrices by incorporating elements of folk religion into their religious practices, thanks to which they gained social acceptance and gradually developed into the most popular Buddhist denominations of contemporary Japan, superseding their parent religion, Tendai.

It is widely believed in Japan, even among scholars, that conventional Japanese religions, such as Shinto and Buddhism, have coexisted harmoniously and peacefully with each other and with society throughout Japanese history (Sonoda 1987, pp. 3–5). By contrast, foreign religions, such as Christianity, are believed in Japan to be the sources of many social conflicts and even wars. In this context, the violent history of Christianity in Japan is often presented as evidence of Western arrogance, imperialism and the incompatibility of Christian and Japanese values. Christian doctrine and missionary activities are widely viewed as having determined the fate of Christianity in Japan. However, various Japanese religions, especially monopraxis religions, such as Jodo Shin and Nichiren, were also involved in various conflicts, rivalries, armed fighting and bloodshed throughout the centuries. The current peaceful coexistence of religions in Japan has been achieved through a long history of religious persecution, violent religious wars, religious extermination, banishment and so on. But eventually the model of peaceful existence of religions within their own boundaries has been created. This model of religious coexistence can actually be quite helpful and instructive for the global societies of the twenty-first century.

It is true that Christianity was a source of much conflict in Japan, such as the destruction of Buddhist temples, idol burning and forced conversions, which caused quite a stir and opposition. Therefore, Father Valignano, Visitor of the Jesuit Mission in Asia, who first arrived in Japan in 1579 and spent in Japan almost ten years, was in favour of dialogue. In his *Advertimentos*,² which was written in 1582, he advised that Jesuits must study Japanese language, customs and etiquette in order not to disrespect the Japanese and thus not to alienate them. He promoted indigenization of Christianity and called for its adaptation to Japanese culture and creation of a Japanese Church. Valignano called for studying Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto and other religions (Ross, 1994, pp. 55–65). However, for Valignano the final goal of the dialogue was to refute Buddhist and Shinto teachings and eventually Christianize the whole Japan.

²The original document is entitled *Advertimentos e Avisos acerca dos Costumes a Catagues de Jappao*. There is no English translation of this document. Jennes (1973, p. 48) has called it *The Code of Behaviour*.

Japan is said to be the location of the greatest missionary success of the Portuguese and Spanish Jesuits. However, after the initial success and growth of Christian mission for almost a century, the missionaries were expelled from Japan and all Christians were forced to convert to Buddhism or face persecution. Some 5000 Christians were martyred, many suffered torture and privations. Under such severe persecutions, most Christians apostatized; however, some went underground and practiced their faith without priestly supervision in constant fear of persecution, which continued until the freedom of religion was proclaimed in 1873 and eventually guaranteed in the Japanese Imperial Constitution of 1889. However, the Constitution of Japan of 1889 offered only conditional freedom of religion to the Japanese. Article 28 stated: “Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.” (Reischauer et al., 1993, p. 233). The political duties to the emperor, the state and the law were given priority over personal faith. This stipulation justified control, and eventually persecution in the name of maintaining peace and order.

From the Meiji period, which began in 1868, until 1945 religions were controlled by the government through the criminal laws of 1880 and 1907, with provisions against the crimes of *lese majeste* (*fukeizai*) and the offence against police regulations (*ikeizai*), and other subsequent laws, such as the Public Peace Police Law (*Chian Keisatsu Ho*) of 1900, the Peace Preservation Law (*Chian Iji Ho*) of 1925 and the Religious Organizations Law (*Shukyo Dantai Ho*) enacted in 1939 (Inoue et al., 1990, pp. 473–484; Nakano, 1996, p. 116; Mitchell, 1976, pp. 39–68, 121–126, 167, 201–203). These laws provided grounds for religious persecution during Japan’s militaristic expansion in Asia. In response to such controls, many believers and their leaders chose compromise, adaptation and collaboration, or confrontation and resistance. The accommodating stand was taken by Shrine Shinto, Sect Shinto, most traditional Buddhist denominations, mainstream Christian denominations, such as the Roman Catholic Church and most Protestant denominations, and by some of the New Religions (the so-called *ruiji shukyo*, quasi-religions, which were not officially recognized by the authorities, such as Reiyukai and Seicho-no Ie). Those who refused to collaborate with the imperial regime suffered dire consequences. Their members were persecuted, imprisoned and some even died in jail; their temples or shrines were destroyed and their lands and possessions confiscated; some of these religions were ordered to disband (Nakano, 1996, pp. 116–119; Mullins, 1994, pp. 264–266; Inoue et al., 1990, pp. 30–32, 61–62).³

Religious Dialogue Since World War II

Religions which are most actively involved in the interreligious dialogue in contemporary Japan are those which in the past were most involved in religious conflict,

³The oppositional stand was taken by Omoto-kyo, Honmichi, Hito-no Michi, Soka Gakkai, Sekai Kyusei-kyo and minor Christian sects, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, Plymouth Brethren and Holiness Church.

persecution and wars, such as Christianity, Nichiren and Jodo Shin denominations of Buddhism. They most aggressively propagated monotheism (Christianity) or monopraxis (Nichiren and Jodo Shin denominations), for which they were persecuted.

As explained above religious pluralism has a long tradition in Japan. Many various religions coexisted together but there was not much involvement or cooperation between them, as they saw each other as rivals. However, through the experiences of oppression and persecution throughout Japanese religious history, and particularly during Japan's militaristic expansionism since the 1930s, many New Religions and Christian denominations learnt a lesson, namely, that other religions, when compared to the political agencies, were lesser of two evils, and thus these religions came to the realization of the importance of cooperation between religions in order to protect themselves from a possible future political interference and oppression. Therefore, when the post-war Japanese Constitution of 1947 guaranteed religious freedom and the separation of state and religion (Article 20), religions took advantage of these postulates and organized themselves in various organizations for the purpose of cooperation with each other.

In 1946, the Japanese Association of Religious Organizations (JAORO, Nihon Shukyo Renmei) was organized. Then in 1951, the Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan (Shin Nihon Shukyo Dantai Rengokai, usually abbreviated as Shinshuren) was formed and the following year it joined the Japanese Association of Religious Organizations, which thus came to represent five federations of Japanese religions, namely, Japan Buddhist Federation, Association of Shinto Shrines, Federation of Shinto Sects, Japan Confederation of Christian Churches and Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan.

Another major organization that has contributed to interreligious dialogue in Japan was the International Religious Fellowship (Kokusai Shukyo Doshi Kai). It was founded in 1947 by the following religious leaders: Toraji Makino – president of the Protestant Doshisha University in Kyoto, Toshio Miyake – leader of Konko Church of Izu, Yoshiyuki Furuya – bishop of Kyoto Catholic Church, Isao Deguchi – leader of Omoto-kyo, Tenko Nishida – leader of Ittoen, Yoshimasa Ookuni of Japan Episcopal Church, and Yoshitada Takahara of Yasaka Jinja (Miyake, 1988). As this early example of religious cooperation presents, these were mainly New Religions and Christianity, which were predominantly interested in cooperation and dialogue.

New Religions of Japan and Their Involvement in Interreligious Cooperation and the Peace Movement

Once the interreligious cooperation had been established, the primary object of that cooperation became the anti-nuclear movement, which was a hot issue among the Japanese people in the post-war period. As Japan experienced firsthand the horrors of the nuclear bomb, with the threat of nuclear war quite real during the cold war

period, and as the Japanese Constitution forbade the Japanese to maintain an army, the concerns of the Japanese public and their interest in disarmament were only natural.

During the Pacific War, most religions supported the militaristic policies of the Japanese government. While some religions did so in order to avoid political oppression, it seems that in the end most religions in Japan became permeated with the ultranationalistic spirit and supported the war effort rather voluntarily. In particular, the Nichiren tradition of Buddhism produced thinkers such as Chigaku Tanaka or Jimon Ogasawara, who, drawing on the political aspects of Nichiren's teaching, created ultranationalist ideologies legitimizing Japanese military policies of expansionism and colonization. These ideologies were then adopted by many Japanese religions. Reiyukai, which, through schismatic movements, produced many New Religions, such as Rissho Koseikai, was one of those religions which embraced Tanaka's ideology and, thus, avoided wartime oppression. Consequently, after the war many Japanese religions were most likely embarrassed by their involvement in the war effort. This, according to Swyngedouw (1982), may have been one of the reasons behind their engagement in the anti-nuclear movement after the war.

With the collapse in 1945 of the militaristic regime and its ideology as epitomized in State Shinto, Japanese national religion, the Japanese people found themselves in a religious vacuum. There was a great demand for a new religion to give meaning to life and provide new ethics and values able to explain the post-war reality. Japanese New Religions had mushroomed in the post-war period and many were very successful in attracting large numbers of followers. Between 1935 and 1977 some fifty percent of the Japanese moved from the rural into urban areas (Kisala, 2006, p. 15). They were deprived of the rural close-knit community support and separated from their Buddhist temples, which have traditionally cared for their ancestors. As ancestor worship is the core of Japanese religiosity, being separated from their ancestors' temples, graves and altars made the migrants to the city feel guilty for neglecting their ancestors and, also, exposed them to the wrath of their ancestors. Traditionally, illness, misfortune and unhappiness have been attributed to spirits' curses caused by the neglect and these popular beliefs have been exploited by most New Religions, which offered new lay forms of veneration for the ancestors and new forms of communal unity where the rural sense of extended family and neighbourly closeness have been substituted with the religious community.

The two religions most actively involved in the anti-nuclear and peace movement and at the same time two largest New Religions have been Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai. Both are New Religions of the Nichiren tradition and, thus, there are many similarities between them, but there are also many differences and antagonisms. While Rissho Koseikai cooperates with other religions, Soka Gakkai has traditionally kept aloof from other religions and has conducted its peace activities on its own. In this Soka Gakkai manifests an exclusive and aggressive tradition of Nichiren, as expressed in the *shakubuku* (literally "to break and subdue") method of proselytization, and the *fujū fuse* (literally "do not receive, do not give") doctrine. The *shakubuku* is a method of proselytization by ridiculing the potential convert's beliefs and insisting on the superiority of Nichiren's teachings. The doctrine of *fujū fuse* is

emphasized by some Nichiren schools, such as Nichiren Shoshu, a 700-year-old purist and exclusive Nichiren sect. Soka Gakkai had been associated with Nichiren Shoshu since its beginnings in 1930 (Thomsen, 1963). The teaching of *fujū-fuse* precludes involvement with other religions and with some secular authorities which are considered amoral and most likely was the factor behind the Soka Gakkai's refraining from interreligious cooperation

The association with Nichiren Shoshu gave Soka Gakkai a sense of establishment through an existing tradition with direct connection to Saint Nichiren and a sense of respectability. However, in 1991, Soka Gakkai was excommunicated from Nichiren Shoshu. The membership of Soka Gakkai decreased by two million households from over ten million in the mid-1980s to eight million in 1995 (Clarke, 1999, pp. 236–238). Going through a major turmoil and looking for new ways to regain respectability and to increase its membership, Soka Gakkai began an interreligious dialogue with Catholic Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in 1995 (Heisig, 1996). Since then, Soka Gakkai has been actively involved in interreligious dialogue, organizing conferences for interfaith and intercultural understanding and cooperation for peace. However, Soka Gakkai still refrains from interreligious dialogue with Japanese religions, and instead conducts its interreligious activities with Christianity, Islam, Chinese and other foreign denominations of Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism, and not in Japan, but overseas (SGI Office of Public Information, 2007, March).

Soka Gakkai has traditionally derived its membership from the lower classes. Since Soka Gakkai gained its political, social and economic influences in the 1950s and the 1960s, it became less aggressive and more accepting of Japanese wider society and in particular to the middle class norms and values. It has gradually transformed from a sect type of religious organization, a religion of the lower class, to a denomination, a religion of the middle class. In the same period, the lower class in Japan decreased in size and the so-called new middle class expanded. Soka Gakkai has been making a constant effort to address this large class in a variety of ways (Filus, 1999, pp. 275–287).

Soka Gakkai has gradually changed its moderate progressive political outlook, and became more conservative and traditional. This is evident in the development of Soka Gakkai's political party, Komeito (Clean Government Party), which moved from the left towards the political right. In 1999 Komeito became a member of the conservative coalition government led by the Prime Minister Obuchi of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Interestingly, Rissho Koseikai, which has traditionally supported the LDP, has refused to give support to the LDP politicians who were in favour of the coalition with Komeito (Maekawa, 2001, pp. 49–50). Thus, in spite of the fact that both Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai preach peace, they refuse to cooperate with each other.

The activities of the two leaders, Nikkyo Niwano of Rissho Koseikai and Daisaku Ikeda of Soka Gakkai, reflect the general attitudes of their religions. Both leaders have travelled the world on a peace mission. While Niwano (who died in 1999) moved mainly in religious circles, Ikeda tended (until 1991) to meet mainly scholars, philosophers and politicians. Swyngedouw (1982, pp. 27–28) argues that the

reason behind the involvement of both Ikeda and Niwano in peace activities was their aspiration to receive the Nobel Prize.

Rissho Koseikai was established in 1938 by Nikkyo Niwano and Myoko Naganuma, as a result of a schism from the parent organization, Reiyukai. Naganuma dominated Rissho Koseikai until her death in 1957. She was a shaman able to communicate with gods and spirits and to heal the sick. She had charisma, which Niwano lacked. It was at the time when Rissho Koseikai was going through the crisis caused by the death of Naganuma, and was searching for new ways of attracting followers without the shaman-type charismatic personality of Naganuma, that it became involved in interreligious cooperation and the anti-nuclear movement. This is in accord with Swyngedouw's (1982, p. 38) claim that, "religions only feel compelled to cooperate when they find themselves in a situation of weakness". As demonstrated above, this was also the case with Soka Gakkai, which started interreligious dialogue after it was excommunicated by Nichiren Shoshu.

It was through the Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan, which in 1954 adopted the resolution against nuclear weapons and nuclear testing, that Niwano became involved in the anti-nuclear and peace movement, and from where Niwano gained many of his inspirations for the successful development of Rissho Koseikai. In 1963, Niwano travelled to Europe and the United States as a member of a Japanese Peace Delegation of Religious Leaders for Banning Nuclear Weapons. They presented a proposal for a complete ban on nuclear weapons and also aimed at developing bonds with world's religions ("Landmarks in the Pursuit of Peace by Religionists of the World", 2001, p. 5). In March 1965, a papal envoy travelled to Japan on account of the centennial discovering of Hidden Christians in Japan and to meet Japan's religious leaders. This was in accord with the new ecumenical approach of the Vatican, which in 1964 established the Secretariat for non-Christians (renamed Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in 1988). Consequently Niwano, who in 1965 became chairman of the Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan (the post that he held until 1992), was invited to attend the opening of the last session of the Second Vatican Council in September 1965. Niwano was also granted a private audience with Pope Paul VI (Fitzgerald, 2006, pp. 10–11). Thus, Rissho Koseikai has taken an ecumenical approach to other religions, cooperating with the Catholic Church, Unitarian Universalist Association and other religious organizations worldwide.

In 1968, Dana McLean Greeley, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, visited Japan and on that occasion the US–Japan Conference of Religions for Peace was held in Kyoto. During that conference, Nikkyo Niwano met Toshio Miyake of Konko Church of Izu and the cooperation between the two leaders thus began, which led to the establishing the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP), as described below. Miyake is another outstanding leader of a New Religion, Konko Church of Izu, who pioneered interreligious cooperation. Apparently, Miyake's inspiration for interreligious dialogue came from his friendship with a Catholic priest, Father Patrick J. Byrne who worked in Kyoto during World War II. In 1947, Miyake, together with Christian leaders, established International Religious Fellowship, as described above (Miyake, 1988).

In 1969, Niwano and Miyake were invited to attend the 20th World Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) in Boston, where they established relations with Unitarians and other religions. To secure interreligious cooperation and support for the peace movement, Miyake met with Pope Paul VI, Archbishop of Canterbury and Patriarch of Greek Orthodox Church. This interreligious cooperation then led to organizing the first World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) in 1970 in Kyoto, where 300 representatives of ten major religions from 39 countries gathered to discuss how religions could contribute to peace, disarmament, justice, human rights and human development. WCRP grew to be the largest international federation of various religions promoting peace. In 1976 WCRP gave birth to Asian Council of Religions for Peace (ACRP). ((Nukaga, 2000; Landmarks in the Pursuit of Peace by Religionists of the World, 2001; Sekai Shukyosha Kaigi Nihon Iinkai, 1973).

Since 1975, Rissho Koseikai has conducted the Donate a Meal Campaign. The participants skip one meal a day on particular days every month and contribute the saved money to the Rissho Koseikai Peace Fund. The money is utilized for a variety of activities for world peace. For example, in 1978, Rissho Koseikai established the Niwano Peace Foundation. Since 1980, the foundation has awarded the Niwano Peace Prize to honour religious leaders or associations that contribute to world peace through interreligious dialogue, human rights movement and conflict resolution. The foundation also provides financial assistance for religiously inspired research activities and projects concerning thought, culture, science and education (Rissho Koseikai, 2006).

Since Niwano assumed the leadership of the Federation of New Religious Organizations, he was able to use the infrastructure and support of many New Religions to conduct ecumenical and peace activities. Rissho Koseikai and the Federation of New Religious Organizations collected an impressive 37 million signatures for their anti-nuclear signature campaign to be submitted to the UN Second Special Session on Disarmament in 1982 (Swyngedouw, 1982, p. 36). In 1988 they cooperated in organizing peace march in New York for the UN Third Special Session on Disarmament, campaign for preservation of the environment in 1990, relief project for refugees of the Gulf war in 1991 and relief project for war refugees in former Yugoslavia in 1994 (Rissho Koseikai, 2006, 2008; Shinshuren, 2008).

Considering the reasons that religions have for involving themselves in the anti-nuclear and peace movement and interreligious cooperation, it is doubtful that the feelings of embarrassment and repentance for supporting the war effort were behind the involvement, as Swyngedouw (1982) wishes to argue. It is unlikely that religions could purge themselves of nationalism and conservatism in such a short period of time. It seems that New Religions had another agenda when engaging in the anti-nuclear movement. They were searching for new ways of diffusing their teachings, for attracting new followers, for gaining recognition and respectability in Japanese society and overseas. Therefore, the peace activities of New Religions, just as the interreligious dialogue promoted by Christianity (which will be discussed below), should rather be seen as a proselytization tactic and, more importantly, as a stratagem to get rid of the stigma of a cult and to elevate their social status.

In the post-war turmoil, Japanese New Religions, Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai in particular, grew enormously and soon had millions of followers. With followers came money and voting power. However, just like nouveau riches, who enjoy affluence but suffer comparatively low social status, New Religions were lacking a history to prove their noble descent and, thus, had little authority. Most New Religions jumped at the opportunity of international interreligious cooperation to establish themselves as respectable religions.

Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue

After the defeat of Japan in 1945 and the collapse of State Shinto as national religion, many Japanese people experienced religious vacuum and confusion. Various Christian missions, societies and educators arrived in Japan, hoping to take advantage of the situation. In order to conduct their missionary work more effectively, they soon engaged in research on Japanese religions, Japanese sense of spirituality and religiosity.

One such example is the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM), who came to Japan in 1948, established Oriens Institute for Religious Research in 1954 and started to publish *Missionary Bulletin* the following year. The *Missionary Bulletin* later changed its name to *The Japan Mission Journal* in 1985 and now publishes many articles on interreligious dialogue. Two CICM missionaries who arrived in 1948, Joseph Spae and Joseph Jennes, engaged in research, which resulted in two major publications: “A History of the Catholic Church in Japan from Its Beginnings to the Early Meiji Era” authored by Jennes and published by Oriens in 1959, and “Catholicism in Japan: A Sociological Study” authored by Joseph Spae, published in 1964.

Another example of a Christian missionary body involved first in research and, later, in interreligious dialogue is the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions in Kyoto. Harry Thomsen, who came to Japan in 1956 as a missionary working for Christian Mission to the Buddhists, established the Kyoto Christian Institute, which in 1959, the centennial year of the beginning of the Protestant mission to Japan, was approved by the National Christian Council in Japan (NCC-J) and renamed Christian Center for the Study of Japanese Religion. Thomsen became its first director. His vision for the Center was that it should be ecumenical in its outlooks and activities, cooperating with other Christian denominations and academic institutions and contributing to a better understanding of non-Christian religions. Also, in 1959, the Center began publishing a journal *Japanese Religions*. Its first issues dealt with the problems of differences between Christianity and Japanese religions, with difficulties in communication between the two traditions, with the intolerance of Christianity and its inability to indigenize, and with the issue of Japanese New Religions, which were mushrooming and growing at an amazing rate in the post-war period. The success of the Japanese New Religions was in contrast to Christianity, which was failing to attract followers. The number of Japanese Christians since the Meiji period (1868–1912) stayed at the same rate, a mere one

percent of the Japanese population. New Religions were of a particular interest to Thomsen, who in 1963 published a book titled *The New Religions of Japan* (Repp, 2000, pp. 135–137).

After Thomsen left Japan in December 1959, the tasks of the Center were more clearly defined in missionary terms, as serving the purpose of proselytization, as follows: “The purpose of this Center is to promote the study of Japanese religions for the sake of effective witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (quoted in Repp, 2000, p. 137). In other words, the Center’s task, as paraphrased by Thelle (2000, p. 14), was: “to promote dialogue for the sake of an effective monologue”. However, since 1965, the activities of the Center became more clearly ecumenical. This initiative was aided by the spirit of ecumenism which accompanied the Second Vatican Council, and was reflected in Japan in cooperation between Catholic and Protestant research institutes.

In 1969, the Japan Ecumenical Society was established within Oriens Institute for Religious Research. Currently, within the Oriens Institute there is a Dialogue group involved in “interreligious dialogue of life”. Oriens Institute is also involved in cross-cultural debates on topics, such as ancestor worship, Zen meditation, the meaning and role of Shinto customs, the writings of Shusaku Endo (a Catholic writer famous for his comparative analysis of Christian and Japanese religious values and ethics in award-winning novels “White Man”, “Yellow Man” and the most famous “Silence”) and other Christian authors. The most recent research and activities of Oriens Institute focus on intercultural and interreligious dialogue in order to find solutions to the growing poverty (Oriens, 2000).

The Society of Jesus, which was the first Christian missionary group to arrive in Japan in 1549, established the first Catholic university in Japan, Sophia University, in Tokyo in 1913. In 1969, two institutes were established at Sophia University: the Institute of Oriental Religions and the Institute for Christian Culture. Both were amalgamated into Sophia University Institute for Christian Culture in 1993. Although the Jesuits were the first Christian missionaries in Japan, it was not until 1995 that the Jesuits eventually officially recognized the necessity of interreligious dialogue at their 34th conference. However, this does not mean that individual Jesuits were not interested in interreligious dialogue. Johnston, a Jesuit scholar working at Sophia University, describes his experience of participating in the dialogue between Zen Buddhists and Christians in Kyoto in 1968 as follows: “There was not a single philosophical or theological tenet that we held in common. . . . what united us was not philosophy but religious experience. . . . Indeed it is amazing that such diverse philosophies should produce such similar experiences” (1970, pp. xi–xii). Johnston (1971, p. 14) envisions the future relationship between Christianity and Buddhism as follows: “Just as a whole new era opened up for Christianity when Thomas introduced Aristotle in the thirteenth century, so a new era, an even bigger one, could be opened by the assimilation of some Buddhist ideas and attitudes”.

In 1970, another interreligious organization was founded, the Conference on Religion and Modern Society (CORMOS, Gendai ni Okeru Shukyo no Yakuwari Kenkyukai), which was the outcome of the collaboration between the Protestant NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions and the Catholic Oriens Institute

(Van Bragt, 2000, p. 6). This organization consists of members of research institutes belonging to major religious organizations in Japan and also of various secular experts of religions. According to Ashina (2004), the exchange of opinions between the religious and non-religious researchers of CORMOS is apparently very enlightening.

In 1976, another important interreligious research institute, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, was established at Nanzan University in Nagoya. This Catholic university was founded in 1949 by the Society for the Divine Word (*Societas Verbi Divini*). The Institute has been actively engaged in interreligious dialogue, organizing interfaith symposia and conducting interreligious research projects. The reports on the interreligious activities are published in the annual *Bulletin of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture*, in English and Japanese. The Institute also publishes the Japanese Journal of Religious Studies, the most prominent English-language source for current research in the field of Japanese Religions and other major publications in the area of religion and philosophy. The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture together with other Catholic institutes, such as Oriens Institute for Religious Research, the Institute of Oriental Religions and the Protestant NCC Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions, initiated the Ecumenical Group for the Study of Interreligious Dialogue (EGSID), as a joint venture of the four “Dialogue Institutes”. Nanzan Institute also edits and publishes the Journal of the Japan Society for Buddhist–Christian Studies (*Tozai Shukyo Kenkyu*). The Society for Buddhist–Christian Studies has its roots in the “East–West Religions Project” of the University of Hawaii.

Those involved in interreligious dialogue for an extended period of time go through a transformation. In 1978, Thelle, an associate director of the NCC Center from 1974 to 1985, wrote about his experience of the interreligious dialogue, as follows:

Those who engage in the study of other religions enter a process; they become engaged in a dialogue that forces them to change attitudes. The contact becomes a mutual search, and Christians become also receivers. . . . A true dialogue will not yield to the temptation of propaganda and apologetics. But it will inevitably involve the risk of conversion. (p. 70)

The above statement indicates a new direction in the interreligious dialogue. Christians began to see non-Christians as equal partners and stopped treating them as objects of proselytization.

Traditional Buddhist Denominations’ Attitude Towards the Peace Movement and Interreligious Dialogue

After the Second World War, traditional (old) Buddhism denominations affiliated themselves with Japan Buddhist Federation (*Zen Nihon Bukkyo Kai*), established in 1957. The status and authority of each traditional religion have been historically established with the entire population of Japan being divided into parishioners of the True Pure Land (*Jodo Shin*), Pure Land (*Jodo*), Nichiren, Zen, Shingon

and Tendai denominations of Buddhism. Traditional Buddhist denominations are often referred to as “funeral Buddhism”, as they are preoccupied with funeral and memorial services for the ancestors and have not been active in current social issues.

In the early post-war period traditional religions had no interest in cooperating with New Religions in the anti-nuclear movement or other social movements. Being conservative in their outlook, they refused to support the anti-nuclear movement, suspecting it was sponsored by international communism (Swyngedouw (1982, pp. 36–37). Swyngedouw (1982) argues that if traditional religions ever participated in the anti-nuclear movement, it was under pressure. Such was the case when Pope John Paul II came to Japan in 1981 and made a peace appeal in Hiroshima. Apparently, some conservative circles resented the fact that it took a foreign religious leader to take an anti-nuclear stance, while the Japanese traditional religious leaders were aloof. The following year, the chief abbot of the Honganji branch of Jodo Shin (True Pure Land), the largest of the traditional Buddhist denominations, travelled to Hiroshima with more than ten thousand followers and made an anti-nuclear plea.

The traditional Buddhist denominations were also not interested in dialogue with Christianity. When the proposal for dialogue came in 1965 from the Vatican, the traditional Buddhist denominations declined the invitation. Yamaori in his 1994 article titled “The Falsehood of Interreligious Dialogue – in Comparison with Religious Coexistence” discusses the position of traditional Japanese religions towards Christian demand for dialogue. Van Bragt (2003, p. 178) translated and summarized Yamaori’s arguments as follows:

All endeavours of one religion to approach or communicate with another religion are necessarily of an aggressive nature, and therefore of negative value. For such contacts necessarily bring tension and confrontation. Interreligious dialogue, no matter how beautiful the term sounds, always contains the thorn of religious polemic. The desire to approach other religions is a monotheistic impulse, and serves the aspiration of such a religion to find a unity among the faiths and to affirm its own uniqueness and superiority. The so-called turn of Christianity from an openly aggressive to a dialogical approach is, in fact, only a change in strategy. The Catholic project of world conquest remains unaltered.

Thus, the invitation to dialogue was seen by the traditional Buddhist denominations as a disguised method of proselytizing and spreading Christian ideas. Besides, such dialogue would involve operating in English or other foreign languages and the traditional Buddhist denominations had no such resources available (Personal communication with Rev. Yoshiharu Tomatsu, Jodo Shu Research Institute of Buddhism, August 4, 2008 and September 10, 2008).

It was Tendai, one of the oldest and least popular Buddhist denominations, which first started the dialogue with other religions. This is in accord with Swyngedouw’s (1982) argument that Japanese religions become involved in cooperation when in a weak position. Tendai has traditionally been associated with aristocracy and it also shared its fate, meaning that it has gradually been losing its influence since the Kamakura period (1185–1333), when the so-called Kamakura Buddhist sects (Pure Land, Zen and Nichiren), popular among the masses, were established. Also, Tendai

had been in the past one of the most aggressive religions (in spite of its syncretistic teaching), involved in religious wars with other religions and secular authorities.

But it also must be acknowledged that Tendai's involvement in interreligious dialogue is indebted to its head priest Etai Yamada's personality and open mindedness. Yamada claimed that: "There are two ways to Lotus Sutra: the way of refutation and the way of integration. I believe the Lotus Sutra is a sutra of integration. In other words, it is good for us to walk together as we aim for the top. Getting to the top by knocking down one's rivals is questionable" (quoted in Sugitani 2006, p. 13). In this way, every religion has some aspects of exclusiveness and aggressiveness. The role of leaders is important to emphasize inclusiveness, what religions have in common, and not what divides them. In 1976, Tendai joined the Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP). In 1986 Yamada, being invited by Pope John Paul II, attended the first World Day of Prayer in Assisi at the age of 91. A year later in 1987 he organized the first Religious Summit meeting for prayer for world peace on Mount Hiei near Kyoto, where the headquarters of Tendai are situated. In 1989 Yamada travelled to Australia to participate in the Fifth World Assembly of the World Conference of Religions for Peace.

Interreligious Dialogue in the New Millennium and the Agenda for the Future

Since September 11, there has hardly been any religion in Japan not involved in some kind of interreligious dialogue or cooperation. Below I will describe some of the more important initiatives and outcomes of dialogue.

In 2002, the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions in Kyoto established the "Interreligious Studies in Japan Program" for students of religious studies, theology, philosophy and Japanese studies. During the programme, students develop practical skills in interreligious dialogue. The programme is an ecumenical enterprise financially supported by Protestant Association of Churches and Missions in Southwestern Germany, World Christian Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Catholic CICM Order and Rissho Koseikai's Niwano Peace Foundation (Repp, 2002, 2004; also M. Repp, personal communication, March 27, 2007).

In March 2005, the XIXth World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions took place in Tokyo. During that conference, taking advantage of the fact that it was attended by some 1700 scholars of religion from all over the world, the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture organized two international symposia on interreligious dialogue (Heisig, 2005). This 2005 initiative was then followed by the international symposium in Tunisia in 2007 on "The Challenges of Religious Pluralism and Dialogue: The West, the Middle East, and Japan". The conclusion of the symposium was that the dialogue on "religious truth" and "universal values" should be discontinued. Instead, diversity among humanity must be appreciated. International and interreligious research on dialogue, tolerance and pluralism should be promoted. School education should encourage tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Exchange and cooperation programmes for children of

different cultural and religious backgrounds should be organized. A suggestion was made that, as Japan has never been part of the conflict between three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Japan's neutrality may qualify it to "serve as a mediator to promote peace and mutual understanding between different religions and civilizations" (Sumi, 2008, p. 38).

The very recent development in the interreligious dialogue is the establishment of the G8 Religious Leaders Summit in 2006. These summits are modelled on the G8 political leaders' summits and organized one month or so prior to the political leaders' summits. As the 2008 G8 Political Leaders Summit took place in Hokkaido, Japan, in July, the third G8 Religious Leaders Summit was organized by Konko Church of Izu in late June in Kyoto and Osaka. The theme of the summit was "Living with the Earth: Message from World Religions". Other issues that the "Religious Leaders Summit's Proposal to Leaders of the Group of Eight" included were ethnic and religious oppression in Tibet and Myanmar, and education, student exchange and scholarship programme as solutions to ease poverty in Africa (Shackleton, 2008, p. 5).

Until the present, interreligious dialogue has been dominated by religious leaders, officials and scholars representing their respective religions' positions. Clearly, there is tension between commitment to one's religion and treating other religions as equal and, thus, accepting religious pluralism (cf. Matata, 2002, p. 155). Unfortunately, those involved in the dialogue still think locally and not globally, that is they think what is beneficial for their own religion and not what will benefit humanity and global society in the future. Accepting diversity and pluralism, which are crucial for peaceful living in global society, seems to be difficult for many people at this stage.

Recently, voices can be heard demanding the involvement of the grassroots and non-religious groups in the dialogue. Ashina (2004) claims that ordinary believers must be involved in the dialogue and be willing to accept people of other beliefs and their rituals. Ashina is particularly concerned with the issue of ancestor worship, as it is the foundation of Japanese religiosity and an important aspect of social relations and unity. Christian missionaries have traditionally instructed their Japanese converts to refrain from ancestor worship, which has been perceived as idolatry. The new converts to Christianity were forbidden to participate in Buddhist funerals and memorial services, which caused a great deal of friction between the new converts, their families and social groups they belonged to. Recently, in order to reconcile Christian beliefs and Japanese traditional religious ethos, churches began to treat the issue of ancestor worship in a more tolerant way (Repp, 2000, p. 148). Ashina (2004) argues that the Christian attitude towards the ancestor worship is a test of Christian tolerance. If in practice Christians are not tolerant towards ancestor worship, then it seems that the interreligious dialogue is nothing but hypocrisy.

Although the involvement of the grassroots will most likely change the focus of the interreligious dialogue, it is doubtful that the ordinary believers will bring much desired progress to the interreligious dialogue. For example, conversion to Christianity or to some New Religions in Japan requires a lot of sacrifices on the part of the new converts, in terms of rupture of social relationships, changed lifestyle

and adjustments to the demands of the new faith. In this sense, borrowing the terminology of the rational choice theory, Christianity and some New Religions are “expensive” religions. The new converts, who have paid the high price for their conversion, would find it hard to accept the fact that all religions are equal and all represent ultimate truth.

Christian attitudes towards ancestor worship are also indices of the ability of Christianity to indigenize and assimilate to Japanese culture. Failure of Christianity to indigenize is blamed for its lack of popularity in Japan. Other issues related to the problem of indigenization involve different conceptions of spirituality, religiosity and religious needs of the Japanese people. These issues are currently studied by the Catholic and Protestant research centres, such as Nanzan Institute, Oriens Institute, the NCC Study Center for Japanese Religions.

The interreligious dialogue was originated by Christian authorities as a pre-proselytization tactic. Now after forty odd years of dialogue, it is clear that its hidden agenda to Christianize Japan failed, however not totally. It is through the dialogue and education (private Christian schools) among other areas that Christianity has been promoting its philosophy and ideals, thus influencing Japanese value system and having its say on important issues, such as bioethics, environment, human rights, lifestyle and so on.

But it is not only Christianity which has exerted influence on Japanese society and religions. Dialogue, being a two-way communication, has contributed to the emergence of new religious consciousness among Christians involved in it. Some Catholic and Protestant missionaries/scholars have developed respect for Japanese religions, the appreciation of religious diversity, and they seem to be gradually leaning towards religious pluralism, which, looking from the perspective of their Christian superiors, in a way indicates the betrayal of the interests of their respective churches.

Van Bragt, a Catholic missionary and a scholar, being influenced by his extensive study of Buddhism and Japanese philosophy, proposes some major reforms of Christian dogmas and conceptions, stating boldly: “I really think that we ought to examine our traditional doctrines very carefully. . . . If a doctrine, no matter how ‘traditional,’ instead of conveying the Gospel of Christ to the Japanese, hides it from them, it is our strict obligation to throw it out” (1969, pp. 529–30). Van Bragt is particularly critical of the violent aspects of Christian God (2002, p. 81). He also suggests that the Christian conception of Trinity would benefit from the incorporation of the Buddhist idea of the non-ego (1999, p. 15), while the Christian conception of the afterlife could be redefined in terms of Buddhist “emptiness” (*ku*) (Van Bragt as cited in Heisig, 2008, p. 16).

Heisig (2004, p. 52), Van Bragt’s collaborator and another bold critic, describes the alleged ecumenical intentions of Christian Churches, as follows:

True, the World Council of Churches and the Vatican Council had issued dramatic statements in support of peaceful coexistence among religions, and even hinted at the need to dismantle the theological modes of thought that had validated the missionary dream of conquering the world for Christianity. But when it came to actually setting out in that direction,

to reallocating resources and personnel away from established institutions to enter into dialogue with non-Christian religious traditions, or to propose theological models suited to the fact of religious pluralism, the churches were quick to draw on the reins and temper the enthusiasm for making a clean break with the past.

Repp (2002) describes the scepticism the Protestant authorities have towards the effectiveness of the interreligious dialogue. According to Repp, Protestants are unprepared for dialogue as far as their theological knowledge is concerned. The result is such that many Protestants find Buddhism more attractive than Christianity.

Therefore some Protestant Church officials argue against dialogue, which they perceive as a threat of losing one's faith and a possible conversion to Buddhism. Even though there have been some instances of this, there are also various and important benefits of dialogue. The most apparent is rediscovering and reformulating one's own identity. Repp keeps emphasizing that interreligious dialogue contributes to openness to other religions and poses no risk to one's Christian commitment, provided the participants in the dialogue have sufficient knowledge of Christian teachings. Repp also talks about other benefits of dialogue, such as, the changing profile of the ecumenical movement which, in Europe until recently, was concerned only with differences among various Christian Churches. However in Asia, in the presence of Asian religions, these differences seem less important, and on the other hand similarities become more obvious. Therefore, Protestant and Catholic institutes cooperate in Inter-Religio network in East Asia, or in Ecumenical Group for the Study of Interreligious Dialogue (EGSID) in Japan. This kind of cooperation gives new insights into possibilities of the ecumenical movement.

Unfortunately, Repp does not seem to see beyond the benefits to his religion, that is Christianity. This position is predominant among representatives of not only Christianity but also of various Japanese religions that become involved in dialogue only for the benefit of their own respective religions. Only very few independently minded religious scholars, like Van Bragt or Heisig, are bold enough to think in terms of religious pluralism or even religious altruism (support for a religion other than one's own, if that religion seems to work better for some people, providing better explanations of life and death and offering deeper insights into spirituality). Heisig (2008, pp. 10–15) summarizes Van Bragt's thoughts on the interreligious dialogue as follows:

... one does not give precedence to the benefits of the dialogue for one's own affiliated religion but rather tries instead to shift the focus to what will be profitable for the religious dimension of humanity in the future. . .

the dialogue is. . . compromised when it is given concrete goals, used to solve particular problems, or measured in terms of its fruits for those who participate in it. The aim of dialogue. . . is to be "aimless". . .

our allegiance to a particular religion by itself cannot constitute our final identity because "our religious belonging is at the same time a deprivation". . .

"the dialogue among religions cannot be restricted to the world of the religions themselves but belongs first and foremost to society at large. . . religion forfeits its *raison d'être* when it ceases to enter into the life of people today".

Van Bragt (2003) discusses the suitability of dialogue for interreligious communication and its ability to bring about understanding and peace among religions as follows: “dialogue far from being a universal concept and value, is a product of Western culture. . . Meanwhile in the East. . .the conviction is that language, far from bringing truth to light, necessarily distorts it, and instead of linking people together erects barriers between them. The real place for truth is then not language but (meditative) silence” (p. 177).

Thus, rather than interreligious dialogue, Van Bragt (1983, p. 29) advocates “interfaith spirituality” as a more appropriate tool of interreligious communication. Also, Heisig (2004, p. 57) calls for looking for solutions to problems faced by interreligious dialogue in mystical traditions as a factor uniting all religions. Moreover, rather than polemics, religious cooperation for peace, protection of human rights and environment, elimination of poverty and oppression of minorities is more desirable and it brings more positive results (Heisig, 1993, p. 41). But Heisig (1996) also sees a positive role in verbal dialogue. He insists that “the leading role that Japanese Christianity has played in interreligious dialogue is partly a function of its concern with facing up to its own failures to acculturate” (p. 23). He continues:

If there is one distinctive element that the Christian tradition has brought to dialogue with other religions, it is the willingness to face up to the inherent sinfulness of our institutions, and the willingness to see the correction or failure to correct as something that affects the role of religion within society as a whole. If it is not out of place for me to say so, this is an attitude that our Buddhist counterparts. . . have yet to accept as fully in the dialogue (pp. 27–28).

The Buddhist participants in the dialogue also note certain positive outcomes of the dialogue. Kitagawa (2006), head priest of Kokei-ji temple at Koya-san, the headquarters of Shingon Buddhism, argues that the interreligious dialogue can bring about the realization of one’s religion’s deficiencies. He admits that there is a discrepancy between Buddhist teachings and reality in relation to the treatment of women. Clearly Buddhism, being influenced by secular social values, discriminates against women. And this is an issue not only in Buddhism but also in other Japanese religions which consider women as inferior. Kitagawa claims that the interreligious dialogue can actually contribute to the improvement of social relations. In opposition to other Buddhists, who see the interreligious dialogue as a form of Christian attack on Japanese religions, Kitagawa understands the importance of it, and its role in creating common consciousness and values among people of various cultures and religions. Kitagawa claims that there is a need for religious people to talk and work together and become involved in social issues, such as education, welfare, environment and peace.

Conclusion

Because of the constitutional separation of state and religion in Japan, there is no religious education in public schools. Private international (secular) schools do not teach religious education, and private religious schools teach only their own religion.

Consequently, there is no interreligious education in Japanese schools. However, the dialogue between various religions is flourishing. Unfortunately, at this stage the interreligious dialogue is limited to the religious leaders and scholars affiliated with religious research institutes. However, ordinary believers are, to some extent, being educated in interreligious and intercultural issues through reading the publications, lectures and involvement in social and cultural activities of their religions.

As demonstrated, the interreligious dialogue has a long history in Japan. Dialogue is an integral part of any attempt to proselytize. Thus, when Buddhism and Confucianism arrived in Japan in the sixth century, when new Buddhist sects were created by schismatic movements in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries, when Christianity came to Japan in the sixteenth century, when in the mid-nineteenth century Japan was reopened after 250 years of national seclusion and Christianity was reintroduced by Catholic and Protestant missions, and when New Religions appeared in the nineteenth–twentieth centuries, on each such occasion there was an interreligious dialogue. However, the religious history of Japan shows that those dialogues in the past often ended up in violence, wars and persecution. It is only since the unconditional religious freedom was guaranteed by the Japanese Constitution of 1947 that peaceful religious dialogue prospers. There are some lessons to be learnt from the religious history of Japan, namely, that global unity must be based on diversity. When the unity is achieved at the expense of diversity, as was the case in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Japan, it only creates hatred, persecution and bloodshed. The future of religion is religious pluralism.

After World War II, there have been a few interrelated movements/initiatives that established the foundations of the current interreligious dialogue. Christian bodies were the ones who started the dialogue, usually in the form of academic research and activities which, however, had the hidden agenda – to contribute to the targets of the Christian mission and, thus, Christianize Japan. Christianity, with its foreign belief and value systems, was badly equipped to cater to the Japanese religious needs of ancestor worship, which is the core of the Japanese religiosity and social unity. Also, because of its exclusivism and intolerance, Christianity was unsuccessful in attracting converts, except for a limited number of intellectuals. Thus, Christianizing Japan turned out to be a rather difficult task. The aim of the academic pursuits of the Christian missions has gradually resigned itself to exerting Christian influence on various areas of Japanese society, namely, its ethical and value systems through education (Christian schools), political and legal systems, especially in regard to democracy, equality and non-discrimination laws, bioethics and so on.

But it is not only Christianity, which had a hidden agenda behind the official dialogue. Looking at the history of interreligious dialogue, it is evident that other religions have also had a hidden agenda when entering into dialogue. In general, religions become involved in dialogue for the purpose of gaining profits, such as new converts, respectability, connections, influence, power or new knowledge. In spite of proclamations to the contrary, it is doubtful that this attitude has changed.

Through the interreligious dialogue, Christians are getting rid of their superiority complex, gaining respect for other religions and realizing that Christianity is not the only “true” religion. Gradually Christians are accepting the fact that in

order to live in harmony and peace in multicultural society, Christianity must accept the fact that it is no longer the dominant religion but only a complementary one. Both Christians and Buddhists see faults in their own religions and, consequently, call for self-reflection and reformation. Buddhism is coming out of its reclusiveness and becoming engaged in social issues. Thus, Japanese Buddhism is going through a major transformation from the so-called funeral Buddhism to engaged Buddhism. New Religions, through the interreligious dialogue, gain social acceptance, respectability and transform themselves from cults and sects into established denominations.

The major obstacle to a further progress in the interreligious dialogue is that it is conducted by religious authorities who depend both financially and emotionally on their parent religious institutions. While there is a handful of independently minded intellectuals who seem to care more about the interest of humanity, rather than the interest of their own religion, the rest of the involved religious participants seem constrained by their religious affiliation and identity. The interreligious dialogue would benefit from involving people religiously neutral and independent of the religious institutions. These people may include scholars of religions, journalists, social scientists, activists and basically anyone versed in religious issues.

However, in spite of various difficulties, there is an evident proof that dialogue has inspired a positive spiritual metamorphosis in some individuals involved in it for a prolonged period of time. Their writings show increased acceptance of religious pluralism. Following the bold criticisms of Christian dogmas by Van Bragt, regarding the violent image of Christian God, as discussed above, I would like to argue that all religions must examine their teachings whether they are appropriate for the twenty-first century to live peacefully in a global village. Religions should dispose of any references to violence, intolerance and discrimination in their teachings, and of violence in their rituals. Religions cannot preach peace if they have teachings referring to violence, which may become justification or seeds of violence.

Since intense globalization started in the 1980s, prompting the term “globalization” to be coined in 1981, counter-movements in politics and religions can be observed since the 1990s in the form of growing conservatism, nationalism, fundamentalism and rising xenophobia. It seems that there is a long way before we can live in a global village where religious pluralism is accepted and where plural religious affiliation is tolerated. However, in the same way as political systems must deal with multiple citizenships, religions must develop ways of coping with multiple religious affiliations. In Japan religious pluralism has a long tradition of fifteen centuries and a multiple religious affiliation has been practiced for many centuries. Polytheistic beliefs in Japan have, of course, helped in processes of a broader acceptance of multiple religious affiliations, which may be challenging for monotheistic religions.

As discussed above, Christianity tends to engage in the interreligious dialogue on a rather philosophical level, where often issues of truth, theology and doctrines play an important role in the dialogue. Japanese religions on the other hand try to avoid these philosophical debates and rather engage in a more concrete cooperation oriented at social activism. It seems that the latter approach is more fruitful and

able to bring a change to the world. The competitive comparison of doctrines and polemics only produce misunderstanding, tension, frustration, animosity and unnecessary confrontation. Religions should refrain from emphasizing differences, as these differences only reflect cultural differences. Rather, religions should recognize the essential similarities in interreligious experience and mysticism, as expressed in trans-religious spirituality. Also cooperation in social, political, educational and cultural activities, particularly in areas such as human rights, welfare, charity, disarmament, social justice, gender and racial equality, and environmental protection, is more profitable for both religions and society, than polemics.

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Towards New Taxonomies of Responsibility and Hope: An Introduction to the South African Policy on Religion and Education (2003)

Paul Prinsloo

Introduction

Generations of children born and yet to be born will suffer the consequences of poverty, malnutrition, of homelessness, of illiteracy and disempowerment generated and sustained by the institutions of apartheid and its manifest effects on life and living for so many. The country has neither the resources nor the skills to reverse fully the massive wrongs. It will take many years of strong commitment, sensitivity and labour to “reconstruct our society” so as to fulfil the legitimate dreams of new generations exposed to real opportunities for advancement denied to preceding generations (Judge Mohamed quoted by Jenkins, 2000, p. 415).

More than 10 years since the demise of apartheid, South Africa is still faced with enormous challenges. Apartheid contaminated and impacted every fibre and dimension of human life. The democratic elections held in 1994 were followed by the acceptance of a new Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), heralded by many as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world (Archer, 2002; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2003; McEwan, 2000). Since the acceptance of the Constitution, South African society has increasingly been re-imagined and re-engineered to celebrate the multiple aspects of diversity in the service of social justice and peace. Education, and educational policy and curriculum were and are essential elements of the national strategy of re-visioning South Africa as a more just and compassionate society (Chisholm, 2005a; 2005b; Jansen, 1990a; 1990b; 2004).

In 2003 South Africa accepted a Policy on Religion and Education¹ (Republic of South Africa), which formalises a particular vision of the role the study of religion(s) can play in national healing, reconciliation and citizenship. The Policy gives a particular interpretation and gestalt to the belief that citizens, if empowered, can

P. Prinsloo (✉)
Directorate Curriculum and Learning Development, University of South Africa, Pretoria,
South Africa
e-mail: Prinsp@unisa.ac.za

¹Hereafter referred to as the Policy.

build a more just and compassionate society. This belief is reminiscent of the function of “hope” after the Holocaust in the work of the early critical theorists like Bloch, Horkheimer and Adorno. Mendes-Flohr (1983, p. 635) quotes Horkheimer who commented about hope “that the earthly horror does not possess the last word”. This hope for redemption and for emancipation “permits one to utter a confident No to the existent order” and looks at social reality “from the standpoint of redemption (*Erlosung*)” (Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p. 635). Mendes-Flohr (1983, pp. 636–637) writes

The future therefore in being anticipated, impels humans to act as active collaborators in the dialectical advance of history. These images of the future, however, are not generated by the dialectic itself, but by man’s primordial capacity to hope, or rather to prefigure the future. The prescient apprehension of the future, which is meant to guide the dialectics of history, ultimately is best articulated in religion.

In the same vein, Bloch calls for a “metaphysics of the future” (Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p. 637). Hope, in a critical theory sense, is at the centre of an epistemology which prevents “the limits of reality to reign supreme” and the forfeiture of the “very essence of our being: to be hopeful” (Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p. 641). Bloch continues to distinguish between “hope” and “idle desire and wishful expectation” by stating:

Hope probes the future and thereby illuminates the possibilities of the present, hope tells us that our present existence is not ultimate and that there is an alternative. Hope permits us to transcend the painful present by anticipating a utopian future – a kind of reality that has never been (1954, p. 312), nonetheless, it is a vision of a possibility that might be realized. Historically, according to Bloch, such visions were most forcefully articulated by religion (Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p. 641).

The Policy is a unique South African response to develop and embed new taxonomies of responsibility and hope. This chapter will continue to

- situate the Policy against the broader debates on citizenship and the nation-state;
- analyse the processes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as introducing *specific* taxonomies of “memory and forgetting”; and
- provide a brief overview of the Policy and some elements of the curriculum.

The Constitution, Citizenship and Education

Since 1994 South Africa is a *rechtstaat* or constitutional state in which the Constitution is regarded as supreme and the final authority (De Waal, Currie, & Erasmus, 2001). The new South Africa is furthermore a *deliberative* democracy referring to the fact that the Constitution is the result of extensive and painstaking processes involving elected representatives from every sector in South Africa. As a deliberative democracy, all policies and legislation should be the result of deliberative and transparent processes (De Waal et al., 2001). Since 1994 the Constitution has been the guiding force and litmus test for new legislation and policy frameworks in a dramatic re-visioning and re-engineering of South African society. As

such, all new policies and legislation must adhere to the principles and the spirit of the Constitution.

Education in the South African context therefore has to translate the values and principles of the Constitution to give a particular gestalt to citizenship and patriotism. Education was historically and still is an integral part of the strategies of many nation-states to shape prospective citizens. Many nations are in the process of redefining their definitions of citizenship not only to address the increase in complexities and the dynamics of pluralism and migration (see, for example Kerr, 1999; Werbner, 2002) but also to address the insecurities of the nation-state with regard to the changed profile of its citizens. Concepts such as nationality, nation-state and citizenship are in flux and are the focus in various discourses and fields (e.g. Bauman, 1995, 1998; Guibernau, 2007; Habermas, 2001; Kymlicka, 2002; Matušík, 1993).

Kymlicka (2002, pp. 284–285) writes that the “health and stability of a modern democracy depend, not only on the justice of its basic institutions, but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens”. Just as the nation-state is withering away (Bauman, 1998, p. 66), so too are the traditional communities that used to provide stability and security for individuals. Individuals are discovering more frequently that these communities are anything but *temporal* places of safety (Bauman, 2000, pp. 169–172). In the past nation-states relied on a mixture of nationalism and patriotism to shape notions of citizenship (Guibernau, 2007). Most nation-states had dominant groups with regard to language, culture and/or religion that shaped descriptions of citizenship and underscored a clear idea of what a “good citizen” looks like. As the economic and political roles of nation-states changed, as well as with the increasing reality of pluralities in previously fairly homogenous states, nationalism and patriotism have changed and are in flux. In these liminal spaces in which nation-states (and citizens) find themselves – between what once was and what needs to be – constitutional patriotism as proposed by inter alia Habermas (2001) seems to be a viable and legitimate option.²

Habermas proposes a citizenship that is not based on “passive inheritance”. Even if it was, citizenship should always be responsive to re-interpretation (Hayward, 2007, p. 184). Hayward summarises the views of Habermas by stating that citizenship is “an artefact of political practice”. In addition to citizenship being an “artefact”, Habermas suggests that citizenship is always *in process*. “Citizen identity is an affiliation that people continuously create and re-create through a series of ongoing public conversations” (Hayward, 2007, p. 184). Collective political societies are bound to the past – whether this bondage is comfortable or not. Notions of nations and citizenship inevitably carry with them a history – a constant burden. “Still, Habermas underscores, there is much room for collective agency as citizens debate with one another and as they decide together *how to relate to their past*” (Hayward, 2007, p. 184; italics in the original). A new identity can be collectively and deliberately (in more than one sense) constructed.

²Constitutional patriotism as proposed by Habermas (2001) is part of a broader “deliberative turn” in democratic theory as explored, for example, by Dryzek (as quoted by Kymlicka, 2002, p. 291).

The Policy is a key ingredient in the deliberate shaping of a collective new South African identity. As such, the Policy confirms the opinion of Codd (1998, p. 237) who says

... policy documents can be said to constitute the official discourse of the state (Codd, 1985). Thus policies produced by and for the state are obvious instances in which language serves a political purpose, constructing particular meanings and signs that work to mask social conflict and foster commitment to the notion of universal public interest. In this way, policy documents produce real social effects through the production and maintenance of consent.

The Policy is a specific ideological response in and to a specific context. Codd (1988, pp. 243–244) emphasises “Policy documents ... are ideological texts that have been constructed within a particular context. *The task of deconstruction begins with the recognition of that context*” (italics added). To fully understand the Policy and its intended impact, we will now proceed to look briefly at the Policy’s context.

Taxonomies of Hope and Reconciliation

Memories of South Africa’s past permeate South African discourses on identity and citizenship, allegiance, patriotism and various claims of entitlement. The majority of South Africans suffered under the system of apartheid with its immense socio-economic impact. *Race* and not religion was the defining characteristic of apartheid legislation. The irony was that adherents of different religions were on both sides of the apartheid system, either as beneficiaries (mostly whites) or as dispossessed and disenfranchised (mostly black). A particular version of Protestant Christianity as represented by Calvinistic Afrikaans churches was, however, foundational to legitimising apartheid as “God’s design” (see Bunting, 1969). Christian National Education (CNE) served the specific purpose of entrenching apartheid by proclaiming white superiority and consigning the majority of South Africans to inhuman conditions and lives of servitude. While the hegemony of CNE shaped the thinking of whites, Bantu Education destined the majority of black South Africans to inferiority and lower-class labour (Jansen, 1990b).

Post-1994, the Constitution, its principles and values provided a crucial framework and impetus to *Curriculum 2005* and the *Manifesto for Values in Education* (Department of Education, 2001). Another major defining moment in post-1994 South African history was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Not only was the TRC a specific negotiated response to the transition to democracy, but it also mapped an “ethics of memory and forgetting” (Booth, 1999) for South Africa. The TRC, its mandate, its processes and its taxonomies not only defined South Africa’s transition but still influences the academic discourses and public debates on curriculum, nation-building and citizenship.

The TRC exposed South Africa’s recent history as “three centuries of fractured morality” (Krog, 1999, p. 68). South Africans were confronted with the abyss of

what they all had become – whether as victims, oppressors or in the contested category of “bystanders”. All South Africans have become inhumane – whether as a result of being treated as such or losing our humanity by treating other humans as less-than-human. As Swartz (2006, p. 552) comments on the TRC, the “rebuilding of the fractured society” started with being confronted with the wounds. The TRC was further clothed in religious, and specifically Christian, taxonomies and rituals (Mamdani, 1996, p. 3; Smit, 1995, p. 13; Maluleke, 1997, p. 324). The distinct use of religious vocabulary and ritual during the hearings refers to a particular and state-sanctioned view on the function of religion in the process of nation-building. This functional view of religion by the newly elected government was later confirmed in the formulation of the Policy.

The TRC’s hearings revealed that religions did not play a role per se in the atrocities committed during apartheid. Perpetrators and victims both referred to the role their religion played in either legitimising or enduring oppression. In the South African context, religious intolerance has never played a role in conflict outside of either supporting opposition to apartheid or legitimising apartheid (Gouws & Du Plessis, 2000, p. 2).³

More than 10 years into the new democracy, taxonomies of who you are and who you *were* during the apartheid years continue to impact on the public discourse. Taxonomies are, however, nothing new to South Africa. As Maluleke (2001, p. 193) states “apartheid was the great simplification of a rather complex society”. The “simple” classification of your race determined where you could live, how late you could remain in which parts of town, the curriculum you were taught and the options you had after matriculation (if you got that far). The TRC not only institutionalised certain terms and concepts but also contributed to the emergence of taxonomies of transformation. Borer (2003), for example, speaks of “a taxonomy of victims and perpetrators”. But the taxonomies not only include categories of role players in the apartheid years but also give existence to categories of “being” in the *new* South Africa. Marx (2002, p. 53) points to the fact that victims’ openness to forgive their perpetrators was proclaimed and perceived as “a self-evident product of their Ubuntu”.⁴

³These authors’ research refers to international studies which found that active participation in a religion often corresponds to political and religious *intolerance* (Gouws & Du Plessis, 2000, p. 4). These studies also found that non-religious people were in general more tolerant than their religious counterparts (2000, pp. 4–5). Gouws and Du Plessis found (2000, p. 6) that “the majority of people are very intolerant” regardless of whether adhering to a religion or not. They further argue that their findings indicate “religion is *not* contributing to making people more tolerant. Religious beliefs do not inspire people to “love their neighbours” (2000, p. 7; italics added). They conclude that tolerance “does not reside in the hearts and minds” of South Africans, regardless of religious adherence or affiliation (2000, p. 15). These authors propose that churches and religious institutions “can take on a new role as agents of socialisation” including acknowledging the “right to proselytise” (2000, p. 15).

⁴*Ubuntu* is a Southern African concept referring to the idiomatic expression in indigenous languages of “I am human because of you” (for a detailed and critical discussion see Marx, 2002).

There is a real expectation that education could and should provide new taxonomies that could contribute to preventing the atrocities of apartheid from happening again. The Policy is expected to play a crucial role in the creation and institutionalisation of new taxonomies of responsibility and hope.

A Short Overview of the Policy's Main Foci and Claims

Clarifying Religion Education, Religious Studies and Religious Instruction

The Policy defines *religion* as follows:

Religion is used to describe the comprehensive and fundamental orientation in the world, mostly with regard to ideas of divinity, spiritual and non-secular beliefs and requiring ultimate commitment, including (but not restricted to) organised forms of religion and certain worldviews, as well as being used collectively to refer to those organisations which are established in order to protect and promote these beliefs (2003, p. 30).

In the Foreword to the Policy, the then Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal, makes it clear that South Africa is *not* a secular state: “We do not have a state religion. But our country is not a secular state where there is a very strict separation between religion and the state” (2003, p. 6). The Policy itself continues to describe its view of a secular state and the implications of such a state for the relationship with religion:

A modern secular state, which is neither religious nor anti-religious, in principle adopts a position of impartiality towards all religions and other worldviews. A separationist model for the secular state represents an attempt to completely divorce the religious and secular spheres of a society, such as in France or the United States. Drawing strict separation between religion and the secular state is extremely difficult to implement in practice, since there is considerable interchange between religion and public life. Furthermore, a strict separation between the two spheres of religion and state is not desirable, since without the commitment and engagement of religious bodies it is difficult to see us improving the quality of life of all our people (paragraph 3, 2003, p. 8).

The main thrust of the Policy is to provide a framework of implementation for specific guidance on religious observances during the official school day, and to provide a framework for Religion Education (as part of Life Orientation Grades R–12) and an elective subject, Religious Studies (Grades 10–12).

Religion Education and Religious Studies are expected to encourage tolerance towards religions *and* secular worldviews. The Policy also prescribes that any overt or covert “denigration of any religion or secular world-view” will not be tolerated (paragraph 14, 2003, p. 12). The Policy therefore not only acknowledges the reality of secularism but also warrants that secularism, as a worldview, will not be denigrated. The Policy states that:

We believe we will do much better as a country if our pupils are exposed to a variety of religious *and secular belief* systems, in a well-informed manner, which gives rise to a

genuine respect for the adherents and practices of all of these, without diminishing in any way the preferred choice of the pupil (paragraph 29; 2003, p. 16; italics added).

Paragraph 62 warrants that students who hold “secular or humanist beliefs” will not be forced to participate in any activities where they may feel denigrated or compromised. The Policy furthermore undertakes to teach *about* “secular values”. Paragraph 30 states:

By teaching about religious and secular values in an open educational environment, schools must ensure that all pupils, irrespective of race, creed, sexual orientation, disability, language, gender, or class, feel welcome, emotionally secure, and appreciated (2003, p. 17).

With regard to claims that the Policy promotes religious relativism, paragraph 68 of the Policy illuminates the Policy’s understanding of the different truth claims of different religions. The Policy states:

Religion can contribute to creating an integrated educational community that affirms unity in diversity. In providing a unified framework for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity, this policy on Religion and Education does not suggest that all religions are the same. Nor does it try to select from different religious traditions to try and build a new unified religion. The policy is not a project in social or religious engineering designed to establish a uniformity of religious beliefs and practices.

The policy does not promote religious relativism, religious syncretism, or any other religious position in relation to the many religions in South Africa and the world. By creating a free, open space for exploration, the policy demonstrates respect for the distinctive character of different ways of life (2003, p. 28).

The Policy further refutes the notion (and allegations) that “all religions are the same” or that the Policy attempts to build a “unified religion”. The Policy does not want to bring about “uniformity of religious beliefs and practices”. By refuting these claims or allegations, the Policy refuses to be drawn into a debate about the “truth” of each religion or worldview *compared to* others. The word “compare” is never used by the Policy; nor does the word “truth” appear in the Policy. Paragraph 22 (2003, p. 14) specifically states that the Policy chose against the alternative to follow a confessional approach to Religious Studies.

If any accusation of relativity could be entertained, it would be the allegation that the Policy is particularly positive about the role and content of religion. The Policy envisages that *all* learners will encounter Religion Education as part of Life Orientation, one of five learning areas in Curriculum 2005. The Policy describes Religion Education as “a set of curriculum outcomes which define what a pupil should know *about* religion” (2003, p. 30; italics added). Paragraph 19 of the Policy locates Religion Education and secondly clarifies the *purpose* of Religion Education within the broader curriculum.

Locating the Policy

The Policy locates the responsibility for Religion Education with *schools*. It secondly locates Religion Education within the curricular domain of values and moral

education.⁵ The location of Religion Education is important and significant as it establishes accountability and responsibility. The Policy locates the responsibility for Religion Education with schools, and *not* with religious leaders in the community or religious organisations or parents. Although all of these role players were involved in the drafting of the Policy and all of them may to a certain extent be involved in the teaching of Religion Education, the *responsibility* of Religion Education is located with schools. This not only makes schools accountable for the implementation of the Policy but also requires schools to translate the Policy into curriculum and syllabi.

Religion Education is secondly located within the curricular domain of *values* and *moral* education. Other options regarding the location of Religion Education may have included anti-racist or genocide/holocaust, citizenship, multicultural studies or peace education. Each of these locations would have impacted on Religion Education. In its present location, it is envisaged to contribute to learners' achievement of "religious literacy" (paragraph 19, 2003, p. 30). Paragraph 19 repeats the parameters as being "religion in its broadest sense, about religions, and about religious diversity in South Africa and the world". The purpose for engaging learners "with a variety of religious traditions" is to encourage "them to grow in their inner spiritual and moral dimensions. It must affirm their own identity, while leading them to an informed understanding of the religious identities of others" (2003, p. 13).

Defining "Religious Literacy"

The term "religious literacy" as such occurs only *once* in the Policy in the context of other literacies. Paragraph 44 (2003, p. 19) states the following:

The Revised National Curriculum Statements of Curriculum 2005 understand literacy to include cultural literacy, ethical literacy, and religion literacy; creativity to include developing capacities for expanding imagination, making connections, and dealing with cultural difference and diversity; and it understands critical reflection to include comparison, cultural analysis, ethical debate, and the formulation and clarification of values. These capacities are captured in the outcome statements and assessment standards of the curriculum, and are obligatory for all pupils.

The Policy does not define or describe what it means by "religious literacy", unless this is defined in the statement in Paragraph 19 that Religion Education should "affirm their own identity, while leading them to an informed understanding of the religious identities of others" (2003, p. 13). Should this be the case it would seem that religious literacy has, according to the Policy, two dimensions: to be first grounded in their own identity and spiritual growth, and second, to have an *informed understanding* of other religious traditions. This seems to concur with

⁵For a discussion on the location of the Policy in the context of legitimising the new dispensation see Chidester (2006).

a definition of religious literacy provided by Prothero (2007). Prothero compares religious literacy to literacy in general and says:

... literacy refers to the ability to use a language – to read and perhaps to write it, to manipulate its vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. In this sense religious literacy refers to the ability to understand and use in one’s day-to-day life the basic building blocks of religious traditions – their key terms, symbols, doctrines, practices, sayings, characters, metaphors, and narratives (2007, p. 22).⁶

Prothero (2007) expands the parameters of his definition by referring to “religious literacies” (plural) to not only refer to different bases for religious literacies, for example “Protestant literacy, Sunni literacy, Zen literacy”, but also include “functional capacities of religious literacy” namely ritual literacy (knowing the meaning and content of different rituals), confessional literacy (a foundational understanding of the basic doctrines), denominational literacy (knowing about the differences between, e.g. Reform and Conservative Jews), narrative literacy (knowing the foundational narratives and characters in the major religions) (Prothero, 2007, p. 23).

The Policy defines Religion Education and Religious Studies as different from *Religious Instruction*, which it describes as “a programme of instruction which is aimed at providing information regarding a particular set of religious beliefs with a view to promoting adherence thereto”. Where Religion Education teaches “*about* religion in its broadest sense, about religions, and about religious diversity in South Africa and the world” (2003, p. 13; italics added), *Religious Instruction* has as focus to promote adherence to a specific faith/belief.

Diversity, the Policy and the Constitution

The Policy therefore attempts to take diversity as a characteristic of South Africa seriously. The Constitution and the Policy are aimed at preventing discrimination and ensuring equality and equity, as well as to finding ways to celebrate diversity. In the Foreword to the Policy, the Minister already indicates, “The Policy is necessary and overdue to give full expression to the invocation of religion in our Constitution and the principles governing religious freedom” (2003, p. 6). Paragraph 9 (2003, p. 10) states:

South Africa is a multi-religious country. Over 60 per cent of our people claim allegiance to Christianity, but South Africa is home to a wide variety of religious traditions.

⁶Prothero (2007) expands the parameters of his definition by referring to “religious literacies” (plural) to not only refer to different bases for religious literacies, e.g. “Protestant literacy, Sunni literacy, Zen literacy” but also to include “functional capacities of religious literacy” namely ritual literacy (knowing the meaning and content of different rituals), confessional literacy (a foundational understanding of the basic doctrines), denominational literacy (knowing about the differences between, e.g. Reform and Conservative Jews), narrative literacy (knowing the foundational narratives and characters in the major religions) (Prothero, 2007, p. 23). Also see the definition of Heimbrock, Scheilke, and Schreiner (2001).

With a deep and enduring indigenous religious heritage, South Africa is a country that also embraces the major religions of the world. Each of these religions is itself a diverse category, encompassing many different understandings and practices. At the same time, many South Africans draw their understanding of the world, ethical principles, and human values from sources independent of religious institutions. In the most profound matters of life orientation, therefore, *diversity is a fact of our national life* (italics mine).

In dealing with the “given” nature of diversity, the Policy tries to “translate” and embody the Constitution’s guidelines regarding diversity. In the Foreword, the Minister already states that “The Policy is necessary and overdue to give full expression to the invocation of religion in our Constitution and the principles governing religious freedom” and “Following the lead of the Constitution and the South African Schools Act, we provide a broad framework within which people of goodwill will work out their own approaches” (2003, p. 6).

The Policy is founded on four principles of which the first principle is that the relationship between education and religion “must flow directly from the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion” (paragraph 8, 2003, p. 9). Paragraph 11 reiterates this position and adds, “By enshrining these basic values, the Constitution provides the framework for determining the relationship between religion and education in a democratic society” (2003, p. 10).

It is crucial to notice that the Policy describes the relationship as “neither advancing nor inhibiting religion” and assuming a “position of fairness, informed by a parity of esteem for all religions, and worldviews”. The Policy describes the state’s position towards religion as “positive impartiality carries a profound appreciation of spirituality and religion in its many manifestations, as reflected by the deference to God in the preamble to our Constitution” but also states that as a state it would “not impose these” (paragraph 5; 2003, p. 9).

The last dimension of the Policy problem is to provide a framework for the relationship between education and religion. The Policy states “we identify the distinctive contribution that religion can make to education, and that education can make to teaching and learning about religion, and we therefore promote the role of religion in education” and

In doing so we work from the premise that the public school has an educational responsibility for teaching and learning about religion and religions, and for promoting these, but that it should do so in ways that are different from the religious instruction and religious nurture provided by the home, family, and religious community (paragraph 1, 2003, p. 7).

In the light of the past, it is also necessary to define the relationship between religion and education. The Policy states:

We do so also in the recognition that there have been instances in which public education institutions have discriminated on the grounds of religious belief, such that greater definition is required. In many cases pupils of one religion are subjected to religious observances in another, without any real choice in the matter (paragraph 2, 2003, p. 7).

The Different Options the Policy Considered

The Policy distinguished between and considered several alternatives or options (also see Chidester, Mitchell, Phiri, & Omar, 1994). The first alternative the Policy entertained is that of a “theocracy”. The Policy rejected theocracy as a viable option as follows: “In a religiously diverse society such as South Africa, this model clearly would be inappropriate” (paragraph 3, 2003, p. 7). The second option considered for regulating the relationship between state and religion was a “repressionist” system defined as “At the other extreme, a repressionist model is based on the premise that the state should act to suppress religion”. In such a model, the state would operate to “marginalise or eliminate religion from public life” (paragraph 3; 2003, p. 7). The Policy judges that “In a religiously active society such as South Africa, any constitutional model based on state hostility towards religion would be unthinkable” (paragraph 3; 2003, p. 7).

The third option the Policy entertained was that of secular/separationist – “A modern secular state, which is neither religious nor anti-religious, in principle adopts a position of impartiality towards all religions and other worldviews. A separationist model for the secular state represents an attempt to completely divorce the religious and secular spheres of a society, such as in France or the United States” (paragraph 3, 2003, p. 8). This option is rejected due to the fact that:

Drawing strict separation between religion and the secular state is extremely difficult to implement in practice, since there is considerable interchange between religion and public life. Furthermore, a strict separation between the two spheres of religion and state is not desirable, since without the commitment and engagement of religious bodies it is difficult to see us improving the quality of life of all our people (paragraph 3; 2003, p. 8).

The fourth option is defined as a “cooperative model” –

In a co-operative model, both the principle of legal separation and the possibility of creative interaction are affirmed. Separate spheres for religion and the state are established by the Constitution, but there is scope for interaction between the two. While ensuring the protection of citizens from religious discrimination or coercion, this model encourages an ongoing dialogue between religious groups and the state in areas of common interest and concern. Even in such exchanges, however, religious individuals and groups must be assured of their freedom from any state interference with regard to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion (paragraph 3; 2003, p. 8).

The Policy also entertained a number of alternatives regarding the specific relationship between education and religion. The Policy rejected confessional forms of religious instruction and motivates the rejection as follows:

Confessional or sectarian forms of religious instruction in public schools are inappropriate for a religiously diverse and democratic society. As institutions with a mandate to serve the entire society, public schools must avoid adopting a particular religion, or a limited set of religions, that advances sectarian or particular interests. Schools should be explaining what religions are about, with clear educational goals and objectives, in ways that increase understanding, build respect for diversity, value spirituality, and clarify the religious and non-religious sources of moral values. We owe this to our pupils, as well as to parents, citizens, and taxpayers (paragraph 22; 2003, p. 14).

Single-faith and multi-faith approaches were also considered but rejected. The Policy opted finally for a “multi tradition” approach, which the Policy describes as

...a multi tradition approach to the study of Religion Education does not promote any particular religion. It is a programme for studying about religion, in all its many forms, as an important dimension of human experience and a significant subject field in the school curriculum (paragraph 23; 2003, p. 15).

The Policy motivates choosing a “multi-tradition” approach as follows:

Instead of promoting a religious position, a programme in Religion Education pursues a balanced approach to teaching and learning about religion. Religion Education can provide opportunities for both a deeper sense of self-realisation and a broader civil acceptance of others. It can balance the familiar and the foreign in ways that give pupils new insights into both. It can facilitate the development of both empathetic appreciation and critical analysis. It can teach pupils about a world of religious diversity, but at the same time it can encourage pupils to think in terms of a new national unity in South Africa. By teaching pupils about the role of religion in history, society, and the world, a unified, multi-tradition programme in the study of religion can be an important part of a well-balanced and complete education (paragraph 25; 2003, p. 15).

The Policy provides the rationale for introducing Religious Studies at an early age by referring to international research:

Research has concluded that Religion Education can be introduced at an early age, in ways that are appropriate to the development of pupils. With an age-appropriate emphasis placed on living together, and without any overt or covert pressures, religion education can start at a very early stage. Pupils in the Foundation Phase could begin a study of religious diversity by exploring the more tangible forms of religion, the observable aspects of religious diversity found in churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, and other places of gathering for religious life (paragraph 50; 2003, p. 23).

The following assessment criteria envisaged for the different grades indicate how the Policy addresses the appropriateness of the curriculum for particular age groups:

Grade R: Identifies and names symbols linked to own religion.

Grade 1: Matches symbols associated with a range of religions in South Africa.

Grade 2: Describes important days from diverse religions.

Grade 3: Discusses diet, clothing and decorations in a variety of religions.

Grade 4: Discusses significant places and buildings in a variety of religions.

Grade 5: Discusses festivals and customs from a variety of religions.

Grade 6: Discusses the dignity of the person in a variety of religions.

Grade 7: Explains the role of oral traditions and scriptures in a range of the world's religions.

Grade 8: Discusses the contributions to social development of organisations from various religions.

Grade 9: Reflects on and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace.

Grade 10: Displays an understanding of the major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems in South Africa, and explores how they contribute to a harmonious society.

Grade 11: Reflects on knowledge and insights gained in major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems, and clarifies own values and beliefs

with the view to debate and analyse contemporary moral and spiritual issues and dilemmas.

Grade 12: Reflects on and explains how to formulate a personal mission statement based on core aspects of personal philosophies, values, beliefs, religions and ideologies, which will inform and direct actions in life and contribute meaningfully to society.

An analysis of the Policy by Prinsloo (2008) has found seven policy claims. These claims are important in evaluating the policy argument as well as determining the probability of the Policy having the impact it envisages.⁷ The Policy claims to

- function in the service of democracy and nation-building (paragraph 14; 2003, p. 11);
- translate the Constitution's provisions regarding the relationship between state and religion as well as education and religion (see for example the Foreword to the Policy (2003, p. 6);
- provide and distinguish between the constitutional roles for state, education, religious organisations and home (paragraphs 2, 5, 14, 17; 2003);
- use and promote religion and certain worldviews as vehicles in a vision of a more just and compassionate society (paragraph 7; 2003, p. 9);
- affirm learners' own religious affiliation and grow their spirituality (paragraph 19; 2003, p. 13);
- promote religion and certain worldviews in service of a common humanity (paragraph 21; 2003, p. 14); and
- be a unique South African response (paragraph 67; 2003, p. 27).

An attempt to cluster these seven claims into a *main* claim results in the following:

The Policy on Religion and Education is a unique South African response to defining citizenship and education, empowering learners to be established in their own cultures and religions as well as being competent and confident in being critically literate in an increasingly diverse and globalising world. The Policy provides an enabling environment by establishing and demarcating clear and distinct roles for parents, religious bodies, educators and educational institutions (Prinsloo, 2008, p. 341).

Some Examples of How the Curriculum Unfolds

Although the Policy also deals with issues like religious observances and the role of parent bodies, and so on, it specifically provides a framework for curriculum development. As such it foresees Religion Education as a compulsory, integrated aspect of Life Orientation (one of five learning areas) and an elective subject, Religious

⁷See Dunn (1994) for a discussion on the interrelation between different elements of policies like policy claims, policy warrants, and a policy argument.

Studies, for Grades 10–12.⁸ Life Orientation has five outcomes (RNCS, 2002a, p. 26),⁹ and the content and assessment criteria for each outcome differ according to the phase in which learners are (RNCS DoE, 2002b, pp. 7–71). The learning outcomes are as follows:

- *Learning Outcome 1: Health Promotion* The learner will be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health.
- *Learning Outcome 2: Social Development* The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.
- *Learning Outcome 3: Personal Development:* The learner will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his or her world.
- *Learning Outcome 4: Physical Development and Movement* The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and participate in, activities that promote movement and physical development.
- *Learning Outcome 5: Orientation to the World of Work* The learner will be able to make informed decisions about further study and career choices (RNCS DoE, 2002a, p. 26).

Religion Education falls in the second focus of Life Orientation, called “Social Development”. Social Development is described as follows (RNCS DoE, 2002b, p. 5):

In a transforming and democratic society, personal development needs to be placed in a social context so as to encourage the acceptance of diversity and commitment to democratic values. Discrimination on the basis of race, origin and gender remains a challenge for learners in the post-apartheid era. To address these issues, this Learning Area Statement deals with human rights as contained in the South African constitution, social relationships and diverse cultures and religions.

Religion Education within the context of “Social Development” is described by the RNCS as follows (DoE, 2002b, p. 6):

The term “religion” in this Life Orientation Learning Area Statement is used to include belief systems and worldviews. Religion Education in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools) rests on a division of responsibilities between the state on the one hand and religious bodies and parental homes on the other. Religion Education, therefore, has a civic rather than a religious function, and promotes civic rights and responsibilities. In the context of the South African Constitution, Religion Education contributes to the wider framework of education by developing in every learner the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary for diverse religions to co-exist in a multi-religious society.

⁸Life Orientation as one of the learning areas is envisaged as follows: “It guides and prepares learners for life and its possibilities. Life Orientation specifically equips learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society” (RNCS, DoE, 2002a, p. 26).

⁹The Foundation and Intermediate Phases cover only the first four learning outcomes, while the Senior Phase includes all five learning outcomes.

Individuals will realise that they are part of the broader community, and will learn to see their own identities in harmony with those of others.

An example of how the above unfolds in the curriculum is Learning Outcome 2 (Citizenship Education) for Grade 10. Assessment Criterion 2 (AS2) states that the learner: “Formulates strategies based on national and international instruments for identifying and intervening in discrimination and violations of human rights. Concepts: strategies and instruments for dealing with human rights violations”. Religion is specifically involved when learners will: “Define the discrimination and violation of human rights, including what causes it (e.g. race, class, creed, rural/urban, HIV and AIDS status, religion, ethnicity, xenophobia, gender, language, prejudice)” (NCS DoE, 2008a, p. 28).

In Learning Outcome 2 (Citizenship Education), Assessment Criterion 4 (AS4) for Grade 10 states that a learner: “Displays an understanding of the major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems in South Africa, and explores how they contribute to a harmonious society” and covers the following concepts: major religions; ethical traditions; belief systems; harmonious society and

- major religions (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, African religions);
- ethical traditions/religious laws;
- indigenous belief systems; and
- religious diversity in South Africa and how each religion contributes to harmonious living (NCS DoE, 2008a, p. 28).

Here it is noteworthy that AS4 focuses on “how each religion contributes to *harmonious* living” (italics added). The same Assessment Criterion (AS4) for Grade 11 (Learning Outcome 2, NCS DoE, 2008a, p. 29) states that a learner: “Reflects on knowledge and insights gained in major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems, and clarifies own values and beliefs with the view to debate and analyse contemporary moral and spiritual issues and dilemmas.” AS4 covers the following concepts – “major religions, own values and beliefs, moral and spiritual issues” – and suggests that learners

- analyse contemporary moral and spiritual issues such as sex, marriage and divorce; abortion; death penalty; crime and punishment; genetic cloning; etc. within the context of at least 2–3 major religions studied in Grade 10.
- analyse and clarify own values and beliefs concerning the above issues.
- prepare for/engage in debates/discussions in which own values and beliefs are used to support one’s position on an issue/dilemma (NCS DoE, 2008a, p. 29).

The elective subject of *Religion Studies* (Grades 10–12) defines the subject as follows:

Religion Studies is the study of religion as a universal human phenomenon, and of religions found in a variety of cultures. Religion and religions are studied without favouring any or

discriminating against any, whether in theory or in practice, and without promoting adherence to any particular religion. Religion Studies leads to the recognition, understanding and appreciation of a variety of religions within a common humanity, in the context of a civic understanding of religion, with a view to developing religious literacy (DoE, 2005, p. 9).

Religion Studies (NCS DoE, 2005, pp. 9–10) is foreseen to have the following purpose:

Religion Studies enhances the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. Religion Studies contributes to the holistic development of the intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of the learner. The purpose is to enhance knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary to enrich each learner, interpersonal relationships and an open and democratic society.

The NCS (DoE, 2005, p. 10) further demarcates the scope of Religion Studies as follows:

- Variety of religions (Learning Outcome 1).
- Universal dimensions of religion as a generic and unique phenomenon (Learning Outcome 2).
- Topical issues in society (Learning Outcome 3).
- Research into religion as a social phenomenon, and across religions (Learning Outcome 4).

The NCS (DoE, 2005) foresees on the one hand that learners will be capable of “cultivating sensitivity and respect across a range of religions” as well as the “confidence to deal positively with differing views”. “Dealing with different views” is part of the challenges facing humans living together. Often different views based in organised religions can become divisive and confrontational. The claims religions often make to represent the “truth” or “the only way”, and that the acceptance or rejection of their claims have eternal consequences, considerably raise the stakes. The study of religion as “a *human* phenomenon” (the first principle; italics mine) however opens the way for “dealing positively with differing views”. At least from an educational perspective, a different viewpoint from my own is “just” another view. This does not imply that the differences are *not* serious or that “all paths lead to Rome”. The contrary is true when learners consider the claims of a religion for its *own* sake and deal with the resultant ambiguity and often perplexing complexities.

Dealing with difference successfully is at the core of peaceful and productive coexistence. A prerequisite for such coexistence is the ability to not only deal with difference but also communicate across differences using a “range of symbolic, conceptual, linguistic and other means of communication”. The “beauty” of the purpose of the Religion Studies as envisaged by the NCS (DoE, 2005) is that it does not *prescribe* ways of coexistence. Rather than prescribing “the way”, it encourages individuals and communities to “co-exist and collaborate with people of various religious persuasions in a variety of ways”.

Religion Studies as a subject also contributes to an open and democratic society by

- allowing the voices of all religions to be heard in the public domain on the basis of equality and nondiscrimination;
- respecting and promoting the human rights and responsibilities of people of all religions in South Africa, Africa and the world;
- stimulating the positive acceptance and appreciation of religious diversity in South African society;
- developing the skills to communicate meaningfully and constructively across religions in a diverse society; and
- reflecting on and critiquing the contributions of religions to the moral, social, economic and political regeneration of society (DoE, 2005, p. 10).

The outcomes as envisaged by the NCS (DoE, 2005, p. 14) for Religion Studies are as follows:

1. The learner is able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a variety of religions.
2. The learner is able to analyse, relate and systematise universal dimensions of religion.
3. The learner is able to reflect critically and constructively on topical issues in society.
4. The learner is able to apply skills of research into religion as a social phenomenon and across religions.

An example of how the curriculum for Religion Studies unfolds is Learning Outcome 1 (LO1) in which learners are introduced to the religions using the world map as *geographical* point of departure (NCS/LPG DoE, 2008b, p. 34). Learners are therefore introduced to religions in Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas and Australasia and the Pacific. Different points of departure could have been a historical timeline or clustering religions according to the mono or plural character of the religion in focus. A *geographical* starting point may provide learners with a “safe” and known place from where to start to explore the “world” of religions. As a result of globalisation the traditional geographical distribution of religions has changed immensely. Such a “map” may provide the opportunity not only to discuss the spread of the religion from the countries of “origin” but also to their being represented worldwide.

Learning Outcome 2 has as its focus: *The learner is able to analyse, relate and systematize universal dimensions of religion* (NCS/LPG DoE, 2008b, p. 34). In this outcome learners are introduced to the purpose (and history) of defining religion(s) and how it relates to other concepts such as worldview, ethical systems, indigenous knowledge systems and belief systems. In Grade 12 learners explore the way the term “teaching” differs from belief, doctrine, dogma, parable, myth, ideology. This will allow learners to engage in the discourses of a particular religion

and really critically explore fundamental beliefs and concepts. In Grade 12 learners can choose one religion and study different components of their choice of religion. These components include

- the nature of divinity;
- the nature of the world;
- the nature of humanity, with reference to community and the individual;
- the place and responsibility of humanity in the world;
- the origin and the role of evil;
- the overcoming of evil; and
- life after death (NCS/LPG DoE, 2008b, p. 34).

One of the main characteristics of the Policy is to provide guidelines for the *educational* study of religion(s). In this educational project the Policy and the NCS/LPG Content Guidelines (2008b, p. 35) are very clear that the subject is not looking for truth and judging whether someone's beliefs are "real". The Content Guidelines are very clear that the subject encourages an understanding of religions "from the point of view of the adherents" (Learning Outcome 2.3 in Grade 10; NCS/LPG DoE, 2008b, p. 35). This is furthermore entrenched in LO2.5 in Grade 10 where learners are exploring "How various religions began" – the roles of the founders, prophets and reformers. LO2.6 (Grade 10) provides for an engagement on the "role of social forms, institutions and roles in religions". The social forms that will be discussed are monarchies, oligarchies, democracies and the division of power between central and local organisations.

The *critical* nature of the Policy and the LPG becomes visible when learners in Grade 10 (LO3.1) are encouraged to explore how specific topics manifest themselves in religions. These topics can include euthanasia, crime and punishment, genetic cloning, suicide, capital punishment and so forth. It is often in exploring a specific belief system's views on such topics that learners, teachers and the communities surrounding the learner are "defamiliarised" (Jensen, 2002) to what they thought they knew or expected. Learners at this age (Grade 10) are very critical of traditional role models and institutions (like their parents) and discovering what their particular belief system or religion states about, for example, abortion may cause considerable disequilibrium for learners, teachers and their communities. The educational study of religion may then lead to a confessional crisis for the learner or even his or her family and/or teachers.¹⁰

Conclusion

The Policy and resulting curriculum provide a clear picture of the role the study of religion *can* play in re-envisioning and reshaping South African society. The

¹⁰This approach to the study of religion(s) is reminiscent of the suggestion by Wood (2001) to promote the study of religion(s) as "critical organic practice".

Policy stands in the service of hope as envisaged by the early critical theorists and as testimony of a “maybe”.

“Maybe” comes with no guarantees, only a chance. But “maybe” has always been the best odds the world has offered to those who set out to alter its course – to find a new land across the sea, to end slavery, to enable women to vote, to walk on the moon, to bring down the Berlin Wall.

Among the many challenges facing South African society, a religiously literate citizenry may contribute to the creation of taxonomies of responsibility and hope.

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Education for Peace: The Indian Context

Ram Puniyani

Introduction

India has witnessed regular recurrence of violence in the name of religion; the violence has seen the massive increase in intensity during the last two decades. First in the 1980s and then especially after the post-Babri demolition massive pogroms were witnessed. The worst of this has been the one of Gujarat where on the pretext of Godhra train burning, a systematic carnage was conducted with the assistance/collusion of the state machinery. After the anti-Sikh pogrom of 1984, communalism manifested itself around Ram Temple, Rath yatras, demolition of the Babri mosque and then the anti-Muslim pogrom, which gripped Mumbai. The Gujarat carnage shook the nation to the core and has been a blot on Indian democracy. “Communalism is today the most serious threat facing the Indian people and the Indian nation. It can tear apart Indian society and become a menace to the hard-won unity of Indian people and unleash forces of barbarism, as it did in Gujarat and earlier in Bombay, Bangalore, Jabalpur, Bhagalpur, Meerut, Moradabad, Punjab and Delhi” (Chandra, 2004, p. 5). Its nature has been changing over a period of years. “The inhuman cruelty committed during the course of communal riots, generally publicized by the media has demonstrated what communalism is capable of. But the character of communal cruelty has changed over years. Its manifestation is more intense and brutal” (Panikkar, 2008, p. v).

Communal Violence

Communal violence is the superficial manifestation of deeper communal politics. It targets the “other” community as the object of hate. Here the values of one’s religion’s humanism are contrasted with the practices of the “other” religions and hatred is created for the other. It is on the basis of this hate that violence can go on in the streets. It is because of the doctored mass consciousness that this

R. Puniyani (✉)

Secretary Center for Studies of Society and Secularism, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

e-mail: jhang45@yahoo.com

violence sustains itself. The doctoring of mass consciousness is also accompanied by religion-based group identity, which consolidates sections of society for this politics and the violence.

Communal violence is the festering wound on the body politic of Indian society. In the pre-independence period communal riots were a sort of reciprocal violence between Hindus and Muslims, with the police (mainly British officers) intervening to restore peace. The nature of these riots after independence has changed in a significant way. First, the numbers of victims are more from the Muslim community; second, the loss of property is also more of Muslims; and third, police play a heavily partisan role in favor of the majority community. Initially it used to be mainly the poor Muslims who were the major victims, but lately even the middle and upper class Muslims have also been drawn into this vortex.

Post-independence Communal Violence

The post-partition riots were followed by a period of comparative calm, in the 1950s barring one episode in eastern India and East Pakistan in 1950. This calm was broken in the 1960s when in 1962 and 1964 the Jabalpur, Jamshedpur, and Rourkela riots broke out.

Of the bloody pogroms in the sixties, the ones at Ranchi, Bihar (1962) and Ahmedabad, Gujarat (1969) stand out as the major events. In the seventies the Turkman Gate massacre of 1976 perpetrated by police . . . , the riots in Moradabad (1980), Nellie, Naogaon, Assam (1983), Bhiwandi (1984) and Meerut (1987) have been the major ones in which more than a thousand lost their lives (Khalidi, 1995, p. 19).

There is a gradual change in the nature of riots in post-independence India; they have gradually acquired a character qualitatively different from those occurring during the British period. These have no more remained assertions to gain economic and political space by subjugating different minority groups at local and or regional level. Instead they now draw their contents from a new form of political discourse that grew first in latent and subsequently in an explicit form through sustained introduction of a communal and divisive ideology. (Lobo and Das, 2006, p. 3)

Decade of the Eighties

In 1989 the Ramjanmabhumi campaign left a big trail of blood in which more than thousand people lost their lives. The massacres of Bhagalpur, Hyderabad, and Aligarh heralded the onset of the bloody 1980s, which has seen the peak of communal violence. Advani's Rath Yatra and post-Babri demolition riots were one of the worst the country has suffered so far. The post-demolition riots gripped Mumbai, Surat, and Bhopal in a major way and many other places in a significant way. From 1960 to 1995 the incidences of riots increased. A big proportion of these have been taking place in six states: UP, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. So far these riots' occurrence is mainly in cities, but

the involvement of villages is also there and has been rising, but lately even the small towns and villages are also being drawn in the vortex.

Social Common Sense

Activist scholar Asghar Ali Engineer points out:

Communal violence can never be explained in terms of religion alone. The religious factor is only apparent but not real. Religion is being exploited by vested interests to sit their own ends. Religion is emotionally appealing so acts as a powerful instrument of mobilization of potential and latent elements (Engineer, 2004, p. 8).

Why has communal violence been growing, why has the killing of innocent victims been possible? Why does the large visible section of society quietly condone the killing of innocents? These questions have been dogging the minds of social activists. At various levels the issues raised by the communal politics have posed a serious challenge to democratic values. One of the obstacles to the values of harmony comes from the notions held by the people about the minority community.

Prevalent Notions Against Minorities

The prevalent notions are encountered through the casual talk with the people, can be gleaned through the media, and are perceptible in different aspects of cultural expressions in the society. The ones' prevalent relate to the history, more so of medieval India, the so called Muslim period of Indian history, related to the ancient Indian history, related to the freedom movement and to the partition tragedy in particular (Puniyani, 2006, p. 40).

About the contemporary society there are many stereotypes related to Muslims, such as marrying more number of times, having 20 children, being aggressive as they eat meat, being conservative, being more unjust to "their" women, and also that all terrorists are Muslims. Many myths or stereotypes are leveled at the Christian minorities also, such as the claim that Christian missionaries are converting forcibly in the tribal areas. Other notions are that that Muslims should be sent to Pakistan and that Christians are foreigners. As the time passes most of these myths about minorities are becoming stronger by the day.

Perceptions Related to History

The root of history-based myths is the communal historiography introduced by the British to pursue their aim of enslaving this country and also their policy of divide and rule. The mass consciousness has been doctored in a way that minorities are viewed with suspicion. This doctored of mass consciousness has been achieved by various mechanisms including the role of communal organizations boosting each other in many ways. The intensity of these varies from place to place in India but its trajectory is the same. It is worst in Gujarat, followed by Jammu. In different parts of the country these prevail in one or the other form with varying shades of intensity.

It was James Mill who periodized Indian history on the grounds of religion, the identities which had begun to become stronger during the British rule. The ancient India being Hindu Rashtra as it was the period of Hindu kings got further boost from the theory propounded by Golwalkar that Aryans are the original inhabitants of this land. The kings cannot be the markers of religion, nor can history be periodized as per the religion of kings. At no point of time was the whole area ruled by the kings belonging to one religion. In addition, the kings kept invading different regions depending on their armed might. Kingdoms cannot be equated to modern nation states. The issue of the Somnath temple and Ram Temple destruction are uppermost in the minds of the people. It is not realized that kings destroyed temples for appropriating wealth and for showing their hegemony over the defeated kingdoms.

It is significant that generally temples are demolished in the territory of an enemy ... it was symbol of the conquest by the sultan. Hindu rulers also did the same long before the Muslims had emerged as a political challenge to these Kingdoms (Mukhia, 1994, p. 26).

Also British historiography was keen to present the Muslim rulers in unfair light, as they had to win over the loyalty of subjects of the country.

Temple Destructions

The British translator A.S. Beevraidge (Quoted in Panikkar, 1991, p. 34) put the unfounded question mark that there might have been a temple at the site where the Babri Masjid mosque is located. There are infinite examples of the Hindu kings destroying Hindu Temples, Muslim kings destroying mosques, such as Aurangzeb destroying the Golconda mosque when tribute was not paid by Tana Shah for a few consecutive years. Hindu kings got the initial mosques made on the Malabar Coast. Tipu Sultan went on to repair the temple Shrirangpatanam, which was destroyed by retreating Maratha armies.

The rule of the kings was not based on the religion of the courtiers, as kings selected courtiers from all the religions. The nine jewels of Akbar, the Muslim generals of Shivaji and Hakim Khan Sur assisting Rana Pratap in his battle against Akbar are too well known.

Spread of Islam

Similarly conversion to Islam in this country is seen as the act of the kings while in reality Islam spread in India because of the humane teachings of Sufi saints. Certainly some individuals and landlords did convert to Islam out of fear or expectation of reward, but those are few compared to the Shudras who embraced Islam in large numbers. To quote Vivekanand "Why amongst the poor of India so many are Mohammedans? It is nonsense to say that they were converted by the sword. It was to gain liberty from Zamindars and Priests..." (Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 330). Many an Islamic/Hindu community imbibed the traditions from both the religious

communities, and Navayat Muslims of Kerala and Mevs of Rajasthan are examples of that. Today the source of origin of many of our traditions, food, and customs cannot be attributed to any one particular religious source. We have syncretic traditions in all streams of our life. Celebrating diversity is one way of looking at it. As such communities do live with each other constantly interacting and transforming their norms of life. It cannot be related just to religion.

Freedom Movement: Rise of Communalism

The freedom movement saw the rise of both Hindu and Muslim communalism. The elite landlord sections were the ones to begin these communal streams which were later joined by some middle class intellectuals, who provided the ideological elaboration for the communal politics. Communal ideology and politics began with the landlords and Princes, “Communalism enabled them to feel nationalistic without opposing imperialism, the foreign power which was then ruling and oppressing Indian people. It enabled them to combine personal safety with nationalist sentiments” (Chandra, 1994, p. 37). It was the British goal to have a foothold in South Asia and so they were keen to partition the country, and the Muslim and Hindu communal streams played in their hands.

Freedom Movement and Rise of Conflicts in the Name of Religion

With the formation of the Indian National Congress and its representation of the cause of “rising classes,” and its methods of “protest” vis-à-vis loyalty, he (Sir Syed) became alarmed and kept aloof from this. Instead he set out to organize the Jagirdari elements amongst Muslims, and along with his followers, he propagated that Congress is meant for the interests of the Hindus and “low-born” classes. In contrast to Congress demand for representation he was for nomination of elite by the British and said that the British are the best guardians of the Muslim interests in India. Later these efforts culminated in the formation of the Muslim league, which stood for the interests of Muslim landlords and Nawabs of Riyasats.

Simultaneously the principles of the Congress were being opposed by another section, Hindu Jamindars, traditional tradesmen (*baniyas*) and the Rajas of Riyasats (Princely states). From the 1870s, a section of Hindu zamindars, moneylenders and middle class professionals began to arouse anti-Muslim sentiments, simultaneously opposing the Congress goal of a single nation, of a common nation irrespective of religious identities. They talked of tyrannical rule of Muslim rulers and of the role of the British in giving liberation from that. They came up with the formulation that the ancient, pre-Mughal age was the golden age of India. The leader of Arya Samaj, Pandit Lekh Ram, went on to condemn all forms of Islam and demanded that Muslims should be expelled from India or converted to Aryanism. They founded Punjab Hindu Sabha, and were hostile to the Indian National Congress. According

to them INC's role of uniting people of different religions into a single nation meant sacrificing Hindu interests to appease Muslims. For them a Hindu is a Hindu first and then an Indian. The culmination of these efforts led to the formation of Hindu Mahasabha and later Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

British rulers realized the differences between Hindu and Muslim elite and embarked on the policy of divide-et-empere (divide and rule). With the formation of Indian National Congress, they were very uncomfortable with its demands. Sir Syed's opposition to these demands was convenient and they encouraged Sir Syed and his elite followers in their "communal demands." The British played their cards well and taking advantage of the Hindu-Muslim divide, they tried to snub the INC many times. They recognized a group of Muslim Nawabs and Jagirdars (Shimla delegation) as the representative of Muslims, and similarly encouraged the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS. None of the organizations undertook any anti-British agitation, neither were they subject to repression by the British.

The declining sections of the elite, landlords and kings resorted to politics in the name Islam or Hinduism and that led to communal violence. "... by assigning the blame to 'other' communalism, thus a sort of backdoor justification for one's own communalism is (or was) provided. Thus the Hindu, Muslim or Sikh communalists justified their own communalism by arguing that they were reacting to the communalism started by the other" (Chandra, 1988, p. 419). This led to partition and then persistence of violence, which resurfaced in more dangerous form from the 1980s. It was not religion due to which the clashes, violence and later the partition tragedy took place; it was the political interests of the declining sections of society, which were couched as religious interests.

These myths had matching myths from the Muslim communal stable. Both communal streams spread it recklessly. In India the RSS has been the major body spreading the venom against minorities, to communalize sections of society. Initially RSS had Shakhnasas where, through Bouddhik (intellectual) sessions, "hate minorities" was spread. Later, different swayamsevaks trained by RSS infiltrated in the field of bureaucracy, education, and media to keep perpetuating these myths. Especially after the Janata Party came to power and Lal Krishna Advani became the information broadcasting minister he planted the swayamsevaks in key positions in the media establishment due to which the communalization of social space began at a rapid speed.

Communal Perceptions: Minority's Plight

It is also interesting that the myths about the current life of the Muslim community came into being due to the historical reasons of the poor education of sections of the Muslim community, which in turn was due to the economic deprivation and maltreatment by the state apparatus and the society. This poor education resulted in the large families while it started being said again that it was due to Islam. The ghettoization and poor education led to fertile ground for the hold of Mullahs, and the policy of state Government appeased the fundamentalist sections of society-led

cases like Shah Bano. It went on to build up the anti-Muslim biases. The biases were cleverly mixed up to project that Muslims belong to Pakistan and that they should leave India and go to Pakistan. By this time the media had started playing a dangerous role in strengthening the stereotypes. The print media was supplemented by visual media and the picture started becoming much vitiated. After the occurrence of communal violence, one could see that after the violence the intensity of hate due to myths/stereotypes went up exponentially.

Role of Education

The school books prevalent in the state-level boards had and have such inherent biases, while the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) books brought out during the 1980s were good and rational. These NCERT books were replaced during the BJP-led NDA regime. All in all the school books, RSS propaganda through word of mouth and its affiliates and mechanisms developed by it, through the media had already prepared a fertile ground for communalization of the social space, more so the middle classes. With violence spreading to villages and with the RSS affiliates like Vishwa Hindu Parishad reaching the villages, communalization also began to reach the villages.

Post-violence Ghettoization

Today we are standing at a very sensitive stage as far as demonization of minorities, and the state of social common sense are concerned. It has not only spread but also gripped the sections of society, the middle class with great severity and other classes in general. Ghettoisation has added to the problems and this emotional distance has brought in physical separation in the form of borders coming up between Hindu and Muslim communities. Most of the urban centers in North India, which have witnessed riots, have separate dwellings for Hindus and Muslims and it is impossible for a Muslim to get a house in a “Hindu” area. Many a professional also face the problem in cosmopolitan offices where communalization has percolated far and wide. Few are the social spaces which have not been influenced by this communalization. The ghettoisation and poverty result in poor hygienic conditions which are again affixed to Muslims while its origin is purely social in nature. The rate of literacy amongst Muslims has been low because of discrimination, because of their coming mostly from Shudra background and from lack of affirmative action for them.

Violence, Minorities and Inquiry Commissions

While violence has multiple social reasons, in popular perceptions the minorities are supposed to be the cause of it. Here the victim is presented as the culprit. As far

as communal violence goes, a new myth is that Muslims start the communal violence because they are as they are violent in nature. This is the highest success of the Right Wing organizations. The minority is generally cornered and then attacked mostly in a preplanned manner, but it is projected as if minorities, Muslims, start the riots. Most of the investigation commissions have pointed out that the riots are engineered by a group affiliated to RSS and many riots are well planned by communal organizations in advance like the one of Gujarat. “By now it has been propagated successfully that Muslims start the riots and then Hindus retaliate. Teesta Setalvad (Who Casts the First Stone, Communalism Combat, March 1998) by citing extracts from five commissions of inquiry shows that truth is the other way around. It is interesting that while the inquiry commissions come to one type of conclusion the popular notions are totally against that and are getting deeply ingrained in people’s minds.”

Post 9/11: Islam, Muslims and Violence

In the aftermath of various acts of terror, there is a prevalent formulation that all Muslims are not terrorists but all terrorists are Muslims which has become part of social common sense, but it has nothing to do with truth. Terrorism is a political process resorted to by a section of people whose democratic rights are strangled, who perceive that the injustice which has been perpetrated on them will not get justice in the times to come, and that revenge is the only option in such a situation. It is a political process and religion or a religious community has nothing to do with it. Neither does any religion promote the killing of innocents (that is what the terrorists do) nor are the terrorists the people chosen by that religious community to undertake such ghastly acts on their behalf.

The definition of terror is also not well formulated. The person appearing as a terrorist for some may be a freedom fighter for others. The examples of Bhagat Singh, the Kashmiri militants and LTTE are examples. We have seen the ghastly terrorist acts by Khalistanis, the ULFA, and the likes of Timothy McVeigh, who dropped a bomb on Oklahoma out of frustration. We also know of a Jewish bomber dropping a bomb on a Hotel in Cairo in 1942 and Buddhist monks indulging in such violent acts in Sri Lanka and Thailand. The backdrop of these countries will tell us the political nature of the acts and that these are not meant to serve any religion.

The trajectory of terrorism in which some Muslims have participated has roots in the oil politics at a global level, in the Kashmir problem and in the rising communal problem in the Indian context. The formation of Al Qaeda by the United States to drive away the Russian armies from Afghanistan is too well known by now. The Kissinger doctrine, “Asians should fight Asian,” was employed to train Al Qaeda by the CIA to fight the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Special Madrasas were set up, which indoctrinated a section of Muslim youth into jihad. The meaning given to this word was that jihad is killing of non-believers, communists in this case, an innovation which worked wonders for US policy. The Muslim youth were dangled the carrot of 72 virgins in Jannat once they lay down their life in pursuance of the US goal of capturing Afghanistan after evicting the Soviet armies.

The demonization of Islam and Muslims began with the US propaganda in the wake of Ayatollah's revolution in Iran, and it was systematically built up with every US intervention in West Asia, the attack on Iraq, the occupation of Afghanistan, the occupation of Iraq, and also after the Al Qaeda attack on WTC. The demonization of Islam and Muslims has been a very systematic process akin to demonization of communists in the cold war era, McCarthyism, and the accompanying propaganda. Noam Chomsky explains this doctrine as "manufacturing consent" for the goals of US foreign policy, which are achieved by US administration through various mechanisms, media being the central key to this doctoring of mass consciousness. This and other means employed by the US administration to demonize Muslims have been outlined very well by Mahmood Mamdani's "Good Muslim Bad Muslim" and by Tariq Ali in "Clash of Fundamentalisms" and "Bush in Babylon," where both these researchers have given the details of US policymakers' documents and the mechanism to demonize the targeted country and the people.

The earlier goal of offsetting the Soviet influence and abetting hegemony was achieved by all methods of propaganda whereby Communists who were fighting for various anti-colonial, anti-imperialist goals were presented as the enemies of democracy and freedom. Now in pursuance of the goal to dominate the West Asian oil zones, anti-Muslim, anti-Islam has become the central point of propaganda. The "ideological" foundation of this was laid by Samuel Huntington who in his book *Clash of Civilizations* puts forward the thesis that the backward Islamic civilization is the real threat to the advanced and democratic western civilization. This global anti-Islamism of the United States finds its supplement in the RSS ideology. Incidentally when the United States was hunting communists, at that time the RSS chief was writing to the home minister in his mercy petition to seek release from jail in the aftermath of Gandhi's murder by RSS-trained swayamsevak. The Sarsanghchalak of RSS that time wrote that if he were released from jail he would give all cooperation to the Government to fight against the communists. Today again, the US designs of anti-Islamism match very well with the RSS designs here in India.

The popular psyche is shaped by multiple factors. There is not much time to get to the roots of the issues and so superficial incidents form the basis of judgments and understanding of the people at large. While those with motives and agenda for dominating the world/society play their games from behind the curtain, an Osama or a Kashmiri militant is visible as holding the AK47 or RDX in his hands, and here the popular understanding comes to a full stop unable to see that Osama is the creation of the United States, or a petty terrorist is insanely avenging the stifling of democracy or violation of the treaty of accession in Kashmir, or a volunteer of Gujarat Muslim A revenge group is insanely avenging the genocide perpetrated against its community. Interestingly in this discourse there is no place for the bomb makers of Bajrang Dal, the RSS affiliates, in Nanded (April 2006), and so the powers that prefer to sleep on the issue and keep arresting hundreds of Muslim youth, as by now the popular psyche, Government machinery, and more particularly police have imbibed the myth that Islam promotes terrorism and that all terrorists are Muslims!

In addition, the interpretation of most of the holy books is problematic, and acts of terror are not due to the reading of those books but due to the political use of

their words by the bigger players of the game, such as the CIA popularizing jihad as the attack on communists in Afghanistan and Kafir for the non-believer communist armies occupying Afghanistan. Their broadened general use is not a religious phenomenon related to Islam but a political phenomenon. Also these books, the Koran, the Vedas and the Bible, are unpalatable in some sections. They are records of their times. What is needed is to distinguish between religion and politics, and politics in the garb of religion. Islam has come under the chopping block of imperialist and communal forces. Madrasas are being seen as the places where terrorists are bred. Most of the scholarly studies on Madrasa show only poor Muslims who cannot afford modern education.

The demonization of this community has started having effects on the psyche of that community. One can see surrender at places by sections of the community. One section hides behind strengthening its conservative identity while another tries to shake off these orthodoxies to come to grips with modern values, modern education, etc., while yet another section has decided to surrender and do the bidding of communal forces while another section of course is joining the tormentors to save their own skin.

The Other Minority: Christians

The Christian minorities have also been “taken care of,” more so since 1996. It was the time when RSS affiliate Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram’s work came to fruition and with this the Christian missionaries were tagged with the image that their primary work was conversion. Amongst various reasons for attacking Christians, one was related to Sonia Gandhi, a Catholic coming to the fore in the political space and having unexpected mass appeal. She was called a “foreigner” and a sinister campaign was initiated which was picked up by sections of Congress itself to break their own party. Today apart from the conversion bogey, the threat of a foreigner ruling the country and India coming under the grip of Italian rule is being conjured up in a serious way amongst sections of the middle classes. The language press in particular has fanned the myths about minorities. The fear amongst Christians living in the villages is increasing. Missionaries have been stripped naked and paraded through the streets, even burnt alive, nuns have been gang raped, churches have been razed to the ground, and the Bible and other literature has been burnt. . . “The heightened animosity and violence against Christians coincides with the rise of BJP at the center” (Panikkar, 1999).

While in the cities the parents of all shades of political thinking vie to put their children in the Christian missionary schools, in the small remote places, Christians are projected as foreigners. The major strategy is the manufacturing of these myths, stereotypes, and to keep percolating them on a constant basis. The social space today seems to be largely gripped by the ideas produced in the RSS shakhas and its head office, and it has serious repercussions for the political chessboard of the country.

India: Islam and Hinduism: Conflict or Interaction

Though it is true that kings fought amongst each other for larger control of territories and the clergy (Ulemas, Brahmins, and Priests) looked down upon others' mode of worship, however the average people, the toilers, the downtrodden of both the religions celebrated interaction with each other. While the kings were preoccupied with expansion or preservation of their kingdoms for their material benefit, the large chunk of society derived pleasure from their social and community life. Different sectors of the nobility were more interested in consolidating their social powers and humiliating the other, but creative layers of society such as poets, laureates, architects, performing artists, folk artists, and painters integrated the other streams into their art, enriching the art itself in the process.

Religious Traditions

In the field of religion the biggest synthetic trends are discernible in the popular religious streams. Bhakti from the Hindu side and Sufi from the side of Islam are the major religious trends to have come up in this period. Kabir, Nanak, and Tulsidas reflected the synthetic trends and the influence of both religions in their lives and works. Kabir rejected Sanskrit, the language of elite Brahmins, communicated with people in simple Hindi, and reflected the building of bridges between the two communities. In one of his Sabda he says that just as ornaments are different manifestation of some basic product, gold, so Allah, Ram, Rahim, and Hari were all different names of the same god. Puja offered by Hindus and Namaz offered by Muslims are just different methods of adoration of the same God. Kabir was a harsh critic of institutionalized religions and the religious traditions which divided people. He was a critic of the mullahs and pundits in equal measures and the social evils which had infested the society in the name of religion such as the caste system and untouchability. His teachings spread amongst many followers of the major religious trends to have come up in this period.

Guru Nanak was for peace in the society; he was influenced by the ideas of Kabir and was a strong proponent of syncretism. He tried to unite Hinduism and Islam by adopting beliefs from both these religions. Borrowing from Islam, Sikhism believes in one God and prohibits image worship. From Hinduism it adopted the theory of reincarnation and karma according to which a person's actions determine his fate in future incarnations. It was against the caste system. The holy book of the Sikhs, *Adi Granth*, quotes extensively from Kabir and Sufi saints like Baba Farid. One of the Sufi saints, Mir Miyan, was requested to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple.

Sufis attracted a large following amongst the lower classes and castes. It was their unorthodox and simple lifestyle which attracted large numbers of low castes to convert to Islam. They were much closer to the masses, both Hindus and Muslims. Their majars (holy places) were open to all irrespective of their religious following. Sufis

were basically upholding the spiritual side of Islam, and it can be said that it was a revolt against the rigidities of Islam, propagated mainly by the Ulema. One of the great Sufi saints Muhiuddin Ibn Arabi founded the doctrine of *Wahahdat-al-wujud*, i.e., unity of being, which promoted spiritual universalism, in turn demolishing the barriers of caste and creed. These doctrines state that the real being is one and we are all its manifestations; this brought in harmony amongst followers of different religions (Engineer, 2004, p. 26).

It is interesting to note that the Sufi saints' writings were very close to the people. Baba Farid wrote poetry in Punjabi and his writings are a part of Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs. Baba Farid's most distinguished follower was Nizamuddin Auliya, who proudly used to say that there were as many ways of worshipping God as there are particles of sand. He was very fond of listening to bhajans, being touched equally by bhajans and quawallis. His respect for local traditions was tremendous.

It is interesting to note here that Ulema often denounced all those who followed religions other than Islam as kafirs, whereas Sufis respected similar spiritual practices in all other religions and showed utmost respect for them (Engineer, 2004). Similarly Mazhar Jan-I-Janan was a Sufi theologian of repute who was again a great upholder of respect for other traditions. Dara Shikoh, the heir of Jahangir's throne, who was murdered by his own brother for the sake of power, was a great Sanskrit scholar who had studied the Hindu scriptures at depth and had written a book called *Majmaul Baharayn* (the meeting of the two great oceans, Hinduism and Islam). In this book he compared the Islamic and Sufi Phraseology with that of Hinduism and showed that there is much in common between the two.

The interaction of the practices of these two religions has been very well summarized by the well-known scholar Dr. B. N Pandey:

Islam and Hinduism which appeared at the start so anti-thetical, at last intermingled; each one stirred the profoundest depth of the other and from their synthesis grew the religion of Bhakti and Tasawwaf, the religion of love and devotion, which swept the hearts of millions following different religions and sects in India. The current of Islamic Sufism and Hindu Bhakti combined into a mighty stream which fertilized old desolate tracts and changed the face of the country. It was this spirit of India which achieved apparently an impossible task of reconciling the puritanical severity and awe inspiring transcendence of Islam into luxuriant fullness and abundance of form and the intuitive perception of their immanent unity with Hinduism, and created those monuments of art, literature, painting, music, poetry and love inspired religion which are the heritage of Indian History, during the middle ages (Quoted in Engineer, 2004, p. 14).

Cultural Interaction

Due to the interaction of the Muslim kings, Islam, and local culture there developed a whole stream of synthetic culture in all walks of life; in music, khayal, ghazal, and thumri are outstanding contributions of these interactions. North Indian classical music as known today is a thorough blend of Hindu and Muslim elements achieved over 500 years. Ibrahim-Second Adishahi of Bijapur (1580–1626) had 300 Hindu singers in his court. To popularize this music amongst Muslims he himself

composed *Kitab-e-Naurang* in Urdu (a book containing 59 poems) and of those the first one is an invocation of goddess Saraswati. Chaitanya Maha Prabhu and most of the Vaishnav saint poets influenced many Muslims to write in their idiom.

Rahim and Raskhan are amongst the very popular Hindi poets who have written in Brij-bhasha in praise of Lord Krishna. Syed Wazid Shah wrote *Hir and Ranja*, the greatest classic of medieval times. Sheikh Mohammed has greatly contributed to Marathi literature and Shivaji's guru (saint teacher) Ramdas had special words of praise for him.

A mixture of Persian dialect with Western Hindi spoken in and around Delhi produced a new language which later came to be called as Urdu. There were great Hindu scholars who not only took to Urdu as an administrative language but also wrote and contributed to Urdu literature. Hindu architecture was masked by a profusion of intricate sculptured detail, while Islamic architecture was notable for elegance and lightness. This fusion of the two styles manifested in different architectural marvels which emerged during this phase.

One of the most valuable relics of the harmony of mediaeval society which has survived the onslaughts of different communal forces is Sufi dargah (shrine). These dargahs are scattered in many cities, managed by Hindu or Muslim families and visited by people of all religions, unmindful of the communal venom being poured by practitioners of communal politics. Right near Mumbai, Haji Malang shrine is a very good expression of the syncretism ethos of medieval times. The hereditary trustee of the shrine is the Kailashnath Gopal Ketkar (a Brahmin). The offerings given at the shrine are a mixture of Hindu and Muslim traditions. Devotees offer chaddars, coconuts, flour, and sheets of flower.

Such examples are numerous and scattered everywhere. Today there is a conscious attempt to downplay such a valuable tradition and to concentrate upon the differences of the elite and the rulers. There is a need to look at the truth as a whole. There is a need to observe the richness of these syncretic traditions, which are a rich tribute to our communities' love, respect, and tolerance for each other.

Religions: Clash or Alliance

In the current times we are witnessing violence of a severe nature all around, in which religion is projected as one of the reasons. It is also projected as a clash between people of two religions and that people belonging to a particular religion are violent due to their faith, also that some violence is a retaliatory violence to check the activities of others who are out to convert the gullible people by luring them.

In India one has seen the intensification of violence in the name of religion more so in the last two decades. After the Babri demolition a wave of violence rocked the nation. In 1998, a pastor working amongst leprosy patients was burnt alive along with his two innocent sons. Anti-Christian violence has been the marker of our times. The burning of the Sabarmati express in Godhra followed by the massive anti-Muslim violence, the genocide, was another blot on the national life. The 9/11 events resulted in the death of close to three thousand people of all religions. Along with

this came the thesis that the current time is the one of the clash of civilizations, and that the the “backward” Islamic civilization is out to destroy the advanced Western civilization. One can see the underlying element of the attempt to relate the violence to religion.

Along with this came misunderstanding about other religions. This misunderstanding has assumed mammoth proportions today and it provides the basis for the violence and the policy of aggression. There is a clear need to understand the difference between religion and politics, just as there is a need to understand the rise of violence from these misconceptions.

Most of the religions came as a set of moral values to guide the people to cultivate the feelings of love for mankind. There began a process of institutionalization of religions to ensure that these values are sustained and percolated to the broad layers of people. At the same time the emphasis on rituals began to be heavier while the focus and emphasis on moral values receded. Today the vested interests have launched efforts to suppress the weaker sections of society and weaker nations for the sake of their material interests. As these attempts are undertaken in the name of religion, a feeling of alienation amongst people overtakes the real spirit of religion.

Those associated with RSS and politics in the name of Hindutva have been spreading hatred amongst different communities. The result is there for all to see. This hatred has been spread against both Muslims and Christians. At the global level the United States has been resorting to “War against Terror,” which is a ploy to attack Islam in oil-rich countries and to create a global Islamophobia. Worldwide, this hatred against Muslims is on the rise. In India the problem is confounded as the US goals worldwide and RSS goals at home match and worsen the problem. In many a Muslim majority country, similar processes are going on against the other religious minorities.

While the political forces bent upon creating this mayhem are very powerful and almighty, have control over resources of different types and in the media, the people with genuine faith in human values need to come forward to ensure that this dark phase of human history is overcome in the spirit of dialogue. The need for intercommunity relations and dialogue has never been needed more.

Religion: Peace Education

The isolation due to this political process is not only creating emotional walls between different communities but also resulting in the retardation of social development. The kernel of the present efforts for peace lies in the process of building bridges between communities and that process can be started only by a genuine dialogue between people of different faiths, by coming close to each other, by abolishing the artificial boundaries created by the politics of hatred being practised by various forces, globally and locally. These dialogues amongst different religious communities are needed at all levels, starting from local groups to the leadership of religions, scholars of religions, the activists engaged in dispelling hate from society, and those working for human rights, all of them need to be involved in this process of dialogue.

We need to look into the recent high-level committee of the United Nations which went on to counter the thesis of the clash of civilizations put forward by the US professor Samuel Huntington. This thesis forms the cover for US ambitions for its aggressions in West Asia. The UN committee (<http://www.unaoc.org/repository/report.htm>) has put forward that there is no clash between civilizations, and that civilizations have an alliance for a better tomorrow. On similar lines one will like to say that there is no clash between the moral values of religions, but it is through the alliance between these values that the human race can look forward to a better future, a future that will eliminate poverty, hunger, disease, and misery from the world. It is this alliance which will ensure that the focus of world policies has to be brought back to the issue of the human rights of weaker sections of society.

There can be no peace without justice. Education for peace involves efforts to look at the real goals of the political forces, which are abusing the name of religion for their political goals. It is imperative that the moral values of religions are highlighted and in education for peace the moral/value aspects of religion must be given the foremost place. With these misconceptions and the mix-up between religion and politics, it is difficult to talk of peace.

The United Nations Resolution 52/13 says: "A culture of peace is based on respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance, the promotion of development, education for peace, the free flow of information and the wider participation of women as an integral approach to preventing violence and conflicts, and efforts aimed creation of conditions for Peace and its consolidation." The focus on global democratic values and participation of all is the crux of peace education, more so at a time when the United Nations itself has been bypassed by the mighty nation of the world. In the contemporary context peace education must address the global political hegemony of powerful nations and the moral values of religion and the fact that these are two separate things.

In general, peace education can be understood from a negative or a positive perspective. Negatively peace education is learning how to react to situations of conflict or war, or how to avoid them. Positively peace education is a long-term proactive strategy. It aims to promote peace that is equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to encounter the many conflicts life offers (Gonsalves, 2003, p. vii).

Thus the responsibility and understanding of peace workers have to range from situations creating conflict—war to human rights and values of global democracy.

Traditionally peace education is understood in three ways: empowering people through peace keeping, peacemaking, and peace building. Peace keeping means learning conflict-preventing skills or ways to deter violence. Peacemaking helps opposite parties (persons, groups, nations) resolve conflict. "Peacemaking means motivating people to choose peaceful solutions to problems and encouraging them to live peaceful lives" (Gonsalves, 2003, p. viii). Today like never before the human race is confronted with divisions in the name of religion as politics is adorning the clothes of religion. The multipronged approach for peace has to have peace education as the kernel of the efforts of mankind.

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A House Divided: The Eastern Churches – Catholic and Orthodox

Paul Bumar

Introduction and Scope of the Chapter

At the Last Supper, after Jesus had spoken of the many mansions in the Father's house, he also prayed "that all may be one . . . that they may also be one in us" (John, 17.21). This, however, is not the case. There are divisions in the Father's house, and what once were "sister churches" now seem to be scarcely on speaking terms. The disunity within the originally unified universal Church is a scandal both within and outside the Christian community. History reveals when the divisions occurred and the subsequent attempts to heal them, but theology (how Christians think and speak about God) and ecclesiology (how the Church might be organized and lead) repeatedly appear as seemingly insurmountable obstacles to union. Theology and ecclesiology have led to major divisions: in the West (e.g., the Protestant and Anglican Churches from the Church of Rome); and, in the East (e.g., the Assyrian and the Oriental Orthodox Churches from the early Church, and, later on, the Eastern Orthodox Churches from Rome, and, in some cases, from one another).

This chapter gives an overview of eastern Christian Churches, Catholic and Orthodox: who they are; when and why they separated; salient issues impeding reunion; and, efforts in the "ecumenical movement."¹ Of the latter, there have been many, more than this brief article should dare to attempt. To illustrate one aspect of the current efforts toward union between Eastern Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, the author draws upon his personal acquaintance with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic

P. Bumar (✉)
Dominican College, Blauvelt, NY, USA
e-mail: durbar2@aol.com; glopeb@aol.com

¹The Vatican II Ecumenical Council defined the ecumenical movement as "activities and enterprises which . . . are started and organized for the fostering of unity among Christians. . ." – such as eliminating offensive words and actions, engaging in dialog, and collaborating in projects for the common good (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, art. 4).

Church and some of its attempts to bridge the divisions with its sister Churches in the Orthodox communion.²

The main point of this chapter is to show that the theological issues usually given as the reasons for divisions do not carry the weight they once did. The main reasons for continued separation are ecclesiological – issues of jurisdiction and governance – and in this regard it is not a matter of “one side coming over to the other,” but of both sides recognizing and respecting – and accepting – the truth of the other. There is a case to be made for the Eastern Catholic Churches to be able to stand with their Orthodox siblings – even to the extent of celebrating of the Eucharist together. Likewise, there is a case to be made for recovering and reinstating modes of Church governance that prevailed in the universal Christian Church before the rise of the monarchical papacy in the second millennium. In other words, it is not simply a case of the Orthodox returning to or “reuniting” with the Roman Catholic communion,³ but of that communion rediscovering its original roots and embracing its Eastern Orthodox siblings.⁴ To move in such directions requires that the Roman Catholic Church, and “the Vatican” in particular, reconsider how the primacy of Peter (also recognized by the Orthodox) is defined and exercised. There are many, even within the Roman Catholic Church, who think it should and must move in different directions. This chapter indicates some of the possible directions – for the Roman Catholic Church in general and the Eastern Catholic Churches in particular. It is intended as a brief introduction to the complexities of any efforts for bridging the gaps between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches. Although it is written primarily from the Roman Catholic perspective, it does reflect salient Orthodox thoughts and feelings about reunification.

Both Sides of the Bridge

It is worth remembering that *pontiff* comes from the Latin “pontifex,” which means bridge maker. It is ironic, however, that for the Orthodox, the manner in which Roman Pontiffs have exercised their claim to universal jurisdiction are anything

²Interested readers are directed to the author’s article, “Many Mansions: East and West in the Roman Catholic Communion,” for an overview of the 19 Eastern Catholic Churches and their history within the Roman Catholic Church. For a much more comprehensive and in-depth study, readers should consult Roberson (1999) and Saato (2006).

³In this article, *Roman Catholic Church* means the totality of *all* the Churches, anywhere, who are in full ecclesiastical communion with the Church of Rome. It currently includes 20 Churches; the Church of Rome plus 19 Eastern Catholic Churches. The *Roman Catholic communion (of Churches)* signifies the same reality as *Roman Catholic Church*, i.e., 20 Churches. The word *communion* is used to emphasize the plurality and interdependence of these Churches.

⁴A striking (but, unfortunately, unique) symbol of this mentality and behavior occurred in 1975 in the Sistine Chapel during a Mass commemorating the lifting of the mutual excommunications of 1054, when Pope Paul VI unexpectedly rose, knelt, and kissed the feet of Metropolitan Meliton, the envoy of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch. Meliton, when prevented by Paul from reciprocating, kissed the Pope’s hand instead (Papas, 2006).

but bridge makers; their claims and actions are the major source of the division. In a similar vein, the Orthodox also view the Eastern Catholic Churches as being unfaithful to their authentic traditions; in uniting with Rome, they “left” orthodoxy. As such, they remain impediments to church union.⁵

Although the Orthodox may not see them as bridges, the Eastern Catholic Churches have been charged with fulfilling a role in promoting Christian unity, which was a major goal of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). Its Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) addresses the divisions both in the West and in the East, and its Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches states: “The Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome have a special role to play in promoting the unity of all Christians, particularly Easterners. . .” (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, art. 24).⁶

Our concern here, therefore, is with the East, with those Churches in the Roman Catholic communion that have a “sister” Eastern Orthodox Church. Between these counterparts, there is an affinity that provides a broad basis for ecumenical dialogue. Despite divisions and differences, they have commonalities and, usually, shared origins that can facilitate efforts toward reunion. Except for the Italo-Albanian and the Maronite Churches, which never left the Roman Catholic communion, and the Hungarian Church, which grew in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries out of various groups of Orthodox from neighboring countries, the 16 other Eastern Catholic Churches⁷ have an identifiable counterpart among the 40 distinct Orthodox Churches listed by Roberson (1999). Table 1 gives a “concordance” of these Orthodox Churches and their Eastern Catholic “sister” Churches. The table indicates their communions, dates of founding and, for the Catholic Churches, of their union – or most recent reunion – with the Church of Rome.

The reader will note that only three of the Eastern Catholic Churches do not have a time when they “left” the Orthodox communion and “came over” to Rome. Sixteen of the 19 Eastern Catholic Churches have their origins within the Catholic communion but at some point “left” the Roman communion and became part of the Orthodox communion. In some instances, an Orthodox Church broke off from an existing Catholic Church; e.g., the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church was founded in 1938 by a group that parted from the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church over the issue of mandatory celibacy for Eastern Catholic priests in the United States (cf., Barriger, 1985; Kaszczak, 2007; Paska, 1975). Most Churches today will acknowledge that whenever and for what-

⁵Conversely, some Orthodox “left” the Roman Catholic Communion and saw this, not as a betrayal, but as preserving the truth, e.g., the formation of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of the United States of America in 1938 (Berringer, 1985).

⁶All references to the documents of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council are from Abbot (1966).

⁷The chapter follows the official list of all the self-governing Churches in the Vatican’s *Annuario Pontificio* (cf. Roberson, 2008a).

Table 1 A Correspondence of the Orthodox Churches and the Eastern Catholic Churches

The Main Orthodox Church Communions (Dates of initial separation from Catholic Communion)	↔ The 19 Eastern Catholic Churches (Dates of reunion with Catholic Communion) ^a
The Assyrian Church of the East (> 431)	↔ Chaldean Catholic Church (1830) ↔ Syro-Malabar Catholic Church (> 1599)
The Oriental Orthodox Churches (> 451)	
The Armenian Apostolic Church	↔ Armenian Catholic Church (1742)
The Christian Coptic Orthodox Church	↔ Coptic Catholic Church (1741)
The Eritrean Orthodox Church	↔ Ethiopian/Eritrean Catholic Church (1961)
The Ethiopian Orthodox Church	↔ Ethiopian/Eritrean Catholic Church (1961)
The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch	↔ Syrian Catholic Church (1782)
The Malankara Orthodox Church	↔ Syro-Malankara Catholic Church (1930)
The Eastern Orthodox Churches (> 1054)	
The Albanian Orthodox Church	↔ Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church (1939)
The Bulgarian Orthodox Church	↔ Bulgarian Byzantine Catholic Church (1861)
The Orthodox Church of Greece	↔ Greek Byzantine Catholic Church (1911) Hungarian Byzantine Catholic Church Italo-Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church Maronite Greek Catholic Church
The Antiochian Orthodox Church	↔ Melkite Greek Catholic Church (1724)
The Orthodox Church of Romania	↔ Romanian Greek Catholic Church (1698)
The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic diocese of the United States	↔ Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church (1646)
The Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church	↔ Slovak Greek Catholic Church (1646)
The Ukrainian Orthodox Churches (5) ^b	↔ Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (1596)
The Macedonian & Serbian Churches	↔ “Yugoslavian” Greek Catholic Church (1777)

^a Roberson (1999).

^b1.) The U.O.C of the USA and Diaspora; 2.) The U.O.C of Canada; and, in Ukraine; 3.) The U.O.C – Moscow Patriarchate, 4.) The U.O.C-Kyivan Patriarchate, and 5.) The Ukraine Autocephalous Orth. Church.

ever reasons the separations occurred, they contradict the prayer of Jesus “that all may be one.” The ecumenical movement, therefore, still exists, and efforts toward reconciliation and reunion continue. Those who engage in ecumenical dialogues know very well that, regardless of who “broke away” from whom, and despite the circumstances, there are wounds on both sides that may be opened, and unresolved issues between parties will reappear. As in any kind of conflict resolution, in ecumenical discussions, each party should be aware of the issues, be sensitive to and respectful of the other party’s position and feelings, and admit to any past and present responsibility for the separation.

This then leads to asking: what are some of the issues to be aware of; what are the kinds of ecumenical efforts occurring between the Churches; and what can religious education offer to help resolve any issues and promote such efforts? Let us look at the Churches in Ukraine for some examples.

Divisive Issues

There are many. One tends to think that they will be doctrinal or theological, but this need not always be the case. It can depend on the Churches involved. For example, the Eastern Catholic Church and the three Orthodox Churches in Ukraine have had to wrestle with the issue of Church property. With the liberation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (and others) in 1989, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church began reclaiming some of the Church property confiscated by the Soviets in 1945 and given over to the Orthodox. This marked “the beginning of deteriorating relations between the Catholic and Orthodox churches” (La Civita, 2007, p. 19). Most of the property disputes have since been resolved,⁸ but it still is an issue to be aware of and sensitive to. Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), after mentioning the over one thousand Orthodox communities that registered as Greek Catholic when allowed to do so after 1989, added: “I can understand the (feelings of) the Russian Orthodox Church. . .It is a wound for the Russian Orthodox Church which is very difficult to heal” (RISU, 2004, p. 28). The Cardinal, however, asserted the right of the UGCC to exist and to reclaim the confiscated property. While wounds are healing, dialogue continues.

Another issue in Ukraine is that of territoriality, jurisdiction, or “who should be in charge here?” Which Eastern Church can now claim to be the “Kyivan Church,” the Church of Ukrainians? There are four today in Ukraine: (1) the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, (2) the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (which was dominant under the Soviets), (3) the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyivan Patriarchate (which broke off from the Moscow Patriarchate in 1992), and (4) the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (which left the Moscow Patriarchate in 1989). The three Orthodox Churches, moreover, are divided among themselves, with the heads of the latter two (3 & 4) claiming the title of “Patriarch of Kyiv.” Add to this considerable problem the fact that in August 2005, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church moved its see from Lviv to Kyiv and changed the title of its head from “Major Archbishop of *Lviv*” to “Major Archbishop of *Kyiv* and *Halych*.”⁹ This results in there being four Eastern Churches with Kyiv as their center and each having jurisdiction over their members throughout Ukraine. Is it possible, desirable, to have only one Church in Ukraine for all the faithful of the Byzantine tradition? Should all become “Orthodox” or all become “Catholic”? Some Orthodox have argued that the Ukrainian Catholics should be either Orthodox or “Latin Rite,” either under a Patriarch of Ukraine (Kyiv) or under the Patriarch of the West (Rome). This position recalls the historical attempts to “latinize” the Eastern Churches.¹⁰ Archbishop Husar, reflecting the position of the UGCC, says:

⁸In 2004, Major Archbishop (and Cardinal) Husar, head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, said disputes still existed in about 25 places in eastern Ukraine, and over 300 in western Ukraine (RISU, January 26, 2004, 24–26).

⁹*Halych* is the territory of Lviv, the western part of the archeparchy, and Kyiv is the eastern (predominantly Orthodox) part.

¹⁰cf. Bumbar, “Many Mansions” chapter in this Handbook.

... one cannot tell us: Disappear! Become Latin or convert to the Orthodox confession! We (the UGCC) wish to be Orthodox in the sense of being of this (Byzantine) tradition. ...But we also wish to remain in communion with the Pope of Rome as the successor of Saint Peter, as the symbol of unity. ... we could be a good example of what it means to be Catholic, in the sense of being in communion with the successor of Peter and not losing in any way our religious or national identity (RISU, 2004, p. 40).

This issue does not go away; namely, the question of a Church being in communion with Rome while at the same time maintaining its own particular theology, liturgy, spirituality, and canonical discipline.¹¹ As mentioned previously, most Orthodox consider ecclesiology – Church governance and canonical discipline – to be their main problem with Rome. They, in effect, are asking: will we be swallowed up and overwhelmed by the ruling hegemony of Rome? Husar is trying to make the case to the Orthodox – and the Church of Rome has to support it – that if the Ukrainian Catholic Church can do it, so can you; be in the Orthodox tradition, and still be in communion with the Bishop of Rome. Any failure or reluctance on the part of Rome to respect the Orthodox as equals, rather than as Churches suffering from some “defects” (*Declaration “Dominus Iesus”*, 2000, p. 17), will be seen as evidence of the West’s desire to dominate and, perhaps, to “convert,” the East.

In the dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox communions there are also theological issues. The first ecumenical councils were very involved with theological disputes, and the first schisms in the universal Church (first, the Assyrian Church of the East and then the 6 Oriental Orthodox Churches) were because of doctrinal disagreements. The issues still remain, but – and this is a sign of hope – they do not seem as divisive as they were originally. Archbishop Husar acknowledged that there may be differences in the emphasis and in wording of Orthodox and Catholic theology, but they are expressing the same faith; essentially, albeit differently:

Our attitude practically is that between the Orthodox and ourselves there are not differences in faith. Questions like purgatory, the Immaculate Conception or the filioque are theological concepts, not faith. And they of course are very different but they are ultimately complementary. ...They represent a different understanding of the gift of faith (RISU, 2004, p. 44).

Such thinking is not unique to those in the Roman Catholic communion, but also can be found in members of the Orthodox communion. In 1994, Pope John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV (Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East) signed a “Common Christological Declaration” (CCD), affirming that Catholics and Assyrians are “united in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God. . .” and they established a common committee to address and remove obstacles to full communion between the two Churches (in Roberson, 1999, p. 18). Moreover, even though the Assyrian Church accepts only the first two ecumenical councils and uses terminology regarding the natures and person of Christ that differs from the terminology of the fourth ecumenical council (in 451), “. . .ecumenical discussions

¹¹These are the four characteristics according to which an individual Church in the Catholic communion is considered to be a self-governing (*sui iuris*) particular church (cf. Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, art. 3, Abbot, p. 374).

held under the auspices of the *Pro Oriente* foundation¹² have concluded that in substance the faith of the Assyrian Church is consistent with the christological teaching of the Council of Chalcedon. . .” (CCD, p. 19). The same has been said regarding the six Oriental Orthodox Churches, that is, “the christological differences between the Oriental Orthodox and those who accepted Chalcedon were only verbal, and. . .in fact both parties profess the same faith in Christ using different formulas” (Roberson, 2008b, p. 4). One, therefore, may conclude that not a few of the theological differences adduced to explain the separation between Orthodox and Catholic Churches never were valid or now are no longer seen as important.

The issue of inserting the phrase *filioque*¹³ in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which has been long seen by the Orthodox as papal usurpation of the dogmatic authority proper to ecumenical councils,¹⁴ has also been revisited. After 4 years of discussion, an Orthodox-Catholic theological consultation recommended, *inter alia*, “. . .that the condemnation made at the Second Council of Lyons (1274) of those ‘who presume to deny that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son’ is no longer applicable” (North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, 2003, Part IV), and recognized that there are legitimate *theological* differences between Churches trying to describe the procession of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.¹⁵ It is worth noting that this theological ambiguity is tolerated even within the Roman Catholic communion. Well before the Second Vatican Council, the Creed in the official liturgical texts of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (which texts are printed in Rome “with the blessing of the Holy Roman Apostolic See”) has the phrase “and the Son” in parentheses, meaning, it can be omitted. This position seems to have been affirmed by Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I when together they recited (in Greek) the Creed without the “*filioque*” at Mass in the Sistine Chapel for the feast of SS. Peter and Paul on June 29, 2008.¹⁶

¹²Dialogues between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church are sponsored and published by the (Austrian) PRO ORIENTE publishing house; wittine@pro-oriente.at

¹³The word means “. . . and the Son” and refers to the procession of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴It was in 1014 that the Church of Rome, apart from any ecumenical council, added *filioque* to the text of the Creed formulated at the Council of Constantinople (381) and formalized at the Council of Chalcedon (451).

¹⁵The Consultation, however, left open for further discussion “the *ecclesiological* issues of primacy and doctrinal authority in the Church” (Part IV). Morbey’s assertion (2001) still holds, “It is. . .ecclesiology that ‘really’ divides us.”

¹⁶It is noteworthy that: (1) the Roman Catholic Church builds its ecclesiology on the primacy of Peter, but celebrates his feast along with that of Paul, his “colleague” – who withstood Peter to his face (Gal. 3:11); and (2) the Ukrainian Catholic Church ranks the feast of Peter and Paul as a “holy day of obligation.” Both these facts might suggest that the Orthodox emphasis on conciliarism/collegiality and the primacy of the particular churches really is an authentic and necessary, albeit neglected, element of Catholic ecclesiology; *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the rule of prayer is the rule of belief).

This is but a recent instance of increasing rapprochement between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. There is a series of other instances. Back in October 1940, when the Italo-Albanian Catholic Church held an inter-eparchial (“diocesan”) synod to unify church discipline and protect its Byzantine traditions they had a delegation from the Italo-Albanian Orthodox Church present. In a similar vein, there were delegations from Orthodox Churches at all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The very day before the closing of Vatican II on December 8, 1965, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras issued a joint declaration in which, as heads of their respective Churches, they clearly stated joint regret for past offensive (sometimes downright insulting) words, the subsequent excommunications, and the “misunderstanding and mutual distrust (which) led in the end to the actual breaking off of ecclesiastical communion” (in Holmes & Bickers, 1983, p. 66). Their regrets were countered with their hopes for the eventual restoration of full communion. One sign of these hopes was the formation of the *Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church* in 1980.¹⁷ Despite setbacks, apparent “dead ends,” and threatened walkouts over the years, the Commission continues its work. It ended its most recent, and very productive, session in October 2007 by issuing the lengthy “Ravenna Document,” which clarifies areas of agreement on ecclesial communion, conciliarity, and authority. The Commission acknowledged that while “primacy at the universal level is accepted by both East and West, there are differences of understanding with regard to the manner in which it is to be exercised. . . .” (Joint International Commission, 2007, 43.2), and went on to add “It remains for the question of the bishop of Rome in the communion of all the Churches to be studied in greater depth . . . the specific function of the bishop of the ‘first see’ in an ecclesiology of *koinonia*” (Joint International Commission, [JIC] 2007, p. 45).

Here, as throughout history, the most controversial issue is ecclesiological; that is, the exercise of “primacy at the universal level in the Church” (JIC, 1993, p. 46). It seems that the Roman Catholic Church resists any rethinking in its current understanding of papal primacy; the pope being “the divinely appointed successor of St. Peter in supreme governance over the universal Church” (Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, art. 3, Abbot, p. 374). On the other hand, the Orthodox Churches resist any dilution of their ecclesiology of *koinonia*, that is, a universal communion of autonomous and autocephalous Churches united in shared acceptance of the Apostolic faith – as defined by all the bishops in an ecumenical council.¹⁸

¹⁷It must be noted that, as a “commission,” the group does not represent the official voices of its respective Churches. It does, however, reflect current thinking and aspirations.

¹⁸Part of the problem may lie in conflating *primacy* and *infallibility*. The primacy of Rome is accepted – even by the Orthodox – but not all pronouncements of popes are inerrant. *Infallibility* attaches to ecumenical councils and also to the pope, but only *when he speaks, ex cathedra, as the head of all the bishops, the official voice for the universal Church*. Since the declaration of papal infallibility at the Vatican Ecumenical Council (1870), only once has a pope done so – Pius XII in 1950 proclaiming the dogma of the Assumption of Mary – and this just affirmed the centuries-old belief of the Church.

The Orthodox fear (not without historical justification) that communion with Rome can lead to loss of identity, autonomy and authority. In the “Balamand Statement” issued at its VII Plenary Session, the Commission had repudiated “unitism”¹⁹ as a model for seeking Christian unity “because of the way in which Catholics and Orthodox . . . discover each other once again as Sister Churches. . .” (JIC, 1993, p. 12). “Sister Churches” is a long-standing metaphor in the Orthodox communion to describe the relationship between all its Churches, even though they also use the term *patriarch* (from the Greek for “head father”).²⁰ In the filial relationship, one may be older or have a certain status, but an essential equality remains between siblings. It seems this is what the Orthodox Churches would like to see in the Roman Catholic Church; acceptance of the fact that while “the bishop of one local Church (may) have precedence in a metropolia, a patriarchate, or in the universal Church. . .he still remains primarily bishop of a local Church” (Saato, 2006, p. 157), and respects the authority and autonomy of a “sister church.” Failure to recognize and respect their Churches has been sharply criticized by the Dean of the Orthodox Cathedral in Ottawa:

... the attempted subversion of our Churches by the “agents of Rome” – ONLY took place BECAUSE the Roman Church saw the Orthodox world as “ other”, as “not-subject-to-Rome” . . . “not-truly-Christian.” . . .If Rome had seen us as fellow Christians, sister-Churches, as the local Church wherever we were . . . there would have been. . .no need for persuasion, evangelization, subordination, domination. So the issue is not . . . only one of grievances concerning historical acts – . . . for which we need to repent, too – but one of . . . ecclesiology. “That is truly and only the Church which subsists in communion with the See of Rome,” says Rome. Period. (Morbey, 2001, p. 7)

Both parties – Catholic and Orthodox – seem to be on either side of a Rubicon in the ecumenical movement. Attempts, however, are being made to cross the divide. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) proposed two noteworthy, and remarkable, initiatives regarding: (a) inter-ecclesial concelebration of the Eucharist and (b) simultaneous dual membership in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox communions.

Inter-ecclesial Concelebration

At the end of the 2006 synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Archbishop Husar had declared that, as a *sui iuris* Church of the Eastern Christian Byzantine tradition, the UGCC was “called to assist in the full and mutual understanding of two

¹⁹Churches “leaving” Orthodoxy and “joining with” Rome, usually as a result of missionary activity.

²⁰The fact that, in 2006, Pope Benedict XVI deliberately stopped using the title “Patriarch of the West” – the only title of the Bishop of Rome that dates back to the time of an undivided Christianity – but continues to use “Supreme Pontiff,” is seen by the Orthodox as another papal assertion of universal jurisdiction over all Churches, and it troubles them (Saato, 2006, p. 157).

Christian traditions – Byzantine and Latin”²¹ (Husar, 2006a, 1.1–4). He went on to say that to “promote the holiness of the united people of God” the UGCC should “consciously and consistently work for the uniting of Christians of the Kyivan tradition”²² (Husar, 2006a, 2.B.2). He suggests that the UGCC and, one presumes, other Eastern Catholic Churches can serve as a bridge over the ecumenical Rubicon.

One month later in Rome, at the Synod of Bishops presided over by Benedict XVI, Archbishop Husar proposed a rather radical notion: concelebration of the Eucharist among Orthodox and Eastern Catholics. His reasoning and question:

If the Liturgy is a *regula fidei* (*lex orandi, lex credendi*); if the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Oriental Churches in communion with the See of Rome and by the Orthodox or Apostolic Churches is identical for both; if there is mutual recognition of the Apostolic Succession of Bishops and, consequently, of priests that celebrate it, then my question is: what more is required for unity? Is there maybe another *fons* or another *culmen* superior to the Eucharist? And if not, why isn't concelebration permitted? (Husar, 2006b, p. 3)

The Archbishop's question went unanswered. He later said “this issue should be widely discussed by both the Catholic and the Orthodox sides . . . inside the Kyivan Church, in its four separated branches” (emphasis added) and that the results of such work could be proposed for other Churches because it is a universal problem that “deals with the nature of the Church and . . . of the Holy Eucharist” (Husar, 2006a, p. 4). The Archbishop, by the way, did not seem to limit the need for dialogue only to Orthodox–Catholic relations, but ended his remarks by proposing that the next Synod (2007) be dedicated to the Eastern Catholic Churches, “in order to grow also in Catholic *intra*-ecclesial communion.”²³

Archbishop Husar's promoting Orthodox-Catholic concelebration of Eucharist was seconded at the Synod by Sophron Mudriy, Bishop Emeritus of Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukraine). He proposed revising Canon 702 of the Eastern Code, which prohibits concelebration of the Eucharist with “non-Catholic” priests, and suggested that “non-Catholic” perhaps should not include Orthodox priests.²⁴ He added, “. . . the Eucharist not only expresses the unity of the Church, but produces it. As an element constituting unity, it cannot come afterwards; but must be welcomed as a key moment in order to make our ecumenical aspirations practical,” and “common participation in celebration of the Eucharist” could help realize Jesus' prayer that all may be one (Mudriy, 2006, pp. 3–5). He concluded by saying that discussions on

²¹The “Byzantine tradition” would include all the Christian Churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, whose historical roots are traceable to Constantinople. Likewise, the “Latin tradition” includes the Churches traceable to Rome.

²²The “Kyivan tradition” would include all the Eastern Christian Churches who can trace their origins back to Prince Volodymyr's baptizing (988), i.e., the UGCC and three Orthodox Churches - in Ukraine and, presumably, the Diaspora.

²³Unfortunately, the 2007 Synod did not address this issue, thus possibly further convincing the Orthodox that the status of Eastern Christians, even those within the Roman Catholic communion, is not a priority.

²⁴The Eastern Code already allows, in cases of pastoral necessity, Catholics to go to an Orthodox Church or Orthodox to a Catholic church to receive Eucharist and other sacraments.

concelebration are not very present “in the official relations between our Churches, but are felt more and more in our daily pastoral work” (6). This seems to suggest that “grassroots ecumenism” might produce changes in thinking and attitudes, and pastoral initiatives will accomplish what talking alone has failed to do.

Dual Unity

The second possible ecumenical initiative was reportedly proposed by Archbishop Husar: “A system of dual unity, allowing Greek Catholics to rebuild formal links with Orthodoxy while retaining communion with Rome” as “part of a move to create one Ukrainian Church” (Luxmoore, 2008). The Constantinople Patriarchate, however, officially stated its position: “full unity in faith is the precondition for the communion in the sacraments” (RISU, July 7, 2008). Political considerations once again, it seems, triumphed; the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow thought Patriarch Bartholomew²⁵ was “intensifying efforts to become the Eastern Pope” and this could “lead to schism in the Orthodox world” (Luxmoore, 2008). The first schism could well be in Ukraine if, as reported, “The Cardinal’s proposal is part of a move to create one Ukrainian Church incorporating Greek Catholics (the UGCC) and two of the country’s three rival Orthodox denominations.”

Church structure and governance, therefore, are major problems in *inter*-ecclesial relations. It should also be evident that the Eastern Orthodox Churches themselves have *intra*-ecclesial differences based on structure and governance, cf., the three Orthodox Churches in Ukraine. Some also see similar problems in the Roman Catholic Churches – both the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches. Wilkins decries the withering of a promised collegiality in the universal church: “Structural change is the great unfinished business of Vatican II” (Wilkins, 2008, p. 11), and Greeley bluntly says: “Don’t expect real reform in the Catholic Church until the Roman curia is brought under the control of local bishops” (Greeley, 2008, p. 1). The problem also exists in the Eastern Catholic Churches. Galadza contends: “the structure of the Church now in place throughout large segments of Eastern Catholicism is detrimental to the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of Christ’s Church” (Galadza, 2009, p. 373). The comments of all three recall what the Orthodox often say: the “problem with Rome” is one of ecclesiology – how authority is structured and exercised in the Church. The issues between Orthodox and Catholics and between Eastern and Western Catholics are similar: they revolve around the hegemony of Rome. It exacerbates rifts between Orthodox and Catholics and creates tensions and fault lines within the Roman Catholic communion. What

²⁵The Patriarch of Constantinople, as the “Patriarch of the East” since Chalcedon (451), holds a primacy of “first among equals” among the world’s nine canonical Orthodox Churches. The Russian Orthodox Church is the largest of the nine, and also the mother church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, whose head resides in Kyiv.

can the Eastern Catholic Churches do to heal division in the “Father’s house,” and what can religious educators do?

Future Agenda

The ecclesial bodies involved are the entire Roman Catholic Church (RCC), the Church of Rome, and the Eastern Catholic Churches. Each of these can effect some change in its interactions with the Orthodox as well as with others in the Roman Catholic communion.

Throughout its history the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) has been both a help and a hindrance in efforts toward Church reunion. It has always “welcomed back” the separated Churches, but less often “reached out” to them and admitted its own failings and wrongdoing. It will have to more readily admit that failings in *inter*-ecclesial relations were not simply actions of rogue individuals, but sometimes the actions of the RCC as institution, e.g., the sacking of Constantinople by the Church-sanctioned Fourth Crusade. When, therefore, in 2001 on his visit to Greece, Pope John Paul II asked God to forgive “some sons and daughters of the Roman Church” who had done wrong, the Orthodox did not see this as an apology for the actions of the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, they felt that the Pope should have asked the Orthodox – not just God – for forgiveness of wrongdoing against them (Morbey, 2001). Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in 1965 had expressed mutual regret for the wrong done by the *Churches* on either side. Why, the Orthodox rightly ask, should John Paul II, 36 years later, not be able to say the same thing? The attitude of the RCC has to be consistent and not depend on the personality of the incumbent Pope.

Another thing that must be addressed by the Roman Catholic Church is an attitude, as perceived by the Orthodox, of “imperialism” and self-righteousness, that is, “taking over” other Churches and insisting that it alone is the one true Church²⁶ and other Christian Churches “suffer from defects” (*Declaration Dominus Iesus*, 2000, p. 17). The RCC has to develop new, more inclusive language and attitudes in defining itself and inter-ecclesial relationships. Moreover, the historical attempts to “latinize” Eastern Churches and the papal pronouncements of “universal jurisdiction” over all Churches still echo in the minds of the Orthodox who so greatly treasure the autonomy/autocephaly of their individual Churches, where “the Patriarch or any other Primate is always a *primus inter pares*”²⁷ and has no “personal jurisdiction . . . over other bishops” (Alexander Schmemmann, in Abbott, 1966, p. 388). To this end, the RCC might seriously consider the call of Margaret O’Gara, a leading ecumenist and former head of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

²⁶The “Church . . . subsists in the Catholic Church,” and “. . . the Church of Christ survives in the world today in its institutional fullness in the Catholic Church, although elements of the Church are present in other Churches. . .” (*Lumen Gentium*, 8., and footnote 23, in Abbot, 1966, p. 23).

²⁷“first among equals”

O’Gara said that for the (Roman) papacy to serve the cause of Christian unity, it must be reformed “in a more pastoral . . . less centralized way, in a way that defends the diversity of the local Churches” (in Allen, 2008, p. 7). The Orthodox would welcome this, but they might have some wariness about two of O’Gara’s specific suggestions for a reformed papacy.

O’Gara’s first suggestion is to remedy “a confusion between papal infallibility and papal primacy, the latter referring to pope’s regular business of governance” (in Allen, 2008, p. 9). In other words, not everything “official” that comes out of Rome is “Gospel truth.” The Orthodox would readily agree with this, but they might still be suspicious of the pope’s “regular (business of) governance” and exercise of primacy, which show little sign of operating in ways that are “less centralized, less authoritarian, and more respectful of the diversity of local churches” (in Allen, 2008, p. 2).

O’Gara’s second suggestion is to reframe *infallibility* so that “Rather than appearing as an unchanging grasp of truth, infallibility could be reinterpreted as the process through which, over time, *the Church* (emphasis added) discerns core teachings of the gospel for its age and culture” (in Allen, 2008, p. 11). Traditional Orthodox theology, with its emphasis on preserving “the one Tradition, the fundamental Christian message” (Ware, 1997, p. 197), may be wary of the Gospel message being discerned for an age or culture.²⁸ Some Orthodox, however, eschew a “theology of repetition,” and look forward to the Gospel message “assuming new forms” and being “enriched by fresh statements of the faith” (Ware, 1997, p. 198), so this may not be an insurmountable obstacle in dialogue, but it must be tactfully addressed. However it is defined, infallibility must be seen as a characteristic of the universal *Church* for which the Bishop of Rome can speak, in certain, well-defined instances – and apart from which he cannot “speak infallibly.” This is more congruent with an Orthodox understanding of the role of ecumenical councils and synods of bishops. Such an understanding of infallibility of the *Church* must be made evident in papal pronouncements and actions, and any attempts within the RCC to minimize the authority of an ecumenical council (viz., Vatican II) will be seen by the Orthodox as evidence that “Rome” does not value the authority of ecumenical councils or episcopal synods,²⁹ and really relies only on the person of the Pope to speak for – and to – the other Churches. This is anathema to them. The Roman Catholic Church is making efforts for Church union, but its practices will always speak more persuasively in ecumenical dialogue than its preaching.

One thing the Orthodox Churches closely look at is the position and status of the Eastern Catholic Churches within the RCC: how they are treated in communion with the Church of Rome. If ecumenical efforts are to produce more positive results, the historical record has to be overcome by evidence of real change. For example,

²⁸Recall that *orthodoxos* is Greek, combining *orthos* (“right, true”) and *doxos* (“opinion, praise”). Applied literally, this makes it hard to alter one’s currently held belief system. Ware (1997, p. 197) recalls the bishop at the Council of Carthage (257) who said: “The Lord said I am truth. He did not say, ‘I am custom.’ ”

²⁹For an analysis and critique of *collegiality* in the RCC, see Wilkins (2008, June 6).

despite the pronouncements of Vatican II about the rights of the *sui iuris* Eastern Catholic Churches – one of which is a married priesthood – there was initially strong opposition to Ukrainian bishops ordaining married men to the priesthood in Canada and the United States³⁰ and opposition to married priests persists in the Church of Rome. At the 2005 Synod of Bishops, Cardinal Scola gave the opening speech in which he maintained “profound theological motives” for not ordaining married men. When he was challenged on this by Melkite Patriarch Gregoire III, Cardinal Scola again asserted that “in the Latin Church theological reasons exist” for celibacy (Meichtry, 2005, Oct. 4). Such a bald assertion is insulting to Eastern Catholic Churches – to their many-centuries-old practice and to their married priests. It also insults the Orthodox. They may rightly say that if Rome does not genuinely respect the traditions of the Eastern Catholic Churches, it will not honor ours; despite well-intentioned and high-sounding pronouncements, the attitude of Rome has not really changed and Rome will still determine what should be true for all.³¹

The Eastern Catholic Churches must themselves attend to “the preservation and growth of each individual Church” (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*[OE], p. 4), first, by preserving and promoting their own individual traditions and then by asserting their right and duty “to rule themselves” (OE, p. 5). This includes not only the right to maintain a tradition of married priests but other rights and privileges “which flourished when East and West were in union” (OE, p. 9). Most important among these is the right to self-governance in ways that more closely reflect an eastern, synodal Church structure.

An example of this Eastern structure occurred at the start of Vatican II. The Preparatory Commission of the Council had asked bishops to submit their proposals. Instead of submitting individual responses, the bishops of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church followed their eastern synodal tradition and wrote to the Commission: “We have believed it more useful to give our proposal together, in common. . .” (Taft, 1992, p. 2), thus modeling a collegiality that perhaps helped the Council itself to later espouse.

A second example of Eastern assertiveness, also from the Melkites, came from Maximos IV, their Patriarch. In his opening speech at the first session, he showed that he and the Melkite Church would not go along with the hegemony of the Church of Rome – even “when in Rome” – and in St. Peter’s!

He refused to speak in Latin, the language of the Latin Church, but not . . . of the Catholic Church nor of his. He refused to follow protocol and address “Their Eminences,” the cardinals, before “Their Beatitudes,” the Eastern patriarchs, for in his ecclesiology patriarchs, the

³⁰The Ukrainian Bishop of Toronto who did so after Vatican II was so severely chastised by “Rome” that, according to R. Danylak, the then Chancellor of the diocese, he would “never do it again” (personal communication, August 1979). Over the past decade, however, some Ukrainian bishops in the United States have begun again to ordain married men.

³¹Cardinal Sfeir, The Maronite Patriarch, said that despite problems, clerical celibacy is “the most precious jewel in the treasure of the Catholic Church” (Allen, 2005, p. 4). Such statements by Eastern Catholic hierarchs can only confirm Orthodox fears that their traditions would be suppressed in any communion with Rome.

heads of local Churches, did not take second place to cardinals, who were but second-rank dignitaries of one such communion, the Latin Church. He also urged the West to allow the vernacular in the liturgy, following the lead of the East, “where every language is, in effect, liturgical.” And he concluded, in true Eastern fashion, that the matter at any rate should be left to the local Churches to decide. (Taft, 1992, p. 14)

Patriarch Maximos was affirming the rights and privileges of the Eastern Churches viz. their synodal structure, the place of patriarchs, their liturgical tradition and practices, and their authority for self-determination. He was affirming that these rights were theirs, not by virtue of Rome’s permission but by virtue of ecumenical councils’ decisions and their own Church history. The actions of a U.S. cardinal may have added impetus to his stance. Prior to the Council, the cardinal complained to Maximos that because English was being used in Melkite Eucharistic liturgies in the United States, Latin Rite Catholics would also want to do the same. The cardinal asked Maximos to discontinue use of the vernacular. Maximos “responded with dignity and courtesy, but with great firmness and unambiguous clarity, that the liturgical languages of the Byzantine Church were none of His Eminence’s business” (Taft, 1992, p. 10).³² Maximos explained his response to the cardinal and his behavior at the Council by saying it was because “the Catholic Melkites had never lost contact with their Orthodox roots . . .” and were able “to discern what is essential (i.e., Catholic) from what is contingent (i.e., Latin) in Catholicism. . .” and become “a counterbalance to Latin Catholic unilateralism” (Taft, 1992, p. 2). Other Melkite bishops at the Council followed Maximos’ lead and by doing so set an example for other Eastern Churches. Years later at the 2005 Synod in Rome, when Archbishop Husar and Bishop Mudriy proposed concelebration between Catholic and Orthodox priests, they were demonstrating (eastern) episcopal authority and challenging the canonical status quo “approved by Rome.”

The direction that the Eastern Catholic Churches should move in has been demonstrated, but such leadership has to be shown consistently, and by all 19 Eastern Catholic Churches. A Byzantine Catholic priest, writing of possibilities for Eastern Catholic liturgy and spirituality, cautions that “little of this potential is bound to be realized – except in discrete communities where bold, intelligent and holy leaders have managed to emerge or retain their positions at the helm” (Galadza, 2009, p. 13). Such leaders, however, have an uphill battle. The very Vatican II document that asserted the right and duty of Eastern Churches “to rule themselves” (OE, p. 5) goes on to say that “The Patriarchs with their synods constitute the superior authority for all affairs of the Patriarchate” and can establish new eparchies or nominate bishops within their territory, but they do so “without prejudice to the *inalienable right of the Roman Pontiff to intervene* in individual cases” (OE, p. 9). This undercuts Eastern Churches’ autonomy and their authority “to rule themselves.”

³²Maximos could also have added that even as Patriarch it would be contrary to Eastern Church governance for him to tell another Melkite bishop what to do in this regard.

Religious Educators

Because hierarchical leadership may be hamstrung, religious educators have an even more pressing role in challenging the “ruling hegemony” and in facilitating ecumenical efforts between Eastern Churches. According to Vatican II: “An individual layman, by reason of the knowledge, competence, or outstanding ability which he may enjoy, is permitted and sometimes even obliged to express his opinion on things which concern the good of the Church” (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, p. 37). Just as infallibility and the primacy of the Pope of Rome should not be confused, neither should authority and leadership. In the Church, as in any organization, leadership is found not only “at the top” but also in anyone who moves the group in a specific direction – which, if not different, can be at least more determined. True leadership challenges the status quo, going beyond what currently exists. Religious educators, therefore, have a critical leadership role – in educating (fr. *e-ducere* – “to lead out/forth”), not only individuals but also the institution of which they are a part.

Religious educators also have a role in promoting Church unity. Change is the domain of education. Ecumenical efforts depend on changing the behavior, ideas, and language of individuals and the institutions of which they are a part. Religious educators must help clarify the language used in ecumenical dialogue, and be very sensitive to the language they use. They need a working knowledge of the other Churches – their names, numbers, relative size, and distinctive features. One must know at least something about others in order to talk to and relate to them.

Roman Catholic religious educators can also do this within their own communities. They can counterbalance any prevailing hegemony by teaching about the diverse and different, yet equally valid, traditions of all the Eastern Churches – Catholic and Orthodox. They can teach that no one Church is “superior” and others are “inferior,” but that all are “sister/brother” Churches in the Christian family. By so doing, they can foster greater understanding and acceptance of the “other” and, perhaps, of their own traditions. It may also help everyone see that, at least theologically, within the Orthodox and Catholic Churches there truly is more that unites us than divides us; that what once were justifications for separation (e.g., the *filioque*, or the Christological disputes at Chalcedon) have lost much validity and should not obstruct the dialogue.

An increased awareness of the “other” must also obtain between the Eastern Catholic Churches. Melkites and Maronites, Ukrainians and Ruthenians, for example, will profit from learning about the commonalities and the differences between them. Religious educators from one particular Church, therefore, should also be teaching about the traditions of other Eastern Churches, not just their own. Doing so might help reduce the traditional insularity frequently seen in the Eastern Churches, and can enrich the life of a community by bringing new ideas, ways of doing things. To grow and develop further, to move out and beyond (*e-ducere*), requires contact with other ways of thinking and being. By learning more of their own and of other traditions, the Eastern Churches can enrich and develop their own identity and tradition, and enable others do the same. They should follow the model of the

Melkites who, as Patriarch Maximos IV said, “never lost contact with their Orthodox roots, and thus never became closed in on themselves” (Taft, 1992, p. 2). They must present themselves not as ethnic enclaves but as living repositories of a vibrant particular theology, liturgy, spirituality, and discipline that enrich all who are bound together in one baptism (Galadza, 2008).

If the Orthodox Churches see that the traditions of the Eastern Catholic Churches are prized and cherished, and that the Eastern Churches enjoy genuine autonomy in the Roman Catholic communion, progress toward Church unity will be greatly facilitated. It will show that the holy and apostolic Church of Christ can be simultaneously one *and* universal. It will demonstrate that while “a path to the absolute truth and divine purpose is found within this (Roman) rite and Church . . . the same can be said of any other rite and Church within the Catholic communion” (Kania, 2008, p. 9); that both East and West can be equal siblings in “the Father’s house.”

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Part IV

Inter-religious Education for Citizenship and Human Rights

Liam Gearon

Introduction

If the European Enlightenment marginalized the political role of religion, current evidence shows a renewed importance for religion in global governance (Burleigh, 2006, 2007; Casanova, 1994; Davis, Milbank & Zizek, 2005; James, 2006; Juergensmeyer, 2005; Hanson, 2006; Haynes, 2006; Hoelzl & Ward, 2006), increased interest in political theology (de Vries & Sullivan, 2006; Scott & Cavanaugh, 2004), and concentrated academic enquiry on the role of religion in public life (<http://centres.exeter.ac.uk/nrpl/>).

If post-Enlightenment religion was subsequently subject to the militantly atheistic onslaught of Modernity – from the natural sciences to the new sciences of sociology and psychology – it was the newer sciences themselves that sought an alternative understanding of religious belief and practice from which they considered themselves to have been epistemologically freed: Marx in political-economic theory, Durkheim in sociology, Freud in psychoanalysis, and so forth. Thus, ironically, the notion that religion is a diverse phenomenon which could be studied as validly as any aspect of human experience arose at a time in history when it was under its greatest epistemological challenge.

William James' still unsurpassed (1928 [1902]) *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in a way follows in this tradition, but James is willing to give religion a more sympathetic reading than many of his intellectual contemporaries. The methodological possibilities of studying religion which we largely take for granted in the early twenty-first century was an approach fostered in the late twentieth century by my former Lancaster University tutor, the late Ninian Smart. The latter's tribute to William James is evident in the title of Smart's famously influential work, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*. Arguably, it was only since Smart (1969, 1999) that the teaching of world religions in schools as well as universities has attracted as much interest as controversy – reflected across decades by scholarly publications such as the *British Journal of Religious Education*, *Religious Education* in the US, the *Journal of Religious Education* in Australia.

Following in this inter-disciplinary tradition, *Inter-religious education for citizenship and human rights* brings together a number of expert theorists, empirical

researchers, and those working in international educational policy forums to examine historical, current, and emergent trends in religious, citizenship, and human rights education, applying policy, pedagogy, and research considerations to one of the most intellectually exciting and challenging aspects of contemporary education.

Arthur's "The Secularization of Citizenship" argues that there is little attention given in modern educational discourses to religion and its role in shaping meanings of citizenship. In part this is due to the fact that many of the organizations that seek to promote a discourse on citizenship education are secular bodies who present issues of religious identity and faith in the language of community, human rights, equality, and diversity. His article critically assesses some of the religious underpinnings of citizenship and its implications for citizenship education. Copley's chapter takes an equally historical perspective, focusing largely upon the nineteenth century, and with specific reference to the liberal education of Thomas Arnold, takes a detailed look at "Education, Citizenship and Teaching Religion in an Age of Empire." The third chapter continues this historical theme, with Kozyrev examining religious education and religious freedom in Russia, presenting a widespread analysis from Czarist Russia through the Communist Revolution to the post-Cold War present. With a high level insider's perspective on UNESCO, King presents an overview of UNESCO's work on inter-religious dialogue, education, and human rights, including recent global policy initiatives in intercultural education.

In "The Totalitarian Imagination" I take up similar themes and contexts to Kozyrev and King, presenting an outline analysis of the inter-relationships between religion, politics, and education in three critical phases of modern history: "Revolutionary Democracy" (1789–1916), "The Totalitarian Imagination" (1917–1945), and "Liberal Autocracy" (1945 – present), and argue that as religions are increasingly subject to the dictates of secular democratic politics, and that educational systems – however benign in outward appearance – are instrumental in the conscious or unconscious breakdown of public and private life characteristic of totalitarianism. This, I argue which might be defined as the emergence of a "liberal autocracy," where twenty-first century democracies may have begun to replicate the very totalitarian structures they were intended to combat.

The next several chapters take a similarly international perspective and examine the prospects for an inter-religious education. Mahler and Toivanen's chapter on teaching human rights in Europe draws upon a major piece of empirical research, reassessing the research for signs of a religious component within human rights and citizenship education, and establishing an agenda for future research. On the basis of a large scale empirical review, Harpviken and Roislien look at the role of religion in peacemaking, providing a synthesis of research on the role of religion in international diplomacy and peacemaking, drawing upon work published originally through the Norwegian International Peace Research Institute. Roux's "Religious and Human Rights Literacy as a Prerequisite for Inter-religious Education" the interplay between human rights praxis and academic enquiry; the contextualization of these issues for teaching and learning in "Religious Literacy" and "Human Rights Literacy"; and a short report on a research project (2004–2008) in South Africa with in-service teachers and student teachers on the process and development of facilitation dialogue strategies in school praxis on human rights in inter-religious

education. Sporre's "Diversity, Epistemology and Dialogue in Citizenship and Human Rights Education" is an international comparative study between South Africa and Sweden.

Leirvik's "Models of Religious Education in the Muslim World" examines current developments and debates on how to teach religion in school, in light of the wider issue of teaching for tolerance in Muslim majority societies. Bouma, Ling, and Halahoff argue that the unanticipated rise of religious diversity and the re-entry of religion to the public sphere have radically increased the need and demand for education about religions – how they contribute to social and cultural capital – and about the management of religious diversity.

The final chapters of the volume provide some philosophical and theoretical reflections on the role of citizenship and human rights in regard to religious education. Schweitzer asks some fundamental questions in "Children's Right to Religion and Religious Education" on why children's rights have received less attention than they might, especially given the 1989 United Nations Convention on Children's Rights, particularly its references to children's freedom of religion as well as to more general rights concerning cultural and ethnic identities, and the implications of this for inter-religious education.

Moore explores the use of narrative in religious and human rights education, drawing upon a wide range of research to provide a critical, philosophical, and theological analysis of the educational applications of literature in teaching about citizenship and human rights education. Webster's "The Right to Inquire into the Religious" argues that religious education, and education more generally, has since Plato privileged epistemology. Drawing largely upon Dewey, Webster argues that inter-religious education ought to respect the personhood of learners and grant them the right to be able critically to inquire into the religious.

Jackson's "Religious Diversity and Education for Democratic Citizenship: The Contribution of the Council of Europe" concludes the volume with a large research funded by the European Commission, the **Religion, Education, Dialogue, Conflict** (REDCo) project.

This volume represents, then, the multi-disciplinary interface of religion, politics, and education. This interaction of religion, politics, and education is a heady intellectual mixture which reaches back into and has shaped the histories of civilizations. Many educators may find here a renewed sense of direction – teleology, purpose – and meaning through the re-examination of the role of politics and religion in public life, and sense some patterns of an emergent inter-religious future.

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The European Secularisation of Citizenship

James Arthur

When secularized citizens act in their role as citizens of the state, they must not deny in principle that religious images of the world have the potential to express truth. Nor must they refuse their believing fellow citizens the right to make contributions in a religious language to public debates.

Jurgan Habermas in Habermas and Ratzinger (2006: 51)

Introduction

The history of citizenship is regularly told by many academics in Europe first and foremost as a discussion of their identity as secular citizens. The story they tell is of citizenship as the primary principle of identity which transcends any identities built on religion. Further, they argue that this European secular identity of the citizen requires nothing but ‘reason’ to ensure progress and liberation. These are of course identities that must embrace an exclusive and exclusionary form of ‘reason’ disconnected from other ways of thinking. Thus, they seek to develop a legal minimum for citizenship whose principles are not derived from faith. These secular self-understandings go on to establish exclusively secular lineages between themselves and the ancient Greeks who they claim originated citizenship. However, claims of affinity between modern secular concepts and practices of citizenship and those of historical forms should always be approached with caution, for citizenship has been an unstable and relative concept in history. Religious and secular identities are also intertwined in complex ways and have been inextricably linked throughout European history. Nevertheless, in contemporary Britain there is little academic discussion within education of religion and its role in shaping meanings of citizenship. Many of the works of Derek Heater (2004) and Bernard Crick (2000) make no reference to the Judaeo-Christian tradition in what they believe to be the foundations

J. Arthur (✉)
Canterbury Christ Church University, Kent, UK
e-mail: james.arthur@canterbury.ac.uk

of Western citizenship. Crick, who is a secular atheist, made his position explicit when he declared at a British Humanist Association Conference at the University of London, in October 2006, that 'Citizenship is secular, on historical and philosophical grounds'. Can it be true that the historical sources of citizenship are purely secular?

Many contemporary political scientists portray Christianity as a force that has hindered the progress of citizenship and therefore consign it to a bygone age. They undervalue the power of religion among the mass of people in the past and instead concentrate their attention upon the politics of the secular elites in society, past and present, in an attempt to free their historical understanding from what they believe to be theological notions, beliefs or bias. The result is a highly selective and abstract idea of citizenship which is secured by pre-selecting concepts that they believe shape citizenship whilst ignoring others. In short, they are so influenced by contemporary political debates and a secular mentality that their accounts of citizenship are simply insufficiently embedded in the wider historical context. As Bryan Turner (2007, 259) says, there is an assumption that the rise of secular citizenship requires the 'erosion of the authority of institutional religion'. These observations minimise the importance of religion in the political context denying religion a legitimate role. Consequently, accounts of citizenship generally omit positive references to religion and fail to appreciate the complex interaction of politics, religion and the multi-dimensionality of the historical record in relation to citizenship and religion. One could say that there is a secularist bias in current political theory which easily judges citizens as too religious, but never too secular. Benjamin Barber (2003, p. 183) calls this 'intolerant secularism. . .' We need to ask how did the ideal of citizenship 'endure' through the 2,000 years of Christian Europe that these authors omit or consider irrelevant in their accounts? With this lack of historical treatment, together with the underlying secular assumptions, some might say secular extremism, behind such an absence, it is not surprising that religious faith and citizenship are widely not seen by European political elites as complementary. I would argue that some modern political scholars in Europe have a myopic vision of the historical origins of contemporary ideas of citizenship.

Secularisation

Secularisation is a controversial concept with academics divided concerning whether the process of secularisation is reducing the role of religion in everyday life. At the most basic level it can mean either (1) the decline of religious belief and practice among a particular population or (2) the retreat of religion from influence on the public sphere. Whilst the world remains as religious as ever, Europe has become less religious, however unevenly, and the marginalisation of religion in public life has led some to believe that the main factor in the decline of belief and practice is definition (2). However, Charles Taylor (2007, p. 18) believes that secularisation is not the result of definitions (1) or (2) above, but arises out of the flood of plausible self-understandings available to citizens in liberal secular democracies. As he says:

'I would like to claim that the coming of modern secularity in my sense. . . has been coterminous with the rise of a society in which for the first time in history a purely self-sufficient humanism came to be a widely available option. I mean by this a humanism accepting no final goals beyond human flourishing, nor any allegiance to anything else beyond this flourishing. Of no previous society was this true.' Whilst secularisation is a contested concept it is clear that in Western Europe industrialisation and urbanisation, together with rising levels of education and wealth have weakened the influence of religious institutions in society. In addition, science has developed as an autonomous secular perspective; education is concerned with competence and skill and has abandoned a religious–literary formation; the economy has lost any religious ethos, politics and medicine have been 'rationalised'; art and culture claim autonomy from religion and even in the area of spiritual and moral guidance there is a rejection of the idea that religion can have any overarching claim over them. Consequently, the formation of European identities is not confined to one set of value orientations, but is rather more diffuse and can even be chosen. It is not therefore surprising that we are all to a greater or lesser degree secular citizens as the secular is so much part of our modern life. This is true to such an extent that some believe that the secularisation process is not only irreversible, but interpret it as normal and progressive – something to be welcomed. The result has been the privileging of European secular identities and secularist self-understandings which result in religion being viewed as fundamentally irrelevant to the politics of the citizen. In this essay secularisation is understood as a change in the role of religion in notions of citizenship, not in the religious tendencies of people.

I believe that citizenship can only be defined as a secular legal status in a narrow way – as consisting of certain reciprocal rights, duties and privileges e.g. the right to own land, to hold public office, to vote, to pay taxes and to serve on a jury. Citizenship clearly arises between the State and the individual when each is fully accountable to the other. The rights and duties of each citizen are upheld by the State and indeed the State has the right to enforce these duties. Legal citizenship is not dependent on religious affiliation, but in the secular project of the European Union, secular liberalism is deeply engrained in the self-understanding of most European elites and especially in the interpretations of most scholars of European politics. These exclusively secular notions of citizenship separate religion from other legitimate and important spheres of life and tend ideologically to favour naturalistic worldviews whilst at the same time refusing to grant any validity to religious worldviews. The secular European liberal State does this of course by purporting to be impartial in relation to particular worldviews and in so doing demonstrates that the secular State is in fact not neutral between competing claims. And yet citizenship that encourages active public engagement and responsibility in a democracy cannot be a wholly secular concept for it involves social attachments and allegiances to other citizens as well as the nurturing of certain civil virtues which must in turn involve prior religious motivations and reasons.

Secular States are dependent upon a degree of solidarity among their citizens since the operation of citizenship is embedded in civil society. Active citizens in a democratic State are supposed to make effective use of their participation rights

not simply to pursue their own private purposes, but to promote public good. Since the liberal secular State cannot legally enact virtue in its citizens, it is clear that the virtues, and above all, the motivations required to sustain and promote a democratic polity often draw on religious sources or what Jürgen Habermas (2006, p. 101) calls 'pre-political foundations'. Religion can have a functional contribution to the reproduction of desirable motives and attitudes since the modern State is not the only repository of civic virtues and moral authority. The long history of Christianity in Europe has moulded our thoughts and feelings and these ideas have so deeply penetrated our very being that we no longer recognise the origin of certain secular ideas in relation to citizenship as stemming from fundamental Christian concepts. For example, distinctly Western ideas of human equality, dignity and rights partly originated in Christian doctrine, but have been transformed into a mechanistic natural law in modern times. It is why secularists sometimes welcome religion's role in fostering public virtues especially when such announcements are restricted to the general welfare and common good of all in society. In this process the Christian goal becomes identical with the secular goal: the process is one of secularising originally Christian values and practices. The secular academic simply superimposes their own prior intellectual preferences on Christian concepts and in this way the secular dimensions of our citizenship status and participation within a democracy can often be presented as an exclusive tie. Christianity thereby runs the danger of identifying too closely with Western European liberalism and as a result unconsciously supplies the temporary motivational backdrop for a particular set of relative and unstable political preferences.

Scholars invariably begin with reference to ancient Greek definitions of citizenship and then proceed directly to Enlightenment notions of citizenship as if nothing useful developed in between. They often attempt to secularise our understandings of citizenship by exaggerating the religious influence in earlier eras while underestimating the relevance of religious ideas today. Certainly the Enlightenment philosophers, encouraged by the French Revolution, prepared the way for the first concrete expression of hostility to religion. This made it easier to begin the eradication of traditional Christianity from public life. It began with a retreat of religious ideas, beliefs and symbols from the public sphere. This process of secularisation has moved on to such an extent that modern political culture in Western Europe often fails to acknowledge ideas of the sacred and holy and human relations are voided of religious virtues. Society as a whole is not seen as having any divine origin or anything beyond itself – what Charles Taylor (2004, p. 93) calls 'radical secularity'. The goals many people have in ordinary life are purely immanent and no account of the transcendent is considered. This is not a conscious process for most, but at the political level it is often the deliberate intention of those in government. During the debates in 2003 over mentioning the Christian roots of Europe in the Preamble to the European Constitution renewed hostility emerged to Christianity's presence in the European public sphere. The fact is that for the majority of us religion has disappeared from our social context and as Taylor (2008) says we have gone from a 'society in which it was impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others'.

Europeans who adopt liberal secular positions generally argue that religion and politics are two distinct activities and that religion has little contribution to make to citizenship. Consequently, they advocate that those who have religious beliefs should keep them private and that they should not allow their religious beliefs to shape their conduct or judgements as citizens engaged in the public sphere. It follows, from this line, that citizenship is a political and secular legal status and religious people should therefore 'bracket' out their religious beliefs if they want to participate in society's political order. John Rawls (1997, p. 781) has asked the question 'How is it possible for those of faith, as well as the nonreligious, to endorse a secular regime even when their comprehensive doctrines may not prosper under it, and indeed may decline'. He answers that religious people should only argue for particular policies or laws by providing secular reasons for them and Robert Audi (2005, p. 217) has gone even further by advocating the 'principle of secular jurisdiction' in which a religious person should exclusively think in secular terms when they vote in democratic elections. This is an explicitly secular definition of the role of religion in political life and it renders any public deliberation as an inherently secular process. It is supported and advocated by many politicians who often attempt to assimilate Christianity to the secular present. If accepted as a principle it would entail that a person of faith would presumably have to think in two different realms – the secular and the religious, which are somehow unconnected in their minds.

Within a State which actively promotes 'secularity' among its citizens, religious believers could find that their deepest convictions and most comprehensive worldview are legally divorced from the political life of society and replaced with an undefined or unstated secular humanism. The implications of adopting liberal notions of the 'secular' are to have nothing to do with religion or becoming completely autonomous of religion. In the most extreme form, this secularist approach is positively antagonistic to religious belief. Jeffrey Stout (2004, p. 93) has observed that: 'There is a sense in which the ethical discourse of most modern democracies is *secularized*, for such discourse is not 'framed by a theological perspective' taken for granted by all those who participate in it. But secularization in this sense is not a reflection of commitment to *secularism*. It entails neither the denial of theological assumptions nor the expulsion of theological expression from the public sphere.' For Stout, the historical processes of secularisation results in a plural society in which it can no longer be assumed that there is a theological perspective that is more or less shared by all. Secularism, in contrast, makes the normative claim that theological assumptions and expressions ought to be expelled from the public sphere altogether. The advocates of this secularism see such expulsion as a precondition for citizenship in the modern liberal State.

The religious believer could find themselves anaesthetised into accepting that liberal secular society alone provides the objective and superior intellectual vantage point and therefore become effectively coerced into accepting secularism as providing the basis for the values in citizenship. The Christian can accept the 'secular' when it is still open to being Christian in ethos – in other words, the doctor has a secular vocation but this does not mean that his or her vocation is not influenced by his or her faith. In the same way, the voter can decide on secular grounds but this

does not mean they seek to promote ‘secularism’. Indeed, religious forms of identification can and do represent legitimate motives for political action. Pope Benedict XVI (2005) has called this a ‘positive secularity’ that omits any kind of hostility between religion and the State and guarantees to each citizen ‘the right to live his own religious faith with genuine freedom, including in the public realm’. In this positive secularity the State respects the prior religious commitments of its citizens. The attempted severance in the mind between theology and political philosophy is, at the very least, problematic as discourses in politics are often intimately bound up with and permeated by religious modes of thought and action. The secular view is not value-free and when it becomes excessively secular in orientation it transforms into an ideology, but one that is not a complete worldview. This incompleteness enables secularists to claim neutrality because they do not have a detailed blueprint for what society should do on all particular points. Moreover, those who promote a wholly secular vision of the citizen usually employ the ‘truth and illusion argument’ – ‘We are neutral, you are biased’ whilst obscuring the real implications of their actions by the appearance of ‘balance’.

Habermas (2006) believes that this mental dualism would be impossible for any human being and that it denotes a ‘narrow secular consciousness’. Secular elites assume that religion is essentially a question of beliefs and doctrines, but religion has public manifestations. Habermas (2007, p. 113) agrees that a shared public language is needed between citizens who are religious and those who are not, but whilst he also agrees that this public language should be open to justification on secular grounds, he explicitly states that all citizens should be open to the rational context of religious contributions. As he argues: ‘Secular citizens, in their role as citizens, may neither deny that religious worldviews are in principle capable of truth nor question the right of their devout fellow-citizens to couch their contributions to public discussions in religious language. A liberal political culture can even expect its secular citizens to take part in the efforts to translate relevant contributions from religious language into publicly intelligible language’. Habermas recognises that it is not legitimate for the modern secular liberal State to exclude religious reasoning from the public sphere and he argues that there is a need for religious and secular rationalities to engage with each other in a mutual process. Habermas proposes a revised concept of citizenship which restores freedom of religious speech and reasoning to the European public sphere. Secular elites have represented themselves as almost the sole defenders of ‘reason’ against irrational religious believers who they claim rely on arguments that turn out to be unsound. This kind of secular thinking inevitably assumes that there is something deeply wrong with the reasoning processes of religious citizens.

Religion and Citizenship

The idea of citizenship holds a prominent place in the history of European political thought. Nevertheless, the relationship between religion, specifically Christianity, and notions of citizenship has been historically problematic, indeed, it has been

characterised as 'very complex, confusing and changing' (Niebuhr, 1952, p. 1). There is no doubt that religion is and has been a key factor in determining someone's character, moral norms, idea of duty and has provided many with a sense of national identity. We are well acquainted with the idea that the practice of political citizenship originated in ancient Greece, but are perhaps less aware that biblical religion also had an important influence on the development of the meaning of citizenship in Europe. The citizen in Greek City-States lived in an age when religion and the State were coterminous, and when civic duty became nearly identical with religious obligation. The temple was the civic centre, priests were public officials, and religious festivals were public events which meant that participation in the religious community was an essential aspect of citizenship. Citizenship meant having the responsibility and privileges of membership in the political community, but this smaller political community of active male citizens was also an integral and leading part of the larger religious community.

In contrast, the Jewish people in Israel structured themselves not as a City-State but as the covenanted people of God. All Jews were members of God's people and the community of which they were a part was more profound and historically far-reaching than a Greek City-State. This produced a larger concept of human society than the Greek City-State. The Jewish tradition emphasised family, friendships, charity, voluntary associations and traditions that together made up and formed the basis of civil society. Members of this society were linked by a bond of kinship which obliged its members not only to love their neighbour, but also to love and respect the stranger. Indeed, love could not be translated in civic and constitutional terms for this duty to love is laid upon human beings by religious commitment in a manner which cannot be articulated as constitutive of the State or as a matter of public policy. Love was seen as primary whilst laws, rights and contractual obligations were secondary. This Judaeo-Christian synthesis understood that a moral relationship that is more fundamental than one that is contractual exists between human beings. The combination of both the political order (institutions, States, governments and political systems) and the social order (family, friendships and voluntary associations) inevitably resulted in tensions as one order tended to be predominant at any given time.

During the first three centuries the Christian Church lived in an ambivalent relationship with the Roman Empire, which alternated between persecution and a degree of tolerance. Christians generally isolated themselves from the political and religious structures of Roman society which led to the accusation from the hostile crowds in Thessalonika that, 'These men all act against the edicts of Caesar, saying there is another King, Jesus' (Acts 17:7). The Church saw itself as an association of human beings trying to live the Christian life, whilst it viewed the State as another association of human beings organised under a government. There was a strong idea of separation that developed early in Christian thought in which the pure Christian life and community, governed by religious authority, was separate from the sinful and often hostile world that was governed by political authority. Nevertheless, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, in the late second century wrote that secular authority had its origin in God's design.

A *universal* idea of membership and belonging, so important to notions of citizenship, were concepts that developed early and Clement of Alexandria (200AD) expressed this when he said; ‘Both slave and free must equally philosophise, whether male or female in sex. . . whether barbarian, Greek, slave, whether an old man, or a boy, or a woman. . . And we must admit that the same nature exists in every race, and the same virtue’. From this it followed that all Christians are moral equals, at least theoretically, and consequently enjoyed equality in a form of world citizenship as baptised Christians. This universalistic thinking laid the important ideological foundations for a definition of citizenship not based on blood or kinship. The anonymous *Letter to Diognetus* (1978) describes Christians as ‘aliens’ for whom ‘every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land since. . . [their] true citizenship is in heaven’. Whilst an idea of ‘alien citizenship’ is suggested, the letter actually admonishes Christians to ‘live in their own lands. . . have a share in everything as citizens and. . . obey the established laws’. This letter nevertheless insists that the Christian’s first commitment is to Christ and speaks of Christians being ‘resident aliens’ – a stress on ‘resident’ when society is more Christian and on ‘alien’ when society is less Christian. However, it was St. Ambrose of Milan (340–397) who began the development of a Christian theory of temporal and spiritual relations. He emphasised the independence of the Church, denied absolute power to the civil authority, whilst at the same time protesting respect for the civil power in matters exclusively temporal. There was a conditional acceptance of secular political authority as having the right to exercise authority, but only in a particular restricted sphere. There were clearly several important religious and political developments between the fall of the Roman Empire and the 1500s that inevitably influenced understandings of citizenship as being simultaneously a religious and political status.

Augustine and Aquinas

This developing theological theory of citizenship in two realms made the important connection between civic citizenship and divine citizenship explicit. An important principle of this developing Christian notion was St. Augustine’s [1984] conception of the world, in his *City of God*, as divided into the metaphors of the City of God and the City of Man. Augustine was responding to the fall of Rome which many Christians, according to him, had wrongly confused with the City of God whilst pagans accused the Church of being incompatible with the morals of citizenship. The pagans argued that the Church weakened the Empire by teaching not to return evil for evil and to turn the other cheek. Augustine’s response was that Christians lived as citizens in two kingdoms, and the people and institutions within the City of Man remain imperfect. Two contrasted forms of citizenship were presented – spiritual citizenship and profane citizenship. He rejected the claim that Constantine had established a Christian State, even though Catholic Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire. The State, however Christian it may appear, can only be a community of saints and sinners for the City of Man, Augustine wrote, is flawed

because of wars and corruption. Politics was therefore conducted in a fallen world in which all individuals fall far short of perfection. The City of Man is a passing Kingdom and therefore offers only a temporary and secondary level of citizenship whilst the City of God is an eternal kingdom and ought to provide the Christian with their primary anticipatory citizenship.

This articulation of a 'dualism', of the world divided into the secular realm (government of temporal affairs) and the spiritual realm (government of men's souls) became a keynote of European culture. These two sources of authority in human affairs was therefore an integral part of the worldview of medieval man, but the Church maintained and taught that God's authority is the source of all power, secular and religious. Nevertheless, in practice an important distinction was drawn between ecclesiastical authority and political authorities. This theory of 'two powers' was explicitly stated by Pope Gelasius I in 494 in a letter to the Emperor, 'There are two chief powers by which the world is governed, August Emperor: the sacred authority of the prelates and the kingly power' (Carlyle, 1930, p. 191). This statement was premised on the Christian belief that spiritual and ecclesiastical considerations have a more authoritative claim than do material ones. This thinking reached its zenith in the bull *unam sanctam* of 1302 in which Pope Boniface VIII claimed the superiority of the spiritual power over the secular in all matters. This theocratic mentality tended to subordinate all political institutions to the Church. There was certainly conflict and tension between the political and religious authorities, but it was a time in which the political community was religious and the religious community political, membership of the latter involved membership of the former. In a sense, everything was conceived as religious in the dominant worldview of the period and the personnel who ran the political community were practically the same as those who ran the religious community. There was no practical conception of the secular as somehow divorced from religion and the question of the Christians' duty to God and their duty to Caesar was not a question of alternatives, but of adjustment.

Consequently, Augustine believed that his two cities were distinct but not separate; Christians had a stake in the earthly City and politics and religion necessarily overlapped. Augustine discusses the ideal secular State by emphasising that the City of God exists within the City of Man, within separate individuals or in communities of believers so that it was possible to see within the City of Man an image of the City of God. So whilst the ultimate citizenship is in the next world, Christians should not withdraw from the City of Man, but ought rather to work within it. They had to engage in the political community, not because politics is ultimate, but because Christians are commended to love both God and their neighbour – in other words they had important responsibilities to both Cities. Augustine presented a case for Christian citizenship which entailed that you could be a good Roman citizen as well as a good Christian by working for the good of society. So whilst for Augustine civic citizenship is a subordinate end, it is ordered to a higher end, but this did not mean that this subordinate end could not be pursued, in fact it was unavoidable. He raised the classic notion of civic citizenship to the level of a religious duty and admonished Christians to assume the obligations of civic citizenship. Christians were to give themselves completely in two directions: the 'upward' (vertical relationship

with God) and the 'forward' (horizontal relationship with their neighbour) and each direction should not hinder the other, but on the contrary further it. Christianity therefore did not disable civic virtues, but provided a force to realise these virtues through public engagement. This developed, by the fourteenth century, into a strong tradition which positively affirmed human community. Christian faith was therefore not at odds with civic identity, except if obedience to the secular authority was destructive of the Christian's relationship with God.

Whilst this Christian theory explicitly recognises public jurisdiction, it limits the power of the State over the individual. The State is not the individual 'writ large', for the State concerns only part of the individual. This teaching has been of utmost importance in the history of Europe, for it leaves to the Church or the individual's conscience the final judgement about whether obedience to the State is spiritually and morally acceptable. In short, the Church provided its members with the criteria to assist them as citizens in judging whether secular orders are permissible. Augustine rejected the idea that it was within the City or State that individuals reach their highest state. Political engagement for Augustine was not something that justifies society's existence or expresses its highest purpose. The individual does not live for the State and the political order does not provide a reason for being for society or the individual (see Dyson, 2001, p. 183–184). Since Christianity considers humanity to be inherently flawed, no individual, and no human agency, ought to have unlimited power. Augustine was primarily concerned with the character of the Christian citizen, not with the political institutions of his time.

It is important to remember here that Augustine's *City of God* is a theological work and that political interpretations of it start with his political prescriptions and often fail to see the theological sources of these prescriptions. It is true that in Augustine's [1984] thought political engagement is relegated to the status of a worldly necessity, that which must be done to survive and keep order; he is essentially pessimistic about human progress, but his theology provides us with important insights into notions of citizenship. The difference between the two cities, as described by Augustine, is an eschatological rather than political one. Augustine is primarily concerned with those who are and are not intended for eternal life with God. He did not elaborate a philosophical theory of politics which is why we must approach his writings with care. Nevertheless, he affirmed the practical value of civic citizenship for the common good of society and individuals. Ultimately, politics for Augustine was about coercion and conflict between sinful beings and he made the distinction between the religious and secular which resulted in the continuing tension of simultaneously accepting and rejecting the world.

Whilst Augustine spoke of the theological foundations of citizenship, Thomas Aquinas [1966] thought of citizenship as a natural aspect of human life in his *Summa Theologica*. He provides a political theory which adheres closely to the writings of Aristotle, but takes as his starting point the theological foundations established by Augustine. Aquinas believed that human beings were by nature social and political animals and that since all things natural are part of God's creation, so is the political order which is both natural and sacred. Aquinas did not believe that civil government was a necessary evil, but rather that it is a positive force for the promotion of

man's welfare. The function of government was to promote the virtues of the citizens. Therefore it is a mistake, he believed, to approach the issue of Christianity and public life as if they were two realms that we have to relate to each other. According to Aquinas and Augustine the public realm for the conduct of one's civic citizenship was already related to faith because it was created by God. Consequently, in addition to loving God, a person needs to feed their children and build for them a safe community and these activities do not direct them away from God, but rather, as Aquinas insists, points them to God.

Commenting on Aristotle's (1981) *Politics* (ST: Q105 reply to objection 2) Aquinas provides a definition of citizenship which he divides into two kinds: 'simple' and 'restricted'. The 'simple' citizenship is the full exercise of political rights whilst 'restricted' citizenship denoted *membership* of a community which involved certain rights and social obligations. The 'restricted' citizenship includes almost all the population residing in the territory of the City or State including women and children. It is an 'anagraphical' citizenship defined on a simple territorial basis. Simple citizenship is attributed by the City or State, whilst 'restricted' citizenship is a more inclusive form of belonging conferred on the basis of residence and the minimal territorial unit which attributed it was the parish and the parish priest through compulsory baptism. It was a notion of citizenship that was bestowed only on Christians, based on their confessional status, and conveyed on them from a source lying outside of the material world. Aquinas saw each sphere of human activity as enjoying its own autonomy. In matters regarding civic goods he said it was better to obey the secular authority even when it was controlled by non-Christians. Indeed, Aquinas developed a theory of natural rights which clearly stipulated that the treatment to which all human beings are entitled is derived from their status as human beings rather than as members of the Christian community.

Pre-Enlightenment Thinking

To understand these developments we need to recognise that theology and politics became fused in early European Christian society. There was also a free and dynamic political debate among the medieval philosophers in European universities concerning the distinction between the two main sources of authority in human affairs. John of Salisbury (c. 1115 – 80), who was influenced by Ciceronian republicanism, taught that a true society is both a natural entity and a spiritual entity. Human society is both a confederation of men and a congregation of Christians where the natural and divine work together. Henry de Bracton (d. 1268), began to liken kingship to God and believed that this royal office is the minister or vicar of God. John of Paris (c.1250 – 1304), argued for a separation of politics from theology by insisting that civil authority was autonomous and sovereign in the realm of temporal property, free of ecclesiastical coercion. Marsilius of Padua (1275 – 1342) expressed what was to become the accepted Western view in that it was the State and not the Church that guaranteed civil peace and that it was reason, not revelation, to which appeal must be made in all matters of temporal jurisdiction. However,

Marsilius also believed that no one could be trusted not to be corrupted by power and denied any divine authority to political power. It is remarkable that many of these intellectuals in the medieval period offered strikingly similar ideas to those that were later offered in the so-called Enlightenment. These medieval thinkers demonstrate that more weight should be given to the general politico-religious background to the Enlightenment.

As civic society sought appropriate political forms, one model of political association that was available to Europeans was the City. The City represented a public space where citizens deliberated and decided their common affairs. However, active citizenship was viewed as the prerogative of the propertied and of the male. Citizenship in the modern sense began to emerge with the creation of these independent cities in medieval Europe. At the Reformation, a series of Protestant City-States were founded by the Swiss reformers Calvin, Zwingli and Beza, these states were based on what they personally thought to be the ideas contained in Augustine's *City of God*. They saw the Church as simply one institution among the organising forces of society which God had ordained. Christian duty was seen in the wider context of civic citizenship. It was the evolution of Cities along the lines of State formation that gave citizenship in Europe its full institutionalised and formalised character and that eventually made nationality a key component of citizenship. Protestant ideas, some would say Protestant theories of citizenship, tended to conflate the Church with the surrounding culture and the emerging idea of the nation began to displace the Church and secure for itself the primary identity and allegiance of the people within its territory. What divided people rather than what united them was the primary emphasis of this new nationalism. Linda Colley (1992) has demonstrated the absolute centrality of Protestantism to the foundation of British identity and citizenship in the eighteenth century. It was thus the Reformation that aided the rise of the modern nation-State by separating out the heavenly kingdom from the earthly, with the earthly dominant in the meantime.

This medieval inheritance began to gradually separate out the powers of the State and Church, but the secular and religious were still understood as being directed by God. The Church was far more universal than any State and possessed many of the functions that today we would regard as essentially political. A minority of intellectual thinkers during the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance and on through the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment' wanted to secure political authority entirely for 'the people.' There also arose the idea that the State is morally autonomous, meaning that its actions cannot be judged against any external standards. A minority of these elite thinkers assumed that religious behaviour is a result of religious belief and that such 'irrational behaviour' would cease if the religious belief was refuted. This purely secularist approach required that political freedom and responsibility of citizens would be impossible to achieve as long as people appealed to God or the Church for help. Other 'Enlightenment' thinkers adopted a critical and sceptical attitude towards religion and this became a fundamental feature of their understanding of citizenship. There was from this point onwards a clear emergence of a process of constitutional secularisation in which the State or temporal authorities were no longer defined or understood in religious terms. As the influence of

religion declined, people reached for a rival source of membership and a kind of secular national identity offered an answer to this need. Religious criteria gradually ceased to be the chief means to regulate society and so religion and secular power began to disengage from each other. Whilst the Church accepted the separation of Church and State, it has never accepted the separation of religion from public life. It is important to remember that the 'Enlightenment' was the preserve of a small intellectual elite and did not, for most of them, involve the conscious abandonment of Christian belief. Nevertheless, the 'Enlightenment' marked a continuing process, begun in the Middle Ages, that separated out the secular and religious in notions of European active citizenship. Secularisation, for many academics, was consequently raised to a law of historical development as inevitable and irreversible.

Citizenship

Today, notions of citizenship are being discussed at a time of uncertainty and doubt within European societies. These notions of citizenship are often variously defined because citizenship itself is contested and is often reduced to a basic language of rights. The outcomes of teaching built on this kind of content are largely based on a worldview of humanity as a marketplace of autonomous and competing individuals. Such notions of citizenship may refer to ideas of community involvement, solidarity, belonging and other forms of fraternity, grounded in a discourse of freedom and equality, a combination which forms the basis of an understanding of a rights-orientated model of citizenship, but this fails to describe the richness of human cooperation and obligation. It fails to persuade people that they ought to trust and love each other. This secular worldview fails to provide adequate descriptions that are compelling for people to be moved to action, indeed, it fails to reach the heart. Michael Ignatieff (2000, 23) recognises the limited nature of rights language for defining citizenship. He writes: 'Codes of rights cannot be expected to define what the good life is, what love and faithfulness and honour are. Codes of rights are about defining the minimum conditions for any life at all. So in the case of the family they are about defining the negatives: abuse and violence. Rights can't define the positives: love, forbearance, humour, charity and endurance. We need other words to do that, and we need to make sure that rights talk doesn't end up crowding out all the other ways we express our deepest and most enduring needs.' The idea that we are all, more or less, becoming modern and that as we become modern we will become more alike, and at the same time more homogenous and more reasonable, is a product of the secularisation of citizenship. It is merely part of a secular ideology of progress that has faith in humanity's ability to evolve towards a universal civilisation based on liberal democracy. This secularisation fails to recognise that, at the very least, echoes of their religious heritage continue to resonate with citizens and are often responsible for the way they demonstrate such qualities as altruism, compassion and love of their neighbour.

In this context, there appears to be a dual calling of citizenship and faith within the competing obligations among those who profess a religious faith. What is needed

is a language of participatory citizenship that can be shared by those with faith and those with none. This cannot be done by ignoring religion. Citizenship programmes in Western Europe often make explicit appeals to inclusiveness, tolerance, equal rights in an attempt to foster unity and even a collective identity. If we understand citizenship as a legal status within a particular territory in which the State enforces legal requirements and bestows entitlement to certain services and basic rights then this 'minimal' or 'formal' citizenship may be seen as a secular construct, but one, I would argue, that is not completely disconnected from religious origins. Nevertheless, the responsibilities of this kind of citizenship for promoting the common good are minimal as it can simply be understood at the level of passive membership of a community. However, if we expand this definition to include the public practice-engagement of the responsible citizens, or public-spirited citizenship, and seek to promote this, then we are promoting a 'maximal' or 'substantive' definition of active citizenship which makes it more problematic to recognise as a wholly secular conception. Such a conception of citizenship, especially republican and communitarian notions of citizenship, have regard for the quality of an individual's response to membership in a community and understand the citizen as a political being who should not only act, but should desire to act and be disposed to act, in a way that fosters and maintains the main goals of the community. The State, in this conception of citizenship, adopts a formative educative role in seeking to produce a certain type of citizen with particular standards of conduct. It speaks of a citizen having certain kinds of virtues – citizens who are publicly spirited, who can discuss, cooperate and compromise with each other and above all can trust one another and undertake public responsibilities when called upon. In this way of understanding citizenship, the good citizen acknowledges obligations towards other people who are not known to them.

The State therefore is not neutral for it extends itself into more far-reaching areas of morals and social meaning. Secular self-understandings cannot pretend to be neutral: that they are somehow above the substantive battle about how a citizen should live their lives. Rather than act as a neutral arbiter, it can be argued, that the liberal secular State has some of its own particular understandings of how people should live and what is in the interests of the common good. As William Galston (2002, p. 17) says: 'The more demanding the conception of citizenship, the more intrusive the public policies needed to promote it. . . the more our conception of the good citizen requires the sacrifice of private attachments to the common good, the more vigorously the state must act (as Sparta did) to weaken those attachments in favour of devotion to the public sphere'. We live in an age in which the meaning and scope of citizenship is ever widening. As a result, the State moves from the regulation of public life (paying taxes, regulating voting, obeying the law, etc.) to the regulation of private life (the way in which citizens interact with themselves, expressing views and associating with others of their own choice etc). The justification for this more expansive formative role for the State is to create a society which holds certain core values dear and to use the law to educate people to transform the culture of citizenship to make it more active, open, tolerant and inclusive. It leads to State policies of social engineering, attempting to encourage a public feeling of moral uplift, especially in relation to 'community cohesion'.

Such a formative role for the State moves beyond simple citizen participation and sees its purpose as forming the moral character of its citizens. If therefore behaving and acting like a citizen involves acquiring a range of dispositions and virtues, which help us to actively seek justice and promote human rights, then the more we ask of the citizen the more religion impacts on the exercise of their citizenship. Weithman (2002), drawing on empirical research, has shown how Christianity functions in politics and how Christians contribute to democracy by being good democratic citizens. Weithman argues that religion enriches political debate and aids political participation through developing political skills, especially among the poor and minorities. Christianity can certainly motivate people to get involved in their communities and many Christian values are, at the operational level, compatible with the secular values of the liberal State. It could even be said that in the very identity and virtues of the Christian there is a stress on citizen action. Christianity can and does provide the motivational force for much active citizenship in practice. However, should the State celebrate one set of values over another whilst assuming the rhetoric and symbols of the neutral public sphere? Citizenship education is not a wholly secular process for it must also address and understand the significance of religious beliefs for an individual citizen's participation in society. As Brian Gates (2006, p. 589) says: '...citizenship depends upon beliefs and values, and these are both religious and moral. Therefore, citizenship education which pays scant attention to the process and content of both moral and religious believing is likely to stumble, for therein lie the springs of active participation'.

There is a dominant view that only a secular State, in which public decision-making processes are based exclusively on secular arguments, is compatible with the principles of a liberal European democracy. This is simply a form of secularism: an ideology which seeks to exclude the influence of religion. Christianity makes the distinction between political rule and social life, with the latter counterbalancing the former. Many States make no such distinction. Habermas (2006, p. 17) has commented that, 'As long as secular citizens are convinced that religious traditions and religious communities are to a certain extent archaic relics of pre-modern societies that continue to exist in the present... religion no longer has any intrinsic justification to exist... In the secularist reading, we can envisage that, in the long run, religious views will inevitably melt under the sun of scientific criticism and that religious communities will not be able to withstand the pressures of some unstoppable cultural and social modernization'. Habermas believes that those who adopt such a view of religion cannot take religion seriously in the public realm and are guilty of adopting a 'narrow secularist consciousness'. Habermas recognises that the restrictions that Rawls (1997) and Audi (2005) would place on the role of religion in public discourse would not work in practice, because they place an intolerable psychological burden on religious citizens. The separation of the private sphere from the public sphere or the separation of knowing and doing is not tenable. Habermas (1984 & 1987) suggests that secular minded citizens should adopt a more self-critical attitude towards the limits of secular rationality and be more open to the power of religious reasons. However, it is unlikely that secular rationalists will abandon the belief that secular 'reason' should take precedence over other means of acquiring understanding.

Conclusion

It has been the argument in this article that European concepts of citizenship in their origin are intimately bound up with distinctively theological concepts. Thus, the contention that the principles which underpin our notion of citizenship are based upon wholly neutral and 'rational' grounds is an illusion. From the beginning of the Church's history in Europe its mission has included a 'political dimension', but one understood through the eyes of theology. From Constantine and on through the Middle Ages, Christendom (Europe) had simultaneously an ecclesial and a political form since religion was interconnected with secular government in complex ways. Both aspects were continually woven into each other and tensions and struggles inevitably arose. However, these two aspects began to break down at the Reformation, as the temporal power of the Catholic Church began to be challenged by nation-States which demanded total loyalty from their citizens. The Church compromised to some extent, but refused to accommodate itself completely to the growing secular ideology of these new nation-States. Christianity not only survived, but learnt to accommodate itself to diverse socio-political arrangements through the Roman Empire, medieval feudalism, Italian City-States, absolute monarchies, nation-states, liberal democracies, and, at least at the level of basic survival, communist atheistic States. The reason for this long durability is that the Church is more interested in announcing the City of God, than providing a political code. The Church's theology never attempted to impose a particular political model on political associations nor, theoretically at least, is identified with any political community or bound to any political system. The Church considered humanity to be flawed and thus in need of governance, whilst the Enlightenment thinkers thought humanity to be good and therefore in need of liberation. It is therefore ironic that secular authorities continue to advance into every aspect of people's lives in modern States unbalancing the distinction between the political and social orders.

It is constitutionally recognised within most European States today that citizenship is not dependent on adherence to any religion and therefore that religion is not, it seems, a constitutive element of citizenship. The liberal democracy that underpins such States, John Gray argues, is itself a 'religious' faith and Gray (2007, p. 1) concludes that 'modern politics is a chapter in the history of religion'. Certainly, a kind of 'religious belief' in moral perfectibility and indefinite progress has replaced the Christian faith in the life of the world to come as the final goal of human effort. As Taylor (2007) notes, secularisation interpreted simply as the separation of religion and politics and the rise of scepticism miss the deeper and more enduring residues of religion. It is also the case that the uncritical acceptance of the division between religion and politics has led historians to underestimate the importance and extent of the impact of historical understanding upon the formation of citizens. Whilst the Christian Church today gives a certain endorsement to representative democracy John Rist (2008, p. 285) warns that it 'should not be divinized . . . it can easily reduce to a cocktail of egalitarianism, ignorance and hedonism: giving opportunity for unrestrained individualism and universal pleasure-seeking rather than a vision of happiness as active engagement and the pursuit of goodness'. In conclusion, Rowan

Williams (2005) has argued that Christian heritage teaches that political power is always provisional and impermanent. As he says: ‘Western modernity and liberalism are at risk when they refuse to recognize that they are the way they are because of the presence in their midst of that partner and critic which speaks of ‘alternative citizenship’ – the Christian community. . .the distinctively European style of political argument and debate is made possible by the Church’s persistent witness to the fact that states do not have ultimate religious claims on their citizens’. He warns that if States do not recognise this ‘dual citizenship’ they eventually stumble towards either state totalitarianism or religious theocracy. Citizenship in the new pluralist Europe does not necessitate abandoning religious reasons for acting as a citizen, nor does it mean that the modern citizen has to adopt a secular self-understanding and identity. Democracy depends on engaged citizens, including religious believers, who argue for their beliefs in the public square without apology. Engaged and effective citizenship does not depend on an exclusive secular mentality, but flows directly and indirectly from faith.

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Education, Citizenship and Teaching Religion in an Age of Empire: A Historical Perspective

Terence Copley

Introduction

This chapter is based on a case study of aspects of the life and work of Thomas Arnold, ‘Arnold of Rugby’ (1795–1842). He became an over-arching figure of the Victorian era in the United Kingdom as a result of his work in education, although he lived only into the early years of Queen Victoria’s long reign (1837–1901). His influence continued, not unopposed, until an essay entitled ‘Dr Arnold’ by Giles Lytton Strachey in his book *Eminent Victorians* (1918). This was full of innuendo, misinformation and hardly subtle character assassination. Strachey’s debunking of four leading Victorians, along with the cultural impact of the slaughter of the First World War, destroyed the last hegemony of Victorian values. Today Arnold is little known in the United Kingdom and still less beyond, except perhaps as the father of the poet Matthew Arnold and one of the characters in Hughes’ enduring novel *Tom Brown’s School Days* (1857). What has survived about Thomas Arnold has been inaccurately handed down. This includes that he reformed a corrupt and ill-disciplined school (it was neither by contemporary standards); that he promoted team sports including rugby football as character building (he was indifferent to them); that he was a modernist and innovator in curriculum (he was neither). But Arnold was undoubtedly one of the key figures in the history of religious education, spiritual development and citizenship in UK education. Here his work was innovative, foundational and seminal.

A recent biography sought for the first time to examine Arnold’s religious and educational ideas together – his educational experiment at Rugby was born out of religious conviction – and to attempt to distinguish the myth from the man (Copley, 2002). This paper seeks briefly to set Arnold within his historical context in UK society and empire and to explore his contribution to education, teaching religion and citizenship. It argues that some of the seeds (though not the practice) of later

T. Copley (✉)
Harris Manchester College, Mansfield Road, Oxford, OX1 3TD UK
e-mail: terence.copley@education.ox.ac.uk

inter-religious dialogue and liberal religious education can be found in Arnold's approach in a way that renders him considerably ahead of his time.

Arnold's Historical Context in UK Society and Empire

For the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century Britain appeared as a colossus astride the world. Britain dominated every field of human activity and her people seemed to possess an almost demonic energy (James, 1994, p. 177).

Britain's success was attributed by some to natural inventiveness, naval supremacy and the Christian ethic of integrity, hard work and philanthropy wrapped in purportedly benevolent paternalism. But contemporary attitudes towards the empire in the early nineteenth century on the part of the 'Mother country' (i.e. Britain) were not capable of translation into so simple a formula. They were diverse and sometimes conflicting. Arnold's world was one of constant and rapid change. Memories of the French Revolution were fresh. The Napoleonic wars extended well into his childhood and the Isle of Wight, on which he grew up, was important for naval defence. These French wars revived British patriotism and laid the foundations for a confidence – opponents would claim superiority and arrogance – that persisted later into the nineteenth century and beyond. Britain acquired overseas naval bases from the victories over Napoleon that enabled it to develop further as a maritime power with its export shipping protected, safely reaching the captive markets of the growing colonies. But colonisation did not advance unchecked. Apart from the avoidable loss of America (1773), the first British adventure in Afghanistan failed (1838–1842), perhaps one of the proverbial 'lessons of history' that Britain was slow to learn, and the 'safe' country of India mutinied (1857–1858).

By the time of Arnold's death (1842) the British empire consisted principally of British Guyana (Africa), Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand, Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and some of the West Indies. The rights of their indigenous peoples were rarely recognised. Sierra Leone, an exception, was founded (1787) by slave trade abolitionists confident that the indigenous population as free people could be responsible citizens. In Van Diemen's Land, in contrast, the indigenous population was killed or died out. For many British colonists, missionaries and garrison troops across the empire, Christianity and European civilisation were synonymous. For some, the terms 'native', 'heathen' and 'savage' were inter-changeable. The 'n' word (not negro) was widely used, even by Quakers who believed in that of God in every man [*sic*] and who were prepared to enter into dialogue with indigenous peoples but still without twenty-first century sensitivities about language, race and gender. The first verse of the then popular missionary hymn 'From Greenland's icy mountain' ended with a line in which Greenland, India and Africa were said to call on 'us' (i.e. Britain) 'to deliver their land *from error's chain*' [my italics]. The writer was Reginald Heber, Anglican Bishop of Calcutta (Kolkata). The anti-slavery movement had moved from the abolition of the slave trade (1807) to that of slavery itself (1833) but attitudes to 'inferior races' were to prove far more enduring.

Back in the ‘Mother country’ (the phrase was redolent of tutelage of colonies), rapid railway expansion – also an export – took place from 1840 onwards. The industrial revolution and population growth both expanded the cities. It was noted that the ‘hands’ (factory workers) sometimes endured conditions much like those of colonial slaves. They were defined by their skills (hands) rather than as people. Industrial advance embraced some specifically Christian philanthropy. The Unitarian settlements under Jedediah Strutt at Belper (1778) and Samuel Greg at Styal (1784) were in the first wave of rural industrialisation – mills sited near water power. The later Quaker settlements by George Cadbury at Bournville (1900) and Joseph Rowntree at New Earswick (1901) were part of ongoing city industrialisation. These communities provided housing, education, welfare and religion for workers and their families. But there were also unprincipled and undisciplined excesses, deftly characterised in the novels of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens. Gaskell’s *North and South* (1855) and Dickens’ *Hard Times* (1854), the latter creating Coketown, are two examples of commentary on the dehumanisation consequent on much industrialisation. Coketown was fictitious, but England produced real towns called Coalville (1833, from an earlier village) and Ironville (founded by the Butterley Iron Company in 1834) and at least a dozen other examples with coal, iron and steel prefixes. Industry and the extension of the franchise in 1832 also acted as a catalyst for educational provision for adult workers and their sometimes-working children. This included the provision of Sunday Schools, often teaching basic reading and writing for 6 hours or more on Sundays, and of church-funded (i.e. denominational) day schools for the fortunate minority.

Why Arnold Is Important

Arnold’s fame rests on three premises: his theological and educational vision; the Arnold dynasty – his children’s impact on education; and the Arnold ‘old boys’, former students who rose to become leading figures in education and spread the Arnold vision. The Arnold children had their own collectively considerable impact on education. Jane exercised a strong influence on her husband, W.E. Forster, MP, and his landmark 1870 Education Act. Matthew was a school inspector on the national scene and his reports and articles were widely discussed. Tom briefly undertook educational work in Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) and eventually went into higher education. William was director of public instruction in the newly founded department in the Punjab. Edward Arnold became a school inspector in the south west of England. Edward’s son Edward, ‘Ted’, founded the educational publishing firm of Edward Arnold. Mary Arnold did not go into education but became a dedicated Christian socialist, developing another strand of her father’s concern. Arnold’s youngest child, Walter, joined the navy at 13, turning his back on the family involvement in education. But in the doings of the other children we might detect Arnold’s influence being adapted and extended a generation below him.

Like many headteachers of his time, Arnold personally taught the sixth form, i.e. the class containing the oldest boys – really young men – in the school. Some

of these leading pupils became influential headteachers a generation on in day and boarding schools: Benson at Wellington; Bradby at Haileybury; Cotton and Bradley at Marlborough; Gell in Van Diemen's Land; Hill at Warwick; Prince Lee at King Edward's, Birmingham; Phillpotts at Bedford. Charles John Vaughan, Craven scholar, senior classic, Porson prize winner, Chancellor's Medal recipient, and Fellow of Trinity Cambridge, became Head of Harrow. Some leading teachers and pupils of Arnold's became bishops: Prince Lee at Manchester; Frederick Temple at Exeter and Canterbury; Tait; Benson; Lightfoot; Westcott. There was a second generation influence. Pears at Repton School had been a housemaster at Harrow under Vaughan. Priestly, head at the nonconformist school at Mill Hill from 1834–1853, corresponded with Arnold and tried to adapt his approach. Thomas Jex-Blake never knew Arnold personally. As a boy he was destined for Eton, but when his father read A. P. Stanley's *Life of Arnold* (1844), he was so deeply impressed that the son was sent to Rugby instead. After a double First at Oxford and a short spell at Marlborough he taught at Rugby from 1857 to 1868, moving to the headship of Cheltenham and returning to Rugby as head from 1874 to 1887.

But what *was* Arnold's vision for theology and education? In theology he became notorious as a radical and there is no doubt that had he wanted a career in the church – like most headteachers of boys' boarding schools of his day he was ordained – he would have found the way blocked. He saw Rugby School as an opportunity for an educational experiment with two purposes:

To determine whether a school could be truly Christian in ethos and not just nominally Christian or Christian by foundation or inheritance

To attempt to abolish adolescence and to see whether children – in the case of this school, boys – could move directly, or at least speedily, from childhood to adulthood

This latter aim was not as odd as it may appear. Adolescence is a culturally conditioned phenomenon, present in industrialised societies, a transition phase between childhood and adulthood. In biblical times and in some non-industrialised societies now, it does not exist. When children reached puberty they were married off and they performed 'adult' work as soon as they were strong enough. No intermediate stage was required. Arnold was at Rugby from 1828 to 1842, so his experiment had 14 years to run. It deserves re-visiting at a time when the position of religion in the public school, the underlying values behind schools and schooling and the appropriate way to deal with adolescents and adolescence are continuing concerns internationally.

Arnold's Life in Outline

1795 Born at West Cowes, Isle of Wight

1807 To Winchester School

1811 To Corpus Christi College, Oxford

1815 Fellow of Oriel College

1819 With a friend opens a small two-teacher boarding 'prep' school at Laleham near Staines to prepare boys for entry to the famous boarding schools at age 13

- 1820 Marries Mary Penrose
- 1828 Head of Rugby School
- 1829 First sermons published
- 1833 *Principles of Church Reform* makes Arnold nationally known and highly controversial
- 1835 *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, edited with commentary by Arnold, a major ancient history text
- 1836 Almost dismissed from Rugby for stridently attacking the Oxford Movement in the Church of England. Saved by chair's vote
- 1839 Public visit to Rugby by Queen Adelaide makes Arnold an establishment-approved figure. He has a private meeting with Queen Victoria
- 1841 Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford (part-time) alongside the Rugby headship
- 1842 Sudden death, on the eve of his 47th birthday

How did Arnold appear to his pupils? One former pupil, Frederick Vaughan Mather, writing at the age of 80, gives a subjective but authentic view of life under Arnold in the 3 years from his arrival at the school to Arnold's death:

I think any one reading Stanley [Arnold's original biographer and another former pupil, see above] would gather that the boys at Rugby were ruled by love. This was not so – They were ruled by high respect and by fear and by fear [*sic*]. Arnold was to them Black Tom, as he was called [He wore a black MA gown, in common with most teachers in schools of his type]. We shivered when he took the form [= class]. Hoping for 'Thank you' and dreading his 'Sit down.' He succeeded in making the boys study for themselves, reading books on the subject of their lessons. Leaving them free to make their own choice. His strong Radicalism made us Tories. His violence in controversy descended in at least equal measure on Stanley. We were proud of him and were certainly very interested in his sermons. One peculiarity with him was his power of making us conscious of our ignorance the depth of which he was fond of saying he never could solve [crossed out] probe. He certainly introduced the plan of trusting boys, and that with admirable affect [*sic*]. His strong personality constantly pervaded the whole place and when he died the void was irreparable. [From unpublished longhand ms in Rugby School archive]

Arnold's Theology

In his time as a Fellow (staff member) at Oxford, Arnold was a member of the 'Noetics'. This nickname, derived from the Greek *noetikos*, pertaining to the mind or intellect, was applied to a group, in the Oriel College senior common room, who were prepared to question and criticise the Christian orthodoxy of their time. Politically they were non-party, but in practice liberal. Arnold first came to prominence by his unpopular support for Roman Catholic emancipation. The legal disabilities to which British Roman Catholics had been subjected for centuries ended with legislation enacted unwillingly by George IV in 1829. The Church of Rome was widely seen as a foreign power (the Vatican still held territories) and

Roman Catholics as not fully British. It was popularly thought that they gave their real allegiance abroad to the Pope and not to the monarch in England, who was head of the established (Anglican) church. The media perpetuated this image. There was no love lost between the Anglican clergy and Roman Catholicism. In contrast Arnold wrote *The Christian Duty of Granting the Claims of the Roman Catholics* (1828).

But he came to real fame or notoriety as a radical with his *Principles of Church Reform* (1833). This passed through four editions in 6 months. In summary it argued that the life and example of Christ were the essence of Christianity. Christ is, so to speak, the non-negotiable goodness and presence of God. Anything that obscures this centrality of Christ, even the Church itself, is bad. What has arisen in post-apostolic Christianity is interpretation, even opinion, emphasis on the periphery rather than the centre. This interpretation must be subject to scrutiny and question. Extraneous beliefs must be stripped away. Creeds and prescribed ceremonies are 'a mistaken way' to provide unity. They are liable to error and they produce 'outsiders'.

A command given to one man, or to one generation of men [*sic*], is and can be, binding upon other men and other generations, only so far forth, as the circumstances in which both are placed are similar (Sermons II, 1832, 431).

Calling Jesus 'Lord' and 'God' is the language of prayer and praise; people should not be expected to explain what they mean by it.

Another danger to which Arnold returns again and again is 'priestcraft'. As it grew, Christianity spawned social structures, in parallel to the political and social hierarchies of kings and barons. The structures included archbishops, cardinals and popes and made the pronouncements of those holding these high offices authoritative. Priests could reduce the status of the laity by purporting to be mediators between the people and God. Such mediation displaces Christ, the true mediator, and downgrades the notion of equality among Christians. Priesthood to Arnold is seen most clearly in the claim to administer the Lord's Supper. 'In the New Testament it is declared 'as plainly as words can speak' that all Christians are equal before God' (*Fragment*: 32). Preferring the word minister (common in non-conformity then and now, but also prominent in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer) Arnold saw a minister as one who serves, spreads their knowledge freely. Priests are associated with secrets, mysteries, religious truths within an inner circle, the power of one group of believers over another. Even the Eucharist could be celebrated without a priest. The same held true for baptism. Any believing, sincere Christian could conduct it. Arnold's opponents were quick to point out that Arnold's butler could presumably celebrate communion as validly as the rector of Rugby.

Arnold held, exceptionally for his time, that what united Christians was far greater than what divided them. There was little of real significance to separate the established Anglican (episcopal) church from Baptists, Independents (Congregationalists), Methodists, Moravians and Presbyterians. Three groups constituted a problem in attempting a united Church. First, the Quakers, by virtue of their radically different worship based on silent waiting on the Inward Light and

the abandonment of outward sacraments. The second problem group were Roman Catholics, by virtue of their claims to be the one true church. The most difficult problem to Arnold of all was Unitarianism, for whom Christ might not be divine.

Arnold stressed that in his plan for a united church, no one was being asked to give up their beliefs or their preferred way of worship, but only to allow the inclusion of others. Liturgy should vary, not only to embrace the denominations uniting into the one church, but also the varying moods of individuals, who sometimes need 'a freer and more social service' and at others need 'the deep solemnity of the [Anglican] Liturgy' (*Principles*: 67). It would be better to hold these different services in the same building at different times than to hold competing services at the same time in various buildings. As people shared the same building, barriers would fall away.

Bishops should be guided by committees of lay people and clergy, partly elected from the parishes. For those likely to be shocked by Arnold's reduction of the power and perhaps status of bishops he had an answer: the present office of bishop was so different to that in the early church that the principle of change and development according to the Church's needs was well established. The clergy should not rule the church alone. There is always the danger of their becoming a caste and dominating the church. Bishops needed checks and restraints to prevent them becoming diocesan tyrants. Parishes should be made manageable units, small enough to promote and reflect community spirit.

Arnold also discussed the colonial mission church issue. He believed that in British colonies, it was not appropriate for the English national church to expect to be supreme. Scotland had a different (Presbyterian) national church with 'equal rights' (his phrase). He did not address the issue of the relevance of British denominations to a colonial context or the larger ethical issue of whether it was right to try to replace one indigenous religion with another imported one. But he did see that the church should seek to integrate into the life of the people, wherever they were, not into traditions of the past. The people should be made to feel that the church is theirs, reflecting their commitment and understanding.

Not surprisingly in the light of this radicalism, Arnold saw Scripture as 'wholly relative and practical' – this in an era which viewed it as authoritative and non-negotiable. Thus, the slaughter of the Amalekites (I Samuel 15) is now rightly perceived to be shocking and appalling but in its time was viewed as acceptable, even divinely mandated. The original meaning of biblical passages must be distinguished from their use as types in the later interpretation of Christian truth. Since the true basis of religion lies in its moral and spiritual heart, historical, critical and scientific 'objections' to the Bible cannot damage its real centre. Even if the verbal inspiration of the biblical record is abandoned, the truths at its heart are not touched. What is 'revealed' in the Bible is the will of God and the duty of humankind. If history and science appear to conflict with the Bible it must mean that the readers have failed to grasp the deeper meaning of God's message. This was decades before Darwin. Arnold emphasised the importance of state-of-the-art scholarship in studying and teaching the Bible.

The Experiment at Rugby

Arnold identified ‘evils’ which might exist in a school: the false tongue; the violent hand; the proud or sensual or covetous thought; the indolent temper; the unkind or selfish or unjust action (Sermon on Genesis 34.30, 1850 ed.: 298). Rouse (1898) argues that Arnold wished to elevate teaching from the training of the intellect to the training of character and that this is where his success resided. In the academic achievements of their pupils, Rouse argued, other heads could rival Arnold. For Arnold, education did not *include* spiritual development; its whole aim *was* spiritual development, which he understood as the Christian path to Christ.

The practice of making older boys praepostors, prefects, was almost universal in boarding schools, as was the granting to them of significant powers, including the power to use corporal punishment. Most boarding schools could not be run without them, as there were simply insufficient academic staff to cover all the duties needed in a residential school setting. The theoretical defence for this practice was that being accorded such responsibility was a training ground for those responsibilities of adult life they would be expected to shoulder on leaving the school. At worst it could be a licence for bullying or exploitation. Where Arnold went further than many of his contemporaries was to take the theory of praepostors utterly seriously, placing great emphasis on the role, both for their own training and for that of younger boys. His praepostors had almost the status of teachers. He therefore gave them great trust and expected total loyalty in return.

Arnold put new life into received methods of teaching rather than inventing new ones, bringing to the task commitment and enthusiasm. Unusual for the time he would always admit when he did not know the answer and try to learn with his class, sometimes sending a pupil to ask another teacher for information. He was also willing to admit his own mistakes or ignorance. Mere cleverness he did not admire, likening it to the cleverness of lawyers divested of moral character with courtroom success, not truth, as the aim. He admired the plodder rather than the genius to whom learning came easily. Arnold also used the question technique as a teaching method far more than was then common. This meant that pupils had less chance of being passive and were also more likely to understand issues than if he had merely lectured, as teachers of older pupils tended to do at the time. The boy Stanley wrote to his parents that Arnold would put ‘queer, out-of-the-way questions’ that made him think. But the Rugby curriculum itself was largely traditional and unexceptional for its time. French had a very subsidiary role; science, as now understood, almost none.

Arnold and ‘Religious Education’ (Spiritual Development)

Arnold was very much aware of the difficulties faced by all schools.

This common and well known Feature of a School, – its Roughness, Coarseness, Want of Feeling, to say nothing of its positive Unkindness and Spirit of Annoyance, does this bear

any Resemblance to the Temper of those who are the inhabitants of the Kingdom of God?
(Sermon on Psalm 94.2, 27th November, 1836)

It is possible, from the sermons and the way in which Arnold structured Rugby School, to reconstruct his view of spiritual development. He called it 'religious education' and it is important not to confuse his usage with the twenty-first century UK name for the classroom subject, which in Arnold's time was called Scripture or Divinity. Adolescence was to Arnold a time of trial and temptation between the idyll of childhood and the maturity of adulthood. There was plenty of evidence in contemporary behaviour in public schools to illustrate this. It included cases of homosexual rape – boys still slept six to a bed in some schools in the 1820s – to bullying including roasting 'fags' (junior boys), extortion, gambling, alcohol excess, riding to hounds, poaching, attacking local residents and other illicit activities. Arnold's radical solution was to reduce adolescence to a minimum, by expecting adult behaviour and trust among adolescents, especially older ones, and by curbing excesses when they did arise by firm but fair discipline.

Arnold famously remarked that he wanted to produce Christian *men*, for Christian *boys* he could not hope to make. He acknowledged few positive aspects of childhood. They included that children were very teachable and therefore needed good examples and that the transition to adulthood could be hastened. This phase was marked when a time of 'principle' was attained, potentially in the sixth form years. Arnold believed that reducing adolescence could be done without damage and that 'over-study' or 'a premature advance in book knowledge' was no part of the recipe, but rather a change from carelessness to thoughtfulness, from ignorance to wisdom, from selfishness to unselfishness. His critics felt that he did it at the cost of not accepting the real nature of adolescence and of depriving some boys of part of their childhood by making them over-intense, encouraging morbidity and introspection. He maintained that 'the natural liveliness and gaiety of youth' held 'a great deal of folly' and that it could be 'riotous, insolent and annoying to others'. Arnold held that boarding schools, by removing parental influence, could themselves harm adolescent boys. This was plausible in the pre-railway era of his early years at Rugby. Until railways made shorter terms practicable, the school year was divided into Long Half (21 weeks from early February to late June) and Short Half (16 weeks from late August to late December), a two-term year.

For Arnold, a Christian school should be a 'temple of God', although just like the Jerusalem Temple it can be corrupted and can then harm its members, e.g. by condoning drunkenness or bullying or lying. Individual members have a duty towards the school. They are not there to please themselves. In some schools, hatred of authority, general idleness and peer pressure to behave badly are the very opposite of Christian love. Set in this context, the male community of the boys' public school under Arnold became a sort of Christian monastery, with the chapel at the heart and with all its teaching religious in intention.

Teachers should not be in the old master–slave relationship but should be like parents. Their example can be crucial. Can teachers accomplish this great task? Is it impossible? The curriculum has to allow proper space for spiritual development.

Physical science cannot instruct the judgement – perhaps a clue to its lowly place in the Rugby curriculum. Only moral and religious knowledge can accomplish this. Teaching history, moral and political philosophy with no reference to the Bible is not possible without giving children an anti-religious education. Arnold recognised no middle ground. Curriculum was either religious or, by the absence of religion, anti-religious.

Children, after the innocence of early childhood is lost, become ignorant and selfish, living only for the present. Arnold believed that adolescence in children in attitudes and behaviour corresponded to the adolescence of the human race. Adolescents needed the claims of Christianity setting before them clearly and uncompromisingly. It was a mistake to appeal to the reason of the child in a situation where obedience should be required. Children are ‘under the law’ (I Timothy 1.9) and therefore require a system with rules, disciplines and where necessary, punishments. Without that, childhood innocence could be corrupted by adolescents into hardness, coarseness, cruelty and stupidity. His opponents argued that he did not like children. It is more accurate to say that he did not like *childhood*, in its adolescent phase.

The Chapel was central to Arnold’s experiment. Arnold had himself appointed chaplain as well as headteacher when the post became vacant. He valued most of all the opportunity provided by preaching and after taking on the chaplaincy he preached on almost every term-time Sunday until his death. Voluntary communion services, on four occasions per year, were routinely attended by between seventy and a hundred, out of about three hundred pupils. It was the one occasion of the week when he addressed all the boys. No sermons lasted more than 20 minutes (short by contemporary standards) and none was repeated. They were composed between the morning and afternoon services. The neatly written notebooks of them survive. The tone was plain, forceful, direct, sometimes delivered with emotion, most especially earnest in their entreaty to renounce evil. It was ‘almost conversational plainness’ (Stanley, 1901 edition, 145). The tone was of entreaty, to take up arms against evil:

Unquestionably, the time of life at which you are arrived, and more particularly the younger boys among you, is in itself, exceedingly dangerous. It is just the time, beyond all others in life, when temptation is great, and the strength of character to resist it exceedingly small (Sermon on Gal.3.24, *ibid.*: 111).

Arnold, History and Citizenship

History is more than the biography of a society, yet the life of every society belongs to history. History is to be seen as the life of the highest and most sovereign society, a state or nation, the biography of a political society or commonwealth (Inaugural, 2ff). Nations are members of a greater body, the body of organised states throughout the world and also of the universal family of humankind – both these memberships are according to the will of God (*ibid.*: 13f). In order to perfect its inner and outer life, a nation needs political institutions and laws. These are invested with one of

God's own attributes, judgement, which entails having to determine between truth and falsehood.

The state must inculcate certain principles in its citizens: this process takes the form of education and education is to be conceived as religious in intention. In Christian countries, religion inculcates truths and forms habits. All societies of people should make their common bond in a common object and a common practice rather than a common belief. Dogma is divisive. Union in action may in the end lead to union in belief, but this can never be guaranteed. A state may declare that a religion is the basis of its law. Does this mean, Arnold asks, that the religion is therefore imposed on the people? But the people and the state are not separate, except in corrupt states that act against their people. A nation acting through its government may choose a law for itself that it deems most for its good. How should it then treat dissenters? It must not overstrain the consciences of individuals on the terms of citizenship. It must not attempt to compel belief, although obedience to law is of course required. Christian law must provide for education and must try to 'realise' (i.e. make real) Christianity to its people (ibid: 45–47). To begin with a strict creed is a sure way to promote hypocrisy and unbelief. Vigorous Christian institutions matter more. State and church should not be divorced: they have common ground in the promotion of moral values.

The great constituent elements of nationality are race, language, institutions and religion. But these are complex constituents. No nation is a single race. The English nation's identity is complex and mixed, including Saxon, Briton and Roman elements. The intermixture of Celtic and Roman changed the face of Europe. Colonisation is re-shaping the world both racially and culturally. It is caused by want of subsistence in the home country; by expulsion of minority groups; by the wish to increase national wealth and by desire to extend civilisation and 'true Religion' (*Essay*, 1815: 2). Yet colonies themselves, like children, can be the heirs to ageing countries and cultures.

It is now assumed that being born of free parents within the territory of a particular state and paying taxes to the government 'conveys a natural claim to the right of citizenship' (*Thucydides III*: xi). In the ancient world citizenship, by contrast, unless specially conferred, depended solely on race and could be denied to migrants and their descendants, although 'distinctions of race were not of that odious and fantastic character which they have borne in modern times' (ibid: xi). Race in the ancient world was linked to specific morals and religions. Particular races worshipped particular gods and subscribed to particular moral codes with differing values, e.g. about polygamy or infanticide. In ancient multi-racial societies there could be confusion: so wide a tolerance being required that it led to 'a general carelessness and scepticism, and encouraged the notion that right and wrong have no real existence, but are the mere creatures of human opinion (ibid: xii). But despite this 'the mixture of races is essential to the improvement of mankind [*sic*]' and 'an exclusive attachment to national customs is incompatible with true liberality'.

How then can a multi-racial society develop which avoids 'moral degeneracy' within a vortex of relativism, 'Epicurean indifference' or at the other extreme 'narrow-minded bigotry'? Arnold's answer is that Christianity makes religious and

moral agreement independent of race or national customs. It is international and multi-racial in its nature. It distinguishes the essential and eternal from the temporal and local and requires toleration of local variation. It requires that reverence be given not to custom or national prejudice or human authority but to the truth of God. The potential binding force for citizenship is now Christianity, in which all races and nations can potentially become fellow citizens. Those without this sort of bond who merely pay taxes in the same country are fellow sojourners not fellow citizens.

Conclusion: The Arnold Legacy for the Twenty-First Century

Arnold died more than a century and a half ago. We can therefore expect little of what he argued to be directly transferable into the context of today: much appears archaic, even arcane. Moreover, his arrival late in life as an establishment figure in education quickly led to the suppressing of his radical and shocking theological views. Yet these views underlay his whole educational enterprise, which cannot be properly understood without them. Arnold's three main aims as head of Rugby School had been to inculcate, in descending order, religious and moral principles; gentlemanly conduct; and intellectual ability. He demonstrated massive energy devoted to work – as sixth form teacher, headteacher, chaplain, academic historian, head of one of the Rugby school boarding houses, correspondent with many old boys – and as a devoted family man. The later Arnold myth in education is partly accountable for by the fact that he lived out the work and moral ethic that many later Victorians came to emulate. Despite Strachey and the collapse of Victorian ideals, Arnold's legacy in English education was not eclipsed, but it was obscured.

First, his radical and inclusive view of Christianity and the Church – an amazing ecumenism in its contemporary context – paved the way for inter-religious dialogue and dialogue with non-religious alternatives such as secular humanism. Such dialogue was to become one of the core principles of British religious education in the state-funded school. For Arnold and most Victorians 'Christianity' and 'religion' were self-evidently synonyms. Such a view pertains no longer. Our society also distinguishes religion and spirituality in a way that Victorians would not readily acknowledge. But there are still implications in what Arnold said for a society like ours that is acutely conscious of competing world religions and secular life stances and in which it is only recently becoming acceptable to talk again about the spiritual dimension in education, medicine, social work and national life. We are moving beyond ignoring these in public discourse on the basis of an implied secular common denominator or the desire not to offend minorities or the privatisation of spirituality. Arnold's willingness to go beyond the safety of the convention of his time and look at the roots of issues (radicalism) offers an example of how a society in time of rapid change might move forward.

Arnold's own classroom teaching to encourage students to think for themselves and not merely repeat formulae or maxims and his use of what was

then state-of-the-art scholarship in 'Scripture' classes provides another example that eventually metamorphosed into open-ended religious education teaching within a dialogical context. This proved to be as popular with later students as his 'queer, out-of-the-way questions' (see above) were with the young men of the Rugby sixth form. Moreover, Arnold's insistence that Christianity should not be taught or conceived of simply as a belief-system extended by implication to other religions. Yet some religious education continues to present religions to children as closed belief systems rather than as complex, changing, multi-cultural organisms with some constants. Arnold reminds religious educators that the heart of religion is not creed or formula but praxis and experience.

Arnold also offers an antidote to some trends in citizenship education. The introduction of citizenship into the UK national curriculum from 2002 was done without any discussion of what constitutes the 'city' and its values. Is the 'city' for which twenty-first century British education attempts to prepare citizens Britain? Europe? The world? Instead a mixture of political education, mainly secularly based moral education and human rights studies, was compiled as politicians looked to citizenship to dissolve low voter turnout at elections and address social problems. Arnold's work provides a challenge to examine and clarify the roots of citizenship itself, which will then have implications for citizenship education. Citizenship education should not merely be content to devise an instrumental syllabus in reaction to contemporary social problems.

Arnold had very clear values and also a unique educational opportunity to test them. His certainties and specifically Christian single-mindedness distance him from our uncertainties and pluralism. The argument that Christianity alone has the capacity to be a truly cross-cultural world religion cannot be sustained. Arnold is a credible exponent of Christianity but cannot be a convincing one in a society so changed as ours. What makes him credible is that he tried to implement in practice what he believed in theory. Few had taken Christianity seriously enough to attempt to place it at the centre of a living school and make it work.

His was not a remote theory of education, like that of Rousseau, whose case study was based on a single – imaginary – child, *Émile*. Arnold had hundreds of real children in his daily care. He was not always a 'good' headteacher, even by the standards of his time, but he was consistently a visionary one. Arnold did not have to cope with the stream of edicts and interventions by politicians in the education process that has characterised British education since 1988. His aims were long term: to produce Christians and gentlemen. Our aims are shorter term, to produce literate and numerate young people who can jump through the hoops or levels of attainment tasks, the range of compulsory and frequent national examination hurdles [national examination testing points] and proceed to degree courses or further vocational training. Those of our children who are compliant enter an educational hurdle course in which the height of the fences is always increasing but the goal is never defined. Arnold, in contrast, challenges us to formulate goals then implement visions.

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Religious Education and Religious Freedom in Russia

Fyodor Kozyrev

Introduction

As a part of Europe, however marginal in geographical and historical sense, Russia faces all new challenges generated by the rapid growth of new opportunities brought with scientific and technical progress. In education the progress is both blessing and curse. As knowledge and intellectual skills become high-valued commodity of postindustrial society, schools find themselves more and more drawn into the midst of the market and forced to define goals and achievements of their activity in utilitarian and consumerist terms and criteria too distant from spiritual dimension of human life. Today Russia shares with the other European societies the same anxieties concerning the sustainability of their school systems and asks the same questions regarding the role and the place of religion in these new educational contexts.

And here the question is posed, whether religion may be a remedy against social disintegration, consumerism, materialism, and individualism fostered by competitive neo-liberal models of education? In a sense the question is even more vital for contemporary Russian context than for the European West. Quasi-religious ideology of Soviet state suppressed all explicit forms of religiosity in education, but it also served, through its very emphasis on ideological issues, as a catalyst of spiritual search and devotions. In a post-Cold War context, with Communist ideology largely gone, a feeling of spiritual vacuum has emerged in Russia. Many among former Soviet citizens felt more comfortable within a consolidated national culture than in unsteady contemporary realm of pluralism of truths and beliefs. As a result, during the 1990s the idea of reconsolidating society with a new national ideology has gained a solid public support, and religion is seen as having a critical if ambivalent role in this process.

F. Kozyrev (✉)
Russian Christian Academy for Humanities, St Petersburg, Russia
e-mail: fkozyrev@yahoo.co.uk

In July 1996, first Russian President Boris Yeltsyn charged his administration with a task to find within a year a new Russian national idea. Alexander Solzhenitsyn was one of the first to react. He called this appeal ridiculous and said that the only possible idea in the situation of misery Russia suffered that time would be the care of the people. Nevertheless since that time Yeltsyn's quest for national idea never run off public discourse, and colored all discussions about the future of religion in Russia and its expected social role.

In fact there are two versions of national idea that constitute the mainstream in the development of Russian civil consciousness during last decade. The first was formulated by Vladimir Putin on February 12, 2004, when he answered the questions of his campaign supporters at Moscow State University: "We must strive to become competitive in every area. Our people must be competitive, our cities, our villages, our industrial sectors, and our entire country. That is our main national idea today" (website of Vladimir Putin – <http://www.putin2004.ru/english/authorized>). The search for an inter-ethnic and inter-religious basis for social consolidation is reflected in the new National Concept of State Educational Policy, adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science on August 3, 2006. Among the main priorities of the federal educational policy is the concept of a "consolidation of the multi-ethnic people of Russia into one political nation and formation of the all-Russia civil consciousness in correlation with ethnic self-identification" (cited from juridical website Garant – <http://www.garant.ru/prime/20061017/90016.htm>).

The second concept is expressed in the Social Doctrine of Russian Orthodox Church (2000) in the idea of Church and State symphony. The Church believes that its task is to participate in the national life by creating a positive moral ideal in society, as well as by providing religious guidance. The principle that stipulates *a priori* that scientific and technological development should not be restricted by any ethical, philosophical, or religious requirements is characterized as a false doctrine from the Christian perspective (chapter "Wisdom (*Hikmah*) as a Holistic Basis for Inter-religious Education"). This basic vision found its development in several later documents. One of them is "The Declaration of Human Rights and Dignity" adopted by the 10th World Council of Russian People (April 2006) and based on the Metropolitan Cyrill's report "Human rights and moral responsibility." In the report the principle of moral autonomy is contested "from Christian perspective" and the importance of the "external criteria" in moral guidance is declared. In line with this thesis the Declaration states that "there are values which are no less important than human rights. These values include faith, morality, and the sanctity of holy objects and one's homeland. When these values and the realization of human rights conflict, society, the state, and the law should work to harmonize them. We must not allow situations to occur in which the realization of human rights tramples upon religious or moral traditions, insults religious or national feelings or sacred objects, or threatens our homeland's existence" (website of the School of Russian and Asian Studies – http://www.sras.org/the_russian_declaration_of_human_rightsfor). Commitment to this alternative to western human rights concept is shared by a large number of politicians belonging to so-called national-patriotic block, the most influential center of political power besides the pro-governmental parties. New national

idea is associated by them with more decisive divergence from secularist global culture of the West and with the strengthening of the authentic features of “Russian civilization.”

It would not be a great simplification to associate these two versions of the national idea with the perspectives of either more secular or more religious (post-secular) orientation of socio-political development in post-Soviet Russia. The issues of religious freedom and religious education are of central importance in the choice between the two.

Facing similar challenges, Russia is quite distinct from Western European countries in the ways these challenges are perceived and met.

Religious Education in Russia: Historical Background

Church and State

Orthodox Christianity is often defined in Russia as a *state-shaping* and *culture-shaping* religion. Its history goes alongside with the history of the state. The first historical witnesses about Christians in Russia refer to the 10th century. Saint princess Olga the wife of the second Scandinavian ruler of Russia (prince Igor) tried to establish Christian Church and it was her grandson saint prince Vladimir who officially “baptized Russia” in 988. There is a beautiful story – a masterpiece of the ancient Russian literature – telling how Vladimir chose the faith for his people and how the beauty of the Byzantine liturgy became the main argument to prefer “the Greek faith.” A thousand years later the celebration of this remarkable event became a starting point of religious revival in Russia after the “Babylonian capture” by communist ideology.

There were several turning points in the history of Church-State relations. The first is connected with the Florence Treaty between Greek Orthodox Church and Vatican (1439) followed by the fall of Constantinople (1453). Being interpreted as the apostasy of Greek Orthodox Church and the divine retribution, the sequence caused profound changes in Russian Church both on the mental and on the organizational levels. In 1448 Russian Metropolitan Iona was assigned for the first time without the approval of Constantinople and that was the first step toward the full autocephalia of ROC obtained in 1589 with the establishment of the independent Moscow Patriarchate. At the same time Russians began to recognize their church as the only heir of the Orthodox faith and the successor of the holy Empire. It was the birth of the theocratic idea of “Moscow the Third Rome” ever significant since that time in Russian spirituality.

Among the most significant events of the end of the 15th century a theological dispute (and a real political struggle) between a group of “zavolzhskie startsy” (or “nestjzhaty”) and the devotees of Joseph Volotsky should be mentioned. The first being devoted to the old Eastern ascetic tradition, nurtured an ideal of Church as a community of the poor deliberately distancing themselves from power and social

activities. The second stood for the socially active and powerful Church taking part in civil life through charity and involvement in state affairs. As a consequence of the victory of the “party of Joseph,” ROC became a big landowner and a serious actor in Russian politics. Some Russian theologians and historians regard it as a great spiritual tragedy, the others treat it as a historical chance for liberalization of Russia through creating the two-polar (Pope-Caesar) political system as it happened in the West. Regardless, the chance was not realized and the establishment of the absolutism of the Moscow tsar in the middle of the 16th century opened a long story of subjugation of church by state and the long list of Russian martyrs. The Metropolitan Philip strangled in 1569 by the body-guard of John the Terrible is fairly considered as the most outstanding representative of the old tradition of Church intercession for people persecuted by state.

A Great Schism of the 17th century, which Alexander Pushkin suggested should be considered to be another religious tragedy within Russian church. Supported by state, the Orthodox hierarchy for the first time in its history initiated mass executions in the name of Christian faith. On the part of Patriarch Nikon it was not only a struggle for the purity of faith but also for the power and independence of hierarchy that underlay his reforms. He loosed the game being overthrown by Tsar Alexey. On the part of the old-believers it was also a matter of power that underlay their resistance. According to Georges Florovsky, the topic of schism was not the old belief but the Kingdom, in which the Tsar and the Church instead of hierarchy were considered to be the main possessors of power. And it was not the “apostasy” of Nikon, but the “apostasy” of Tsar that really worried them (Florovsky, 1937, pp. 67–68). Russian schism put the end to the Moscow dream of Holy Kingdom and came, according to Alexander Schmemmann, as a retribution for the anti-historian and utopian Russian theological thought (Schmemmann, 1977). The old resentments and consequences of the Great Schism would play their role in the later success of Communist utopia.

January 1, 1700, was a beginning of a new era for Russia with a new “New Year” celebration, with a new chronology system counting years from Christ and social reforms turning upside down all sectors of public and civil life. In his titanic efforts to make Russia a European country, Peter the Great could hardly rely on the church for support. “Antichrist” became the common nickname of the young Tsar with clergy taking an active part in political opposition to him.

As the result of Peter’s radical secularization policy the Church independence was withdrawn. The Institute of Patriarch was abolished and substituted by the institute of Synod with a lay state service bureaucrat (ober-procuror) at its head. The church was recognized as a unit in a larger mechanism of Empire, with its affairs controlled by the state. Further, “The Spiritual Regulation” (1721), explicitly delivered religious leadership to the Emperor – the “Bishop of Bishops” was announced as a supreme power over all powers, lay, and cleric (Florovsky, 1937, p. 87). From that time the clergy became a “frightened caste” (ibid., p. 89) of Russian society, pushed out to the periphery of public life, poor and isolated from “high” secular culture. This isolation produced a split between the “secular” and the “spiritual” cultures that was responsible for much of the future dramatic history within the Russian Empire.

A new chapter of Church-State relations began with the revolutions of February and October 1917. It was not only a story of Church devastation and abasement. It was also a story of courage and glory, a story of more than 2000 saint martyrs canonized by Church Council of 2000, and of innumerable confessors that saved Orthodox faith and transmitted tradition through the severe atheistic campaigns at Lenin, early Stalin and Khrushchev times. It was also a story of the revival of Church independence that began in October 1917 with the restoration of Patriarchate and election of Patriarch Tikhon, a principle continuing now in the separation of Church and State reaffirmed by new Russian Constitution (1993). After a long period as an institutionalized “state religion” and a much shorter time of being a marginal “survival of the past” doomed to die out, the Russian Orthodox Church now finds itself in a quite new situation which calls for new ways of participating in civil life and partnership with the state and civil institutions.

Religious Education Between Church and State

In Muscovy Russia (15th–17th centuries) family education evidently dominated over schooling. Agiography, spiritual instructions by *holy fathers* and the famous *Domostroy* with its three parts devoted to religious regulations, piety in family life and economy of housing were among the most popular readings. Monks constituted the educated class of Russian society and monasteries played a role of scientific centers with theology (“bookish teaching”) at the top of the sciences to study. During this period much work has been done to collect, translate, correct, and disseminate sacred texts. The first full text of Church Slavonic Bible appeared in 1499 as the fruit of this work.

In the 17th century the raise of interest for European cultural development caused a rapid growth of influence of scholastics and a number of theological schools with Latin style of teaching grew up on the borders of the “Orthodox world” in Ukraine. As a result of this movement the first higher educational institution was established in Moscow in 1687 under the Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich. It was called the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy. Besides theology its curriculum included classic languages and liberal arts. It was a first big step toward integration into the European educational space, yet the real change of the situation in Russian education came a little bit later with the reforms brought by the son of the Tsar Alexey – Peter the Great.

Western enlightenment came to Russia together with the radical secularization of civil and cultural life. While accepting in general the design offered by Western scholars (with Georg Leibnitz among them), according to which Russian system of education was planned to be a copy of German one, the Russian Emperor made one exception regarding religion. He separated theology from academic science. Religious (“spiritual”) educational institutions (parish and monastery schools, theological seminaries and academies) and civil schools (mostly of military and engineering profile with so-called numeral mathematic schools as a preliminary phase) were subordinated to different state structures. Clergy became an isolated

caste. It was forbidden for clergy brood to enter civil schools. They had only two options: to learn in seminaries to become priests or to become soldiers for 25 years. Even the special body-type was ordered to use for printing “spiritual” literature so that everyone could easily distinguish it from the civil one. Since the first Russian University appeared in Moscow in 1755 under Peter’s daughter Elizabeth and till the very end of 19th century upper class could not study theology in Academies and alumni of Academies could not enter universities. First theological departments began to appear in Russian universities at the break of 21st century.

Segregation of church (spiritual) and civil (secular) cultures became a powerful factor shaping Russian spirituality and mentality. It created an inner tension between the ideal of a synthesis of Church and state reflected in the Orthodox concept of Symphony and identified by R. Niebuhr as the Constantinean or “Christ within Culture” model of Church-and-Culture relations (Niebuhr, 1951) on one hand and the strict dualism of social reality on the other hand. Moreover, the isolation of clergy from the new developments in science and education led to a widening gap between the “high culture” of upper class and the traditional “Orthodox way of life”. The latter began to be associated more and more with the commitment to Russian antiquity and with the rejection of the “Western way” of scientific and social development. Peter’s reforms succeeded only in part. He brought one sector of Russian society closer to the West, but in the system of cultural coordinates this movement is better to describe not as the dislocation of the whole social body but rather as its stretch between the two poles.

After Peter’s reforms divided education into two trends, religious education became a prerogative of a *spiritual trend* targeted to professional training of clergy, while in the schools of *secular, or civil trend* learning religion was either withdrawn or substituted by learning courtesy, Western languages and “noble arts” such as horse riding and fencing. This radical change made another solid contribution into a stable Russian prejudice associating the “Western” with the secular and even antireligious stance.

However, with the establishment of the system of universal popular education in Russia under Catherine the Second catechesis returned to school as a “fourth R” and remained there until 1917. The “Design of popular education in all sciences” made up for Russia by famous French philosopher Denis Diderot included recommendation to teach about the existence of God and about two essences in Christ. As the author professed, “the inclusion of religious subjects was made as a concession to the empress’s will” (Ahayan, Sviridova, & Smirnova, 2005, p. 126). Following educational reforms (1802–1804, 1826, 1860–1868, 1871–1872) changed considerably the system of general and higher professional education affecting the structure of educational system, the ratio of its elements and trends, the subordination and administration aspects, the level of autonomy of educational institutions, and leading principles of schooling. But the attestation for religious subject called “God’s Law” invariably occupied the first line in the state certificates of general education.

By the end of the 19th century two trends of educational system were presented on the primary level by Church parochial and grammar schools subordinated to Synod and supported by parishes and dioceses on one hand and the “town

schools” founded and supported either by government or by civil local communities (*zemstva*) on the other. The ratio of the two was 50:50. Religious subjects occupied about 40% of parochial schools curricula and included besides “God’s Law” training in Church choral groups and in Church-Slavonic reading. The main goal of these schools was defined by state Regulation (1902) as “the dissemination of education in the spirit of Orthodox faith and church”. Civil primary schools divided curriculum time between “God’s Law”, grammar, arithmetic, geometry, and basics of history, geography, and natural science. According to the Regulation of 1872 their goal was “to provide children of all classes with the essentials of mental and religious-moral education” (Piskunov, 2005).

Regarding the content of religious education, the “God’s Law” subject normally included three big parts: Bible; Church canon; and Catechesis (Dernov, 1913, p. 55). The first part was usually called in Russia “The Sacred History” and the selected narratives from the Old and New Testament were used as the main didactical source for it. Basic knowledge about liturgy, fasts, and celebrations was the core element of the second part. Catechesis had an objective to teach Church doctrine, to explain religious truths and to inspire pupils with piety. It based mainly upon three doctrinal sources: Credo, Lord prayer, and Decalogue (*ibid.*, p. 76). Besides classes the participation in weekly Church worship was considered to be an important element of religious education. It was usual to underline in methodic guidelines that the aim of the subject is not so much to give abstract knowledge as to contribute to moral and religious growth and perfection (*ibid.*, p. 48). That is why a specific Russian term “spiritual & moral” education was often used instead of religious education.

In the late 19th to early 20th centuries “God’s Law” and the whole enterprise of religious education in civil schools undoubtedly become the most frequent target for public and professional criticism. A reminiscence by Vasily Rozanov (1856–1919), an outstanding philosopher, pedagogue and journalist who wrote on the church topics at that time, is quite typical and indicative: “During 8 years of gymnasium studies we learned catechesis, liturgics, the history of Russian Church, the ‘Sacred History of Old Testament’ by Rudakov and the ‘Sacred History of New Testament’ by him as well. But I never read Gospel and Bible, and the only thing I knew to distinguish between them was that Gospel is small and Bible is huge and heavy. I want to say and I want to complain at last that at the so-called ‘God’s Law’ we were taught everything but a word of God and the word of God seemed to be in quarantine for all that time . . . And the second fact I know that we finished our course all being fierce atheists and my first religious feeling was awakened only at the University . . . under the impression of talented lectures on the world history” (Rozanov, 1995, p. 77).

No better was the situation in the “spiritual” trend of educational system – that is, in the parochial schools, theological (“spiritual”) seminaries and academies. The official reports of the diocesan bishops written in 1905 and published a hundred years later contained extremely negative evaluations. The low level of pedagogical skills of the professorship, the lack of elaborated methodic in Seminaries, and the unwillingness to sponsor primary parochial schools were the items of most frequent critics. Some reports were explicitly pessimistic. Orenburg (Siberia)

Bishop Joachim wrote about “the full impossibility for students to get education in seminaries is revealed through the extending disorders of terrorist kind that put many seminaries to closure” (*Comments . . .*, 2004, p. 1, 759). The Volyn (Ukraine) Bishop Antony (Khrapovitsky) who later became the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, confessed that he had to agree with “one respectful archbishop” in his opinion that our theological school cannot be reformed. “It must be dispersed and destroyed, the basements of seminaries and academies must be blown up and the new institutions instead must be created on new places, and filled up with new people” (*ibid.*, p. 726).

A revolutionary mood shared by bishops with all other segments of Russian society was a justified reaction on the corrosion in educational sphere caused by the perverse state politics and fairly described in a note of the Alliance of Teachers of Secondary Schools (1905): “We are witnesses of a portentous moment of the crashing of the secondary school. It was shielded from every aspect of life, but life burst into the school and threw the youth, mostly the boys, onto streets under Cossack lashes. It imposed Orthodoxy but having brought it forth in heavy forms of government formalism, cultivated religious indifferentism . . .” (Pinkevich, 2001). Pre-revolutionary religious education failed to fulfill its tasks more obviously than any other part of school education. Another epoch was approaching. It brought the devastation of religious communities and the long rupture of pedagogical tradition of school religious education.

Until the collapse of Soviet regime the nurturing of confirmed atheists was mentioned in manuals for teachers among the main tasks of Soviet school (Maryenko, 1984). In general the concept of atheistic upbringing was based on the idea of incompatibility of scientific and religious stances. Since the task of general education was to foster scientific outlook, religion was regarded as a principle obstacle. At primary school level this task was pursued by means of inclusion of narratives containing exposures of falsified religious miracles into the plan of obligatory readings. Stories of that kind were delivered to pupils also by means of movies, theaters, and museums. At the secondary level teachers of literature, history, and citizenship education were expected to make a major input into the denunciation of religious fallacies and exposing the negative historical role of religion. Higher education curricula included a sequence of ideological disciplines (History of Communist Party, Dialectical and Historical Materialism, Scientific Communism) obligatory for all institutions and Universities regardless of their profiles of education. One-term course called “Scientific atheism” was among them.

Soviet official youth organizations like Pioneers’ League (for children 9–14 years old) and Komsomol (14–28 years old) were to play a sufficient role in atheistic upbringing too. The Charter of the “All-Union Leninist Young Communist League” (Komsomol) stated that its members were obliged to “master the theory of Marxism-Leninism, knowledge, culture and the achievements of the modern science and technology, . . . to carry on the determined struggle against all manifestations of bourgeoisie ideology, against parasitism, religious prejudices, different antisocial manifestations and other survivals of the past” (point 2.3 of the Charter, cited from the juridical website www.kadis.ru/texts/index.phtml?id=31067&PrintVersion=1).

The positioning of “religious prejudices” next to parasitism and among “antisocial manifestations” bear witness to one more dimension in antireligious propaganda identifying missionary activity of religious communities with a form of exploitation or even fraud, that is, with an attempt to get profits from deceived people.

After 1988, situation began to change and since that time religious communities began to open their own schools and send their representatives to the state educational institutions mostly with missionary and charity tasks. For a short period of time embarrassment and helplessness of the officials and managers of state schools in religious matters produced real anarchism and allowed missionaries of all sorts including cults and new religious movements to participate in teaching and even management of a good number of state educational institutions. After the Federal Law on Education (1992) came into force situation was put under control. The Law forbade religious organizations to act within state and municipal educational institutions and all levels of administration (chapter “Religious Pluralism and the Paradigm”). It also proclaimed the secular nature of education in state and municipal educational institutions as a principal of national policy in education (chapter “Enlightenment’s Wake: Religion and Education at the Close of the Modern Age”). Regulations concerning confessional education were included in the Federal Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations (1997). According to it religious communities were allowed not only to organize confessional schools, but also to give confessional RE in state schools “outside curricula” and under certain reasonable conditions (chapter “The Search for A Common Epistemological Ground Within the Inter-religious Framework”). *De jure* new Russian laws gave all chances for the development of religious education in Russia. Nevertheless, religious classes and religious schools still did not become *de facto* a normal element of educational system in post-Soviet Russia. Disagreement in public opinions on the role of religion in education is the main reason for it.

Religious Freedom in Russian Context

Liberalism: Unwelcome Concept

Liberalization of social relations in Russia looks like surf meeting a breakwater. Each wave of liberal reforms no matter inspired from above or forced by the political activity of the people caused immediate reaction and the more decisive were the former the more furious was the latter. There was a solid socio-cultural basis for that resistance. V. Leontovich in his “History of liberalism in Russia” identified two main reasons why West-European liberal ideas did not give roots in Russia. One was the absence of feudal system. After John the Terrible there was no class of rich people in Russia independent enough to act as socially responsible subjects of civil freedoms. Liberalization had no social basis. The second reason was the absence of the autonomy of the Pope. “Representatives of the hierarchy never had the status of sovereigns in Russia,” as Leontovich emphasize (Leontovich, 1980,

p. 2). Accordingly, they also could not act as an agent restricting absolutism of Russian monarchy.

Surely this dependence of Church upon state was not accidental. The Caesar–Pope doctrine determining the Church social policies in the East appeared to be a powerful factor shaping social development in Russia. This doctrine in turn had deeper roots in ecclesiology, anthropology, and cosmology peculiar for the Christian East that made parallelism of Church and civil society much less acceptable for the Eastern Christians than for their brothers in Christ in the West. Quest for synthesis of Church and state, Church and culture, Church and society as reflected in the already mentioned Niebuhr’s typology was one of the implications of the broader Russian phenomenon of radically monistic state of mind or *totalitarianism of mind* in Nikolay Berdiaev’s terms.

The demand for social coherence or solidarity is the most obvious but not the only aspect of this phenomenon that makes the idea of liberalization problematic. Christos Yannaras gave recently a plain explanation why the contemporary societies whose culture has been shaped in Orthodox tradition are more reluctant to assimilate the principles of the protection of individual rights than the societies brought up under the influences of the Western Churches. “There is crucial question which specialists of human rights leave without answer. How and why did ancient Greece, which created . . . the magnificent achievement of democracy, entirely ignore the idea of *human rights*?” The answer according to Yannaras is that the whole idea of individual rights was incompatible with the Greek version of politics. “The honor of being a citizen provided many more privileges than those conventionally provide (through the civil code) by the protection of individual rights” (Yannaras, 2004).

Theurgical pathos conjugated with spiritual immanentism is the other side of the same monistic state of mind. It may be considered as a desperate determination to overcome the more substantial dualism – that of Heaven and Earth. This idea implicit in the Orthodox liturgical tradition and explicit in the writings of Russian spiritual teachers transformed gradually (most intensively in the pre-Revolutionary decades) into the wide spectrum of utopias with vision of socialistic paradise being the most popular among them. For those who did not lead intensive mystical life, the Russian dream of *sobornost’* as a perfect unity of human beings in Christ and the idea of reaching Heaven while standing on the earth gave an impulse for the enormously energetic social activity resulted in revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

The leading role in revolutionary activity belonged to Russian *intelligentsia*, the special class or order of people constituting the “third pole” of Russian cultural landscape equally opposing the Church and the State. Boris Uspensky in his “Essays on Russian history” claims the opposition to be the main social function of this new class of educated people: “Russian intelligentsia is always in opposition, it is a group of society that in principle, by its very nature can’t be engaged by state, can’t be incorporated into the bureaucratic machine” (Uspensky, 2002, p. 401). Uspensky believes that this class consolidated in 1830s and this consolidation was a direct response of the civil society to the state-building activity of Nikolay I. Before that time the relations between upper classes and monarchs were personal and the way to change the policy was either to appeal to the tsars or to substitute them by means

of palace intrigues and upheavals. After Nikolay I created the impersonal system of state power in Russian Empire the struggle against absolutism came out of religious and ethical dimension and became as systematic as the power itself. Generations of educated people in Russia became professional revolutionaries.

During the long periods of counter-reforms in the 19th century intelligentsia was the main transmitter of the ideas of liberalism and enlightenment that reached Russia from the West. And it is the great tragedy of Russia that the transmitter appeared in the situation of the long-term confrontation with the Church which was recognized as an element of that very system generations of intelligentsia worked to destruct. This was the unaccounted factor of vulnerability of Caesar-Pope doctrine and of Church servilism implied by it.

Famous St. Petersburg Religious-Philosophic Assemblies of 1901–1903 illustrate the social significance of the clash of the two spiritual poles of authority present in Russian society. It was for the first time that intelligentsia and Orthodox hierarchy decided to meet and to discuss the perspectives of future dialogue and cooperation. The freedom of conscience was the main topic to discuss. Participants articulating the “church position” insisted that the concept of freedom of conscience should be recognized as a contradiction in terms. This line of argumentation was articulated in the question raised by Bishop Nikanor. How can a judge (conscience) be free from the law? (Polovinkin, 2005) The other argument used in the debates even more broadly was the sinful nature of human beings making them not capable of realization of their freedom for good. What else is legitimization of the freedom to choose religion if not a right for spiritual illness? – archimandrite Antonin Granovsky asked.

Later on in the course of the discussion Antonin soothed his position and recognized that he had mixed up two different questions, one about the truth of Christianity and another about the (free) acceptance of Christian truth. Nevertheless, the Assemblies disclosed Church reluctance to accept unconditionally the concept of freedom of conscience and marked orientation toward some compromise between liberal and Orthodox ethics. This search for “Russian way” of dealing with personal freedoms continues today and lies behind neo-Orthodox projects like “The Declaration of Human Rights and Dignity” that question the justifiability of the concept of *unencumbered self* and stand for the social correction of conscience corrupted by sin.

Today explicitly negative attitude toward liberal values including the freedom of conscience are still present in a number of official Church papers and declarations. In the most important doctrinal document of the recent years, “The basics of social doctrine of Orthodox Church,” the Byzantine doctrine of a symphony of Church and State is defined as an eternal ideal of Orthodox faith. The document reminds that in 1917 just after the revolution, the Church Council declared: to require separation of Church and state is equal to wish the sun not to shine and the fire not to heat. Chapter “The Maze of Tolerance” of the document contains the following passage directly regarding the issue of liberal freedoms.

“The principle of the freedom of conscience, which emerged as a legal notion in the 18th–19th centuries, has become a fundamental principle of interpersonal

relations only after World War I. It was confirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and included in the constitutions of most states. The emergence of this principle testifies that in the contemporary world, religion is turning from a 'social' into a 'private' affair of a person. This process in itself indicates that the spiritual value system has disintegrated and that most people in a society which affirms the freedom of conscience no longer aspire for salvation. If initially the state emerged as an instrument of asserting divine law in society, the freedom of conscience has ultimately turned state in an exclusively temporal institute with no religious commitments.

The adoption of the freedom of conscience as legal principle points to the fact that society has lost religious goals and values and become massively apostate and actually indifferent to the task of the Church and to the overcoming of sin. However, this principle has proved to be one of the means of the Church's existence in the non-religious world, enabling her to enjoy a legal status in secular state and independence from those in society who believe differently or do not believe at all" (English version: <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/english/?act=documents&div=22>).

With the increase of Church influence in modern Russia this approach to the personal freedoms has a chance to become a part of the renewed national system of values and to reinforce the resistance toward the old concept of liberalism struggling for centuries for its place under the Russian sun.

Liberal Idea in Pedagogical Projection

The concept of "liberal education" is not used in Russian pedagogical discourse. It had been in use centuries ago, but did not give roots for some reasons one of which may be ascribed to not simple history of liberalism in Russia. The Charter of Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy (1687) named the "Privilege of Moscow Academy" announced on behalf of tsar that the motivation for the establishment of the institution was the pursuit of "fresh and liberal doctrines of wisdom." Despite this claim and despite constant references to "artes liberalis" as the main subjects to study, the Charter prescribed "auto-da-fe without mercy" to "any professor together with his disciples if he would teach doctrines forbidden by Church." The same punishment was recommended for converters "from different faiths and heresies" in case of their return to former beliefs (*Anthology*, 1985). The text of the "Privilege" shows pretty well how little the concept of liberal education had in common with the idea of personal freedoms at that time. Later the liberal idea of education becomes the most controversial issue among Russian pedagogues and educators.

Ideas of European Enlightenment came early to Russia through the personal contacts of royal family and nobility. Though Catherine II did not like Rousseau and especially his "Emile," first liberal pedagogical movements appeared at the time of her ruling. In 1780s the main actors of the movements were members of Masonic lodges, such as Ivan Lopuchin (1756–1816), Alexander Kutuzov (–1790), Nikolay Novikov (1744–1818), and Alexander Radischev (1749–1802). The French

revolution though changed the Empress's attitude toward Enlightenment and as a result Novikov and Radischev were imprisoned as "dangerous persons." However, by that time Masonic movement made a solid input into mobilization of creativity of Russian thought and inspired important philosophic movements of the 19th century including both main parties of Russian thinkers: *Westerners* (zapadniki) and *Slavophiles*.

Early Russian professional pedagogues like Ivan Betskoy (1704–1795) received their education abroad. They also played an important role in the promotion of the Enlightenment in Russia. The influence of Rousseau (who was especially loved in Russia probably due to his naturalism so akin to Russian philosophic insights) is traced through the whole of the 19th century. The earliest private school for peasants' children based on the ideas of Rousseau was opened as early as in 1805 in the estate of duke Izmaylov near Moscow (Piskunov, 2005). One of the first classical articles on pedagogical topic "The issues of life" (1856) written by famous Russian surgeon, philosopher, and pedagogue Nikolay Pirogov (1810–1881) was also obviously inspired by "Emile." Lev Tolstoy was so devoted to Rousseau that carried a locket with his portrait on the neck. It was through the personal influence of Tolstoy that the liberal idea of education in its most radical form gave roots in Russian pedagogical culture.

Even some of Russian higher authorities were inspired by the ideas of the "new pedagogy." Russian emperor Alexander I personally met Pestalozzy at the frontiers of Napoleon war and being fascinated by his commitment donated to his school (Modzalevsky, 2000). The Ministry of Education established in Russia in 1802 was fused by the emperor in 1817 with Synod "in order to make Christian piety the basement of true enlightenment" (Piskunov, 2005, p. 343). The leading position of Alexander I in the Holy Alliance of European monarchies demanded attention to interchurch relations in education. By one of his special order it was strictly forbidden to extol Orthodoxy over the other Christian confessions – a fact without precedent in Russian history. The most significant outcome of Alexander's educational policy was Lyceum organized almost literally under the wing of the Emperor, for its students learned and lived in a specially erected building communicating with the Emperor palace. Alumni of the Lyceum with Pushkin among them formed new Russian cultural elite. Commitment of these young founders of the "Golden age" of Russian literature to the value of "inward Christianity" deliberately nurtured at that time by educational system became a significant factor of humanization and Europeanization of Russia.

It was the counter-reform of 1824–1826 that made clear how closely the issues of education and particularly religious education are intertwined with political issues and with choice of orientations in cultural development of Russian society. Remarkable is argumentation of the leaders of counterreformation archimandrite Foty and admiral Alexander Shishkov. From Foty's point of view Biblical society as well as other "secret societies" had the only task to destroy Orthodoxy: "The enemies planned to induce somewhat Biblical religion, to make a mixture of faiths and to reduce the Orthodox Christian faith" (Florovsky, 1937, p. 153). Shishkov openly argued not only against the translation of Holy Scripture into Russian ("Indecently

would be to read Lord Prayer in vulgar language”) but also against the dissemination of Bible among people, for this could produce in his eyes only “heresy and schisms.” He was sure that people could not be allowed to have Scripture at homes, for that would disgrace the Scripture: “It would lie about on the floor under a bench” (ibid., p. 163). Thus, treating “simple people” as morally inferior persons evidently lied behind this ideology unfortunately dominant in Russia through the 19th and 20th centuries. Within this frame of reference liberal education oriented toward the ideal of personal autonomy became impossible and inadmissible.

In 1834, Minister of Education Sergey Uvarov proclaimed the famous formula “Orthodoxy–Autocracy–Nationality” that became a credo of reactionary policy in culture and education. Rejection of democracy, the search for the “authentic Russian way” and the promotion of spiritual exclusiveness based on the “only true faith” became the main components of the state ideology. Correspondingly nurturing loyalty to the state and commitment to traditional national values became the main task of religious education.

The story repeated after the liberating reforms of Alexander II in the 1860s. This time it was a powerful chief of Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev (1827–1907), who was at the head of the reactionary movement of 1880s. Religious education “in the orthodox spirit,” allowing “to keep people in the strict subservience to the order of public life” was a key element in the complex of measures he offered to prevent democratic revolution and to save monarchy in Russia. “Defeat of personality” – that is how an outstanding Russian pedagogue Vasily Stoyunin (1826–1888) defined the main feature of Russian social order fostered by state education. Contrary to that, in Stoyunin’s view the only true purpose of general education should be the upbringing of the *enlightened person*. Enlightened is “not a man who have learned a mass of unconnected facts . . . but a man who used scientific knowledge to develop higher ideas, determining human life in its relation to the world around. The school . . . should put a youngster on the way of self improvement inevitable for the enlightened person . . . Truly enlightened man will always look for activity because it will become the need of his matured nature. This activity will connect him with society and will give him the rank of a citizen” (Stoyunin, 1991, p. 198). Clash of the two visions of educational idea and ideals became a source of the growing tension in which representatives of liberal intelligentsia found themselves in a strict opposition to the conductors of the official educational policy of both state and Church.

The most radical version of the liberal idea of education was produced by a pedagogical movement “Free Education” founded by the followers of Lev Tolstoy. The leader of the movement Konstantin Ventzel (1857–1947) consistently extended his pedagogic principles to the field of religious education: “In the domain of religion a child should be ensured with full freedom of development even better than in the other aspects of life” (Borisovich & Boguslavsky, 1999, p. 188). Ventzel claimed that the only justifiable assumption for the theory of free education should be “the fact of existence of religious problem but not a certain method of its resolution.” Since children of even preschool age already have living experience that inevitably leads to religious feeling, these experiences and not the external religious ideas should be used as a ground for religious development. Moreover, “religious

development of a child should be a result of his own authentic creativity” (ibid., p. 190).

Ideas of “Free education” did not attract many followers. They were strongly criticized by several theorists of education including Ivan Ilyin (1882–1954) who devoted a whole book to denunciation of Tolstoy’s doctrine of non-resistance to evil and of its pedagogical implications. Criticism of Tolstoy and the approval of coercion for pedagogical purposes constituted one of the central points of a pedagogical system elaborated by Sergey Hessen (1887–1950). Hessen’s idea to distinguish between educating *in* freedom and educating *for* freedom opened the most productive “middle” way to deal with the problem of freedom in education. Moreover, his *culture-centered* approach proved to be the most adequate one for the Russian socio-cultural background. The more meaningful in this context is high appreciation given by him to the role of radically liberal ideas in the history of Russian pedagogical thought. After the long and detailed analysis of the theoretical basis of pedagogical naturalism he resumes that Rousseau and Tolstoy are definitely wrong in their reduction of the role of external influences on the developing personality. Their idea of natural development is an illusion. “But (he adds) it is impossible to become a true pedagogue without being fascinated by their ideas for a time” (Hessen, 1995). Their protest against culture “appears on closer examination to be a struggle for the ethical ideal of free and holistic personality”. Hessen shares these liberal commitments but believes they are reconcilable with culture-centrism. The concept of culture becomes in this framework a key to central pedagogical problems.

Learning from Culture: The Russian Way

Since public debates on religious education started in Russia in late 1980s, two confronting positions have been dominating in them. These two correspond in some way to the two versions of new national idea indicated in the introduction. One position is based on the ‘secular principle’ proclaimed by Russian Constitution. According to it the best way to deal with the problem is to follow France and the USA in their historical choice keeping the strict separation of public education from the influences of religious bodies. Clericalization of education in this frame of references is often associated with cultural degradation and the direct threat to scientific and social progress. An opposite view is presented by those who look forward the expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church influence in education. Restoration of the confessional system of teaching religion at school is seen by them as the best solution. Conversion of young people to the “Orthodox way of life” by means of public education and promotion of Orthodoxy as a national ideology are the priorities openly declared by the most consistent adherents of this position.

Besides these two irreconcilable positions the third one pointing to the option of non-confessional forms of religious education entered the discussion and gradually was recognized by the growing number of educators as the most constructive and promising approach. This “middle way” is based on the identification of religion

as a part of culture and on justification of its presence in school curricula on this ground.

The first signal about the shift in the policy of the Church hierarchy and right-wing politicians oriented in 1990s on the restoration of a pre-revolutionary catechetical subject “God’s Law” came in 1999 with Patriarch Alexey’s Epistle to “All Right Reverend Bishops” (dated 9.12.99, № 5925). In this epistle Patriarch admitted the impossibility to restore the confessional RE in contemporary Russian educational system and spoke in favor of a *culturological* approach to teaching religion. Though for a part of its advocates, the approach was but an umbrella for intrusion into public educational space with catechetical teaching, it was a best compromise seen at the moment. It appeared to be acceptable for a wide sector of Russian political and professional elites and easily comprehended by practicing teachers.

Three years later the Ministry of Education offered a plan to include the subject “Orthodox Culture” (OC) into curricula for general education schools and released an official letter on that (dated 22.10.2002) with the attachment “The Draft Content of Education on the Subject ‘Orthodox Culture’.” The project can be regarded as a decisive positive step on the way of reanimation and innovation of religious education practice in Russian schools. First, it was a precedent legitimising non-confessional approach to religious education in the system of Russian general education. The document define subject as “culturological” in approach and affirms that “the most significant for the organization of study of OC is the principle of the secular nature of education.” Second, the document proclaims some important guiding principles that can be applied for the study of any religious subject on the non-confessional premises. For instance it states that the approach promoted by the Ministry is based on the principles of freedom and pluralism and “excludes the forcible unification of the aspects of education, while promoting creativity in teachers and development of students’ identity.” It also states that the secular and humanistic nature of education is guaranteed by “the culturological and non-indoctrinating manner of teaching and the corresponding methods of study of OC” (Religious Pluralism and the Paradigm).

The project was not supported by the majority of local authorities, though in several regions of Russia (including Belgorod, Kursk, Voronezh, and some others) “Basics of Orthodox Culture” became an ordinary subject of school curricula. Islamic culture became an invariant part of the school curricula in six regions of Russian Federation with predominant Muslim population.

The main problem with this project appeared to be religious pluralism. For Russia with its poly-ethnic and poly-confessional population this challenge is not new, but it calls for new solutions in the context of democratization. The study of religious culture of the dominant ethno-confessional group draws the problem of the rights of religious minorities. Actually it presupposes division of students on confessional ground. The image of religion that came back to school in order to divide is fairly recognized by politicians and educators as the most undesirable image leading to social disintegration and fraught with danger of conflicts. Several ways to deal with this problem are under consideration today. One of them has been enunciated

recently by a leading theorist of Orthodox pedagogy hegumen Georgy Shestun. His suggestion is to complement the teaching of “Orthodox Culture” as a compulsory “federal” subject with classes on “ethnic” religious cultures organized in regions with strong presence of Muslim, Buddhist, or other non-Christian population. These studies organized on “regional level” should not substitute study of Orthodox culture on federal level. They should be also compulsory for all students without confessional differentiation. This model is expected to help young citizens of Russia to save their ethnic identities and at the same time to contribute to the common goal of building “Orthodox civilization” (Shestun, 2007).

One of the alternatives under discussion is the study of some integrated subject such as the “History of World Religions” or “World religious culture.” Several attempts to put this model into practice were made too. Michael Men, the governor of Ivanovo region and the son of a famous Orthodox theologian Alexander Men advocated “World religions” to be studied next after Orthodox culture in the senior grades of Ivanovo municipal schools. Similar project was discussed in Nizhny Novgorod. Good number of schoolbooks on “World religions” have been published during last years. But the approach meets a strong opposition and does not attract many followers among school teachers.

Situation remains highly unstable and it will not be a surprise if within next 2 or 3 years some form of religious education will become a normal part of schooling for almost all segments of Russian secondary education. Intention for the development in this direction can be seen in the proposed structure for the new national educational standards that are to come into operation in 2009. An educational area called “Spiritual and Moral Culture” is designed within the new structure partly in order to give room for subjects like Orthodox culture and other traditional confessional cultures as well as to make religious and ethical education liable to state regulation on federal level. The most disquieting in this project if compared to previous approaches is the newly emphasized link between religious and moral education that may be considered by the modern adherents of Shishkov’s and Pobedonostsev’s idea of education as a formal sanction for the instrumental use of religion in ideological purposes.

Whatever the mainstream of the future development would be, the concept of culture seems to occupy a prominent place in the discussions about religious education in Russian public education. The idea to shape the study of religion as a study of culture proved to be the most popular in Russian context. The main reason for this success is apparently the strong culture-centered tendency characteristic for Russian philosophy of education. Far from pragmatic approaches to education inherent to American pedagogy, Russian and Soviet pedagogues always used to look at education as at a channel, connecting individuals with culture. The importance of the concept of culture in education is a derivate of the more basic ideas about the nature of relations between human society and individual human being. For S. Hessen culture is “the real aim of existence for a modern man, while the individual survival is only a prerequisite of culture” (Hessen, 1995, p. 26). Education initiates individual into culture and thus opens for him/her a perspective of a full existence, that is, of existence oriented toward *meta-personal* goals. Accordingly,

“there is a precise equivalence of education and culture. Education is nothing but a culture of an individual” (ibid., p. 35).

This thesis of the “precise equivalence” of education and culture becomes a point of convergence of the most influential and apparently different trends in Russian-Soviet pedagogy such as the cultural–historical school of Lev Vygotsky or radically personalistic philosophies of M. Bakhtin or Ivan Ilyin. The most influential representatives of the Soviet didactics of the second half of the century I. Lerner and M. Skatkin define the content of school education in terms of the translation of different forms of culture (Skatkin, 1982). The post-Soviet manuals for pedagogues keep this tradition when regarding education as a “movement of a person within the field of culture” (Gusinsky & Turchaninova, 2000, p. 99) or regarding culture as “the prerequisite and the result of education” (Bordovskaya & Rean, 2004, p. 62).

Most important in this respect is the concept of the “individual culture” developed by Hessen. It provides pedagogues with a key to avoid the false contraposition of socialization and individuation as educational purposes. Taken Hessen’s view into account *enculturation* is not a way to subdue personality to external tradition but on the contrary a way to develop his ability to remain a free and productive person in the “field of the gravity” of culture. Education should put personality and culture in harmonic relations so that the “centrifugal power of external cultural contents,” trying to get the person torn into pieces, will be balanced by the centripetal power of maturing personality. The ultimate aim of education is to produce the correct correlation which enables the learner to become a maker of culture, that is, a person who forces big masses of “cultural contents” to revolve around him.

Application of this concept to the field of religious education can be found in the works of Ivan Ilyin evidently influenced by Hessen. According to Ilyin “each of us is called to build the culture of the own religious experience” (Ilyin, 1993, p. 40). The best way to do it by educational means is “to empathize with religious acts of the founders” of confessional traditions and to focus on their personal spiritual routs accentuating not the individual differences between them, but rather “axiomatic foundations” common in their experience (ibid., p. 36). The search for these common foundations should not and can not be pursued at the expense of individual freedom, for “religious experience begins with obtaining one’s own spirituality” (ibid., p. 54) and religious autonomy is the only genuine form of existence for human spirit. To stay in religious heteronomy is unnatural and harmful, for it is always a fake of theonomy. It is the obedience not to God, but to men. But religious autonomy does not suppose the intention to invent one’s own individual faith. On the contrary, “religious autonomy properly understood . . . admits divine Grace as the only source of Revelation and calls for it” (ibid., p. 75). In this respect “to oppose autonomy of human spirit to theonomy is a matter of misconception” (ibid., p. 69). Matured religious life is impossible without commitment of a person to some meta-personal values and aims. These values and aims cannot be derived from subjective experience by definition. They are to be opened in the outer reality and initiation into religious culture is the way to do it.

In the context of the ongoing reconceptualization of the idea of culturological approach to teaching about religion in Russian schools the concept of the

“individual culture of religious experience” may play a crucial role in the orientation of religious education toward the aims of personal spiritual growth instead of religious indoctrination. The concepts of the individual and the collective culture are put in Ilyin’s contemplations into a balanced, yet, hierarchical order that may prevent various misuses of religion in education that spring usually from the disregard of either personality or of meta-personal values. The problem of compatibility of the liberal ideal of personal autonomy with religious commitments is vital not only for Russia. It was the topic of a long and passionate discussion on the justifiability of school RE and religious upbringing of children among English-speaking philosophers of education (Marples, 1978; Attfeld, 1978; Hudson, 1982; Kazepides, 1982, 1983; Thiessen, 1982; McLaughlin, 1984, 1985; Callan, 1985, 1988, 1994; Gardner, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1996; Hare & McLaughlin, 1994, 1998; Hand, 2002). The study of the Russian approach to this problem may awake some ideas and insights relevant to the European context.

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Education for Human Rights, Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Dialogue: The Role of UNESCO

Linda King

History should teach us that alongside an infinite diversity of cultures, there does exist one global civilization in which humanity's ideas and beliefs meet and develop peacefully and productively. It is a civilization that must be defined by its tolerance of dissent, its celebration of cultural diversity, its insistence on fundamental universal human rights . . .

Kofi Annan

This paper discusses the role of UNESCO with regard to the emerging area of work on inter-religious dialogue and education. It focuses only on those aspects which are directly related to education and schooling. As a whole, the Organization works in many spheres, promoting, for example, the creation of UNESCO Chairs around the world on inter-religious dialogue or on inter-cultural education, or convening meetings of spiritual leaders to discuss ways forward to breach misunderstanding and between peoples of different faiths. In the sections that follow I describe the mandate of the Organization and its evolving mission and current issues. In doing so I focus not only on the issues of cultural diversity, multiculturalism and inter-religious dialogue, but also seek to show with examples and references the way in which the discourse is interpreted and reshaped through practice.

Origins

From its very inception UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was mandated to promote peace, tolerance and dialogue among the peoples of the world. In the aftermath of the Second World War it was born of the need to support the development of “ the means of communication between peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of

L. King (✉)

Education Sector, UNESCO, 7 Place Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France

e-mail: L.King@unesco.org

mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives".¹

To do this, its Constitution, proclaimed in 1945, clearly states that it should "Contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion." The notion of discrimination and prejudice against others on basis of difference, whether gender, ethnic, linguistic or in regard to religion, and the role that this played in creating conflict, was already acknowledged, albeit indirectly, in the constitution of the new international agency.

But the world of the post-war period was very different to that of the twenty-first century where religion has very much come to the forefront in the discourse and dialogue of international relations. It is a world where globalized 24-hour media coverage of international crises and events, including conflicts with a strong component around religious identity, has inevitably drawn increased attention to the notion of difference based on faith and creed and the fuelling of stereotypes against those who pray, dress and behave differently .

At the time of the creation of UNESCO, religion did not feature as a central area of concern nor was UNESCO of the same size and influence that it now occupies in the international arena. In fact, only 18 countries attended the first London Conference and only 44 came to the Constitutional Conference held in 1945. The world map still reflected the dominance of imperialism and it was only in the 1960s with the achievement of independence by African states that the current core configuration of UNESCO membership came into being and was able to develop its now considerable influence on the world debate on education, science, culture and communication and the interaction between these. The key to peaceful relations between countries and peoples was, it was thought, the cultivation of universal knowledge and understanding. While acknowledged indirectly, religion was not highlighted in the sense of competing systems of belief which could be a cause for potential conflict, and neither did it figure explicitly in the rationale for the creation of the United Nations system.

Human Rights

The year 2008 saw the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This instrument still forms the basis of most calls to defend human rights but it has over the years been followed by numerous Conventions, Covenants and Recommendations which call for the defence of fundamental human freedoms in relation to different human rights principles, whether concerning education, culture or science, or in relation to the specific categories

¹ 1945 preamble Constitution UNESCO

of peoples that may be classified beyond nationality, e.g. migrants, the disabled, indigenous peoples, women, and others. In regard to inter-religious dialogue, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is quite specific. Article 26, para 2 states that the Declaration “shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”.²

And while many have claimed that the Declaration reflected a worldview based on western visions of a colonial landscape, its relevance was reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, whereby the international community called for a renewed commitment to promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms as the basis for peaceful coexistence. Yet unease persists, particularly in countries based on Islamic law and belief and where the centrality of divine authority may be interpreted by some as being threatened by principles emanating from the secular system of the United Nations. Attempts to overcome this malaise have originated in particular from within the Movement of Non-Aligned countries which in September 2007 adopted the Tehran Declaration on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity.³

One Hundred and eighteen member-states of the United Nations subscribed to this declaration which calls attention to the dangers of prejudice, intolerance, and xenophobia in relation to people of different cultures and religions and which may give rise to subsequent hatred and violence. The call is against the notion of universality defined as monoculturalism and speaks in favour of the recognition of cultural and religious difference. The debate is ongoing and adds richness to the dynamics of international relations. The central issue however is that cultural difference should not be used as a justification for human rights violations, as may be the case in specific abuses against women, children or minorities, and neither should the argument for universality be employed to deny the right to be different of other cultures and religions. And the perceived tension between the central universality of all human rights and the presence of cultural difference is likely to remain at the core of much of the discussion and debate.

In promoting human rights in the school system, UNESCO works closely with member-states and particularly with other UN agencies within the Framework of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, the follow-up to the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. In December 2008, the International Year of Human Rights Learning was launched, devoted to activities undertaken to broaden and deepen human rights learning on the basis of the principles of universality, indivisibility, interdependency, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive dialogue and cooperation, with a view to enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, bearing in mind the duty of the State, regardless of the political, economic and cultural system, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms,

²United Nations 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

³United Nations Document 179 EX/48 October 2007

and the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds.⁴

Cultural Diversity

Stenou⁵ has analysed the major UNESCO documents in regard to cultural diversity since its creation and has found that four main periods of thinking in the Organization's history may be observed. In the first place, in the years following the end of the Second World War, UNESCO focused on education and knowledge as the key to peace. "The idea of pluralism, diversity or interculturality was therefore linked to that of international, not intra-national, differences. . ." Culture itself was seen less as a question of identity than as of artistic expression. The second period witnessed the independence of many formerly colonial countries which now entered the international arena and whose justification for coming into existence as nation-states lay, precisely, in their separate cultural identities. During this period, a growing resistance to the homogenizing forces of technology began to be evident coupled with a largely silent resistance to the dominance of superpowers, in the Cold War context, by small states. The third period, she contends, constituted an extension of the second period whereby the notion of culture as political power became associated with the idea of endogenous development. The link between culture and development was associated with claims by developing countries to follow their own paths for development and to have the right to receive international funding for this. Finally, the fourth and most recent period has been characterized by a link between culture and democracy, with an emphasis on the need for tolerance and understanding not only between member-states but also within them. We may add to her analysis that this has been associated with accelerated globalization and corresponding demographic shifts caused by, on the one hand, increasingly mobile migratory movements and on the other, sharp drops in the fertility levels of industrialized countries coupled with the opening up of market economies occasioning influxes of young immigrant labour from different cultural backgrounds into ageing, formerly monocultural and monolingual societies.

The most recent period in UNESCO's work in regard to cultural diversity is marked by the watershed of the post-9/11 period. In particular, the General Conference of 2001 following shortly after the event itself, with all the debate and ramifications that ensued, unanimously approved the Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity seeing this as an opportunity to reaffirm the need for intercultural dialogue and to avoid what Huntington had seen as the inevitable clash of civilizations.⁶ The focus was now on the concept of constructive pluralism and the

⁴Resolution 62/171 UN General Assembly

⁵UNESCO. (2004). In Stenou, K. (Ed.), *UNESCO and the issue of cultural diversity. Review and strategy 1946 to 2004*.

⁶Huntington, S. (1996). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York: Simon and Schuster

Organization's Medium-term Strategy for 2002–2007 explicitly states “the idea is to channel diversity towards constructive pluralism through the creation of state and societal mechanisms to promote harmonious interaction between cultures. . . .the protection of cultural diversity is closely linked to the larger framework of the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and its ability to achieve genuine mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation”. (Stenou: 20).

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions approved in October, 2005 reinforced the ideas already expressed in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001 in regard to the role of education in protecting cultural diversity, stating that diversity can only be guaranteed through respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and through educational programmes which sustain these.

Inter-cultural Dialogue

The notion of dialogue between civilizations to neutralize or substitute for the supposed clash theory put forward by Huntington (op.cit.) is now central to the thinking of the United Nations and UNESCO in particular. The year 2001 was not only the year of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity proclaimed by UNESCO, but also the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and marked an increase, particularly following the post-9/11 hiatus of a questioning of the role of religion, culture and civilization in international relations in the modern, globalized world. The concept of “civilization” itself, moreover, was understood as “universal, plural and non-hierarchical. . . .evolving through contact, exchange and dialogue. . . .and is inherently inter-cultural”.⁷ There was indeed a shift in the Organization's thinking in regard to the notion of dialogue that has been documented in several texts.⁸

UNESCO'S work on inter-cultural dialogue has in turn motivated a considerable number of meetings and declarations which seek to move the agenda beyond merely stating the notion of goodwill between countries and cultures and towards seeking practical manifestations of that sense of community and tolerance. Hence, an International Ministerial Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations was organized in India in 2003; a Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations held in Macedonia in 2003; while in 2004, the Tirana regional Summit was convened on Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue in Southeast Europe and finally in Hanoi in the same year, there was an Asia Pacific Conference on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations for Peace and Sustainable Development.

⁷UNESCO. (2005). *Report by the Director General on the promotion of the dialogue among peoples*. 171/EX.40

⁸See in particular UNESCO. (2004). *New approaches and concrete actions in the dialogue among civilizations*. UNESCO 170 EX7INF 5 (Executive Board document).

In 2005, an International Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives was held in Morocco, whose aim was to be “ a launch pad for the development and adoption of series of concrete measures and activities”. At the Rabat Conference, education was identified as a prerequisite for dialogue and inter-cultural understanding. “There is a repeated appeal from governments, politicians, parliamentarians, educators, decision-makers and civil society representatives to use education as a privileged tool for fostering the dialogue among cultures and civilizations”.⁹ Both as a response to this call and within the framework of its work on Human Rights Education UNESCO published *The Guidelines on Intercultural Education* in 2006. This drew upon much of the standard setting instruments and major conference documents that had preceded the publication, but it also brought together major world experts on the subject to arrive at a consensus on the Organization’s position on this regard.¹⁰

In particular, certain areas of education were singled out for emphasis to achieve this goal. Citizenship education, for example, whose aim is to teach young people their legal rights and obligations, and to promote their commitment to shared values, equity and justice, tolerance and respect for the Other. Multicultural education, itself, was conceived as enhancing and improving knowledge of culture, civilizations, religions and traditions through teachers, guides and curriculum models as well as the revision of national textbooks and university curricula in key disciplines such as history, geography, philosophy, social and human sciences. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of textbook revision, for these: “present an opportunity for engaged dialogue between students, between teachers, and by extension between students and their families and ultimately between cultures” (ibid). The need for these to be examined from a gender and a human rights perspective so as to eliminate stereotypes and promote a positive view of other cultures was emphasized.

In 2008, Denmark hosted a follow-up to the Rabat Conference in collaboration with UNESCO, ISESCO, the Alliance of Civilizations, the Organization of Islamic Conference, ALECSO, and the Council of Europe and other key partners in civil society entitled “ Education for Inter-cultural Understanding and Dialogue”. Again, education was seen as the basis for improving dialogue between religions and many concrete examples of this work were presented. Among these was the work carried out by the Interfaith Council through the Arigatou Foundation based in Japan, and with collaboration from UNESCO and UNICEF. This has resulted in a key inter-faith learning materials for young people entitled *Learning to Live Together*.¹¹ Based on human rights principles and encouraging respect, tolerance and understanding for those of different or no faith and religion, this is but one example of

⁹UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO, OIC, DCCO, Anna Lindh Foundation. (2005). *Background document : international conference among cultures and civilizations through concrete and sustainable initiatives*. Rabat

¹⁰UNESCO. (2006). *Guidelines on intercultural education*.

¹¹*Learning to Live Together* , 2008. Arigatou Foundation, UNESCO and UNICEF.

how the UN specialist agencies are working with partners on encouraging inter-faith dialogue through schooling.

Much of the discourse surrounding the dialogue between civilizations has been intertwined with that of the prevention of terrorism, and indeed dialogue is perceived as an essential preventative measure to undermine the bases of hatred and misunderstanding that provoke terrorist activity. In particular in 2004 the Secretary General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change made a specific reference to the pivotal role of education.¹² Nevertheless we should be cautious about making assumptions in regard to the relationship between schooling and the development of terrorism. Research carried out on this issue has not brought forward conclusive evidence that this is in fact the case and, far from clarifying matters, assumptions often serve to confuse or increase further intolerance or negative stereotyping.¹³

The Alliance of Civilizations

In 2005, the Secretary General of the United Nations convened a High Level Group to examine ways and means to reduce world tensions and contribute to the fight against terrorism. This gave rise to the Alliance of Civilizations based in UN Headquarters in New York. The Alliance was established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations. In April 2007, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance. The AoC is supported by a Group of Friends – a community of over 85 member countries and international organizations and bodies

One area which was marked out for attention by the Alliance was the schooling system and education in general, this being the principal institutional context where young people learn to relate to others in society and the world, and develop their personal and social identities. School is where they learn about their own history, and sometimes, the history of other countries and their society's place in the world. In particular, the Alliance looked amongst other topics, at issues in global and cross-cultural education, media literacy, teaching about religion, peace and civic education, higher education and teacher training and the role of the Internet in education.

A major recommendation of the Alliance has been the importance placed on the question of World History. The need has been stressed to develop curriculum and further disseminate those curriculums already available on World History and to train teachers able to communicate to students the commonalities in the history of the world and the multiplicities and connections contained therein. The Report on

¹²UN. (2004). *A more secure world: Our shared responsibility*. www.un.org/secureworld

¹³cf. Douglass' (2006) analysis for the High Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations of research findings on this issue, particularly in studies in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which failed to find any clear linkage.

education submitted to the High Level Group found that World History research and curriculum is not as advanced in Muslim regions of the world as in North America, the Far East and Latin America and that this lacuna should be addressed by the Alliance of Civilizations in its work. Nevertheless, despite the fact world history studies are more developed in some regions, this does not of itself guarantee understanding and tolerance of other civilizations and their histories.¹⁴ The Report also recommends further efforts in teaching about other religions in schools.

The implementation plan of the Alliance of Civilizations in 2008–2010 focuses on developing online clearinghouses in its main areas of concern: youth, education, media and migration, of which the most relevant in this context is the clearinghouse on education about religions and beliefs.

Education and Multiculturalism

UNESCO's work on education in general, and inter-cultural education, in particular, is framed within a number of standard setting instruments and documents, the major one of which is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), but whose principles are echoed in later standard setting documents, in particular, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974), The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), and the Declaration in the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981).

The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adds a central provision concerning the social empowerment of the individual through education by stating that “education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society”¹⁵ while the 1989 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education explicitly states the need to take into consideration the cultural background of students and speaks of the importance of protecting the common heritage of mankind.¹⁶ The (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child, one of the most influential conventions in this regard, states explicitly that “the education of the child shall be directed to . . .the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, languages and values, for the national values of the county in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.”¹⁷ Similarly, the International

¹⁴Indeed, recent polls in US cited by Douglass (op.cit.) suggest that is far from being the case, although a report published by the BBC (BBC World Service 19.02.2007) comparing attitudes in 27 different countries found striking differences in attitudes even between European countries.

¹⁵Art. 13 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. 1966

¹⁶Art 3 *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education* 1989

¹⁷Art 29 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* 1989

Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and member of their Families (1990) emphasized that the teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the immigrants should be facilitated. More explicitly still, the ILO Convention 169 which addresses the needs of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples stipulates that “education programmes and services for the peoples concerned shall be developed and implemented. . .to address their special needs and shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their social, economic and cultural aspirations. . .”¹⁸ Specifically, in regard to inter-cultural relations, it is required that “educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community. . .with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbour in respect of these peoples” (ref).¹⁹

Yet as we have stated earlier, there is an underlying tension, though not necessarily a contradiction, between both the universality of the human right to education and the right to hold distinct identities as manifest in the phenomenon of cultural pluralism. Concepts of diversity, and indeed the reality of it, may inevitably create a need to accommodate different cultural and linguistic identities within a common national curriculum. The challenge is to be responsive to the expressed needs of specific societies. It may well be that different educational models emerge across regional, subregional and, indeed, local realities. While in some situations there may be expressed demand for an education that responds to and is inclusive of local cultural contexts, in others, this may be seen as marginalizing local communities from mainstream educational opportunities in the broader national context. Nevertheless, this need not be the case, and there are many successful examples of inter-cultural education that reflect the contexts in which children are growing up.²⁰

The Delors Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century established by UNESCO in 1993 to determine the emerging orientations of education policy in the world set out four basic pillars of learning essential for the future of education. These were²¹:

- Learning to know
- Learning to do
- Learning to live together.
- Learning to be

¹⁸Art 27 *ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*. 1991

¹⁹ibid. Art.31

²⁰See King and Schielman (2004). *The Challenge of Indigenous Education*. UNESCO for a set of case studies on successful practice in indigenous and intercultural education in different regions of the world.

²¹Delors (1996). *Learning: The Treasure within Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century* UNESCO

Of these, the third pillar is arguably the most important in terms of inter-cultural education and learning. By learning to live together, children “develop an understanding of other people and an appreciation of inter-dependence – carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding . . .and peace”.²²

How may these pillars be translated into inter-cultural education policy as understood by UNESCO? Throughout the past 60 years of its history, UNESCO has served as a global forum for dialogue between member-states, and as a reflector of trends and new thinking on social, scientific and educational issues. An analysis of documents and recommendations produced over this period has led to the establishment of certain key principles in regard to inter-cultural education which may be summarized as

- respect for the cultural identity of the learner through provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all,
- provision of the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to participate fully and actively in society, and
- provision of the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills which enable learners to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations.²³

Multiculturalism is a reality in most countries of the world in the twenty-first century. There are very few nation-states where only one language is spoken, or only one set of cultural patterns or religious beliefs the norm. It is a fact that we live in an inter-cultural world, interacting everyday of our lives with people who speak languages different from the ones we speak, eat different foods, believe in different gods (or none at all), and who bring up their children in sometimes radically different ways. Nevertheless, most children, unless they are in culturally or religiously specific schools, interact on a daily basis with others who may hold different sets of values. Where this is recognized and positively supported, it may be considered formally as inter-cultural education, where it is not, it nevertheless exists (albeit at an informal level), although in this case it is more likely that there will be negative stereotypes which circulate within the school and are reproduced through ignorance and fear of other cultures and religions .

Much has been made recently of approaches to multicultural education and inter-cultural education. In general terms, inter-cultural education implies a proactive stance on the part of schools to bring different cultural groups together to a situation of understanding, respect and dialogue. Multicultural education often stops short of this goal, and seeks tolerance of other cultures rather than engagement and understanding. Multiculturalism as a policy may even encompass integrationist and assimilation approaches while paying lip service to the notion of cultural diversity.

²²Ibid., p. 97

²³For further detail of these see UNESCO. (2006). *Guidelines on intercultural education*.

In terms of educational planning for multiculturalism, uniform solutions for educational policy are attractive in terms of administrative and managerial simplicity. Textbooks and learning materials produced in only one language and encompassing only national references to culture (leaving out the local languages or cultures) may seem more feasible and realistic. There is the position that through a “one-size-fits-all” education, cultural differences may be minimized, leading, the argument goes, to greater social cohesion. But both arguments disregard the risks involved in terms of reduced learning achievement,²⁴ loss of cultural diversity and the promotion of learning to live together in one world as a precondition for peace. On the contrary, however the challenge must be for education systems to adapt to contemporary complex realities and provide quality education which takes into consideration learners’ needs, balancing these with social, cultural and political demands and with economic development that, in turn, goes hand in hand with the eradication of poverty.

Although education may be formal, informal or non-formal most of what we commonly refer to as education pertains to the formal schooling system taking place throughout the different learning cycles in young people’s lives. School is hence the most visible educational institution, and its role is central to the transmission of knowledge and the development of competencies. It is a determinant factor in the evolution of societies and universal primary schooling is at the forefront of the Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations to be achieved by 2015²⁵ reflecting, in turn, the importance of the Dakar Plan of Action, which emerged from the World Forum on Education for All in 2000 and which set out six major goals including universal literacy, gender equity, quality education for all, universal primary schooling, early childhood education and education for life skills.²⁶

Increasingly, however, there has been a call for the recognition of different cultural identities in education and in broader public policies in general. Indeed, the concept of multicultural citizenship, which supplements basic human rights with that of minority and cultural rights, has come to the forefront in the work of the major development agencies, including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme.²⁷ While cultural, religious and ethnic identities are not necessarily new in themselves, what is more recent is their role in demanding a say

²⁴Various studies have shown that children learn better when they learn in their mother tongue. See in this regard Tucker (1997). *The Use of First and Second Languages in Education: A Review of Educational Experience*; Mehrotra (1998). *Education for all: Policy lessons from high achieving countries*, UNICEF Staff Working Papers and Dutcher (2001). *Expanding educational opportunity in linguistically diverse societies*. Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington.

²⁵The eight Millennium Development Goals include the achievement of universal primary education for boys and girls by 2015. See: www.un.org/millennium goals.

²⁶See UNESCO. (2000). World Report. Education for All.

²⁷See for example, United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report. (2004). *Cultural liberty in today’s diverse world* UNDP New York, and the 2006 World Bank Report : *Cultural diversity and delivery of services: a major challenge for social inclusion*

in national education policy, thus expressing the need for their particular views of the world to be taken into consideration within the educational context.

In discussing culture in this text, reference is made to all the factors that pattern an individual's way of thinking, believing, feeling and acting towards other members of society. It has been defined variously in UNESCO documents as "the whole set of signs by which the members of a given society recognize . . . one another, while distinguishing them from people not belonging to that society"²⁸ and as "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group. . . . (encompassing) in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs".²⁹ Culture is at the core of identity and is a major component in the reconciliation of group identities within a framework of social cohesion. Language, moreover, is both the expression of a culture and the principal means through which culture reproduces itself. Linguistic diversity is a reflection often as not, although not exclusively, of cultural diversity. Both language and culture are at the core of education in different contexts and ergo of inter-cultural education.

In turn, culture and education are intertwined, language itself ensuring the transmission of knowledge in the school or learning context. Inter-culturality, on the other hand, refers to the relationships between cultures and, in this particular case, within the educational context. It presupposes cultural diversity in national settings and proposes dialogue between cultures with a view to promoting peaceful coexistence and tolerance of each other. A major challenge, nevertheless, when discussing the issue of education and culture is dealing with the inherent tension between diverse and competing world views, whether this be between groups that have recently migrated into territories previously occupied by other cultures and peoples, or between cultures and peoples that have long withstood the effects of colonization from previous eras. Although the circumstances and conditions may be different, the underlying dialectics are nevertheless the same, namely the toing and froing between diverse knowledge systems and their relation, in turn, to the structures of power, both economic and political, within nation-states. Furthermore, it is this relationship of knowledge, power and political context that determines the nature of the educational system and the place it accords to diversity and multiculturalism.

Two key aspects of inter-cultural education as viewed both in theory and in practice reside in issues relating to language and to history. Questions of identity, nationhood and power and indeed sometimes of religious affiliation are closely linked to the use of specific languages in the classroom. In fact, the choice of language (or languages) of instruction is probably one of the most hotly debated aspects of inter-cultural education occasioning widely divergent views on all sides of the spectrum. While there are strong educational arguments in favour of the use of

²⁸UNESCO. (1992). International Conference on Education 43rd session. *The contribution of education to cultural development*. P.5

²⁹cf UNESCO. (2001). *Universal declaration on cultural diversity*

mother-tongue instruction, a careful balance needs to be made between facilitating learning and providing access to broader learning contexts. Linguistic isolation from the rest of society is clearly a danger in minority-language instruction, and policy makers need to be sensitive to the importance of bilingual models of instruction, and of avoiding the creation of museum cultures in ghettos on the margins of mainstream society.

UNESCO supports mother-tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and the teachers. It also supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies. And finally, UNESCO supports language as an essential component of inter-cultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights.³⁰

In turn much of the key work done by UNESCO over the years has been collaborating in the revision of history textbooks, promoting a dialogue between competing interpretations of history or stereotyping of the Other through the school curriculum, particularly in regard to Euro-Arab relations and the image of Arab culture in European school books and vice versa. Similarly, the pioneering work of the Organization on the relation between culture and Routes has produced learning materials of extraordinary quality used by the UNESCO Associated Schools Programme. The Silk Roads, the Slave Route and the Spices Route are examples of these.

Conclusion

UNESCO has a major role as an international organization in terms of its mandate on education. Indeed it is the only international UN agency specifically entrusted by the international community to deal with education policy at a global level. It is, by very definition, the agora of inter-cultural dialogue and the arena for shaping global thinking on policy that is endorsed by governments and ministries of education around the world. And it is a rights-based Organization which uniquely promotes the right to education as a basic human right. Its work on inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue should be understood in this context. The Organization has the legitimacy and the mandate to undertake this work. And as events and international politics continue to shape world history, so too will the focus of UNESCO in terms of policy which reflects the needs and concerns of member-states in a changing global context. The Organization's central mandate as originally set out in its Constitution to promote world peace through inter-cultural dialogue remains as crucial as ever as we move forward through the twenty-first century.

³⁰See UNESCO. (2003). *Education in a multilingual world*. Ed. Linda King

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The Totalitarian Imagination: Religion, Politics and Education

Liam Gearon

Introduction

‘The Totalitarian Imagination’ presents an outline analysis of the inter-relationships between religion, politics and education in three critical phases of modern history. In ‘Revolutionary Democracy’ (1789–1916), I introduce some commonplace reminders about the nature of eighteenth century revolutions based on citizenship, democracy and human rights, and the changing roles of religion and politics which this initiated, including a new relationship between politics and education, so closely as even to presuppose a correlation between politics and pedagogy. Resolutely and increasingly secular in outlook, eighteenth century revolutionary democracy nevertheless retained many of the ‘totalizing’ features of religion, and laid the basis for more systematic philosophical and political attacks on the latter.

Under the heading ‘The Totalitarian Imagination’ (1917–1945), I argue that eighteenth century revolutionary democracies (and the philosophies which followed in the nineteenth) therefore provided a militantly anti-religious ground for early twentieth century ‘totalitarian’ politics, which made the State sacred, which attempted to remove any residual acknowledgement of religion, which broke down boundaries between public and private life, and which used education as a means of inculcating totalitarian ideology.

Under the heading ‘Liberal Autocracy’ (1945–present), I argue that the formation of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War – with the end of Nazi totalitarianism and the start of the Cold War which was the beginning of the end for Soviet Communism – was an attempt to globalize the principles of citizenship, democracy and human rights emergent in the eighteenth century. The post-Cold War period marked a perceived victory of liberal democracy based on equal citizenship and universal human rights which manifested itself in an ‘end-of-history’ hubris. Here, from the avowedly secular inception of the United Nations, education was regarded as of central importance to the inculcation of these political values – and

L. Gearon (✉)
University of Plymouth, London, UK
e-mail: liam.gearon@plymouth.ac.uk

from the post-Cold War period onwards has involved a coordinated international renewal of educational programmes to further citizenship, democracy and human rights. This post-Cold War triumphalism was short-lived, however, coinciding with manifold cultural challenges to the adequacies of liberal democracy, notably with an unexpected resurgence of religion in political life, and as a result, new political interest in *religious* life. This latter move, I argue, shows that religions are increasingly subject to the dictates of secular democratic politics, and that educational systems – however benign in outward appearance – are instrumental in the conscious or unconscious breakdown of public and private life characteristic of totalitarianism. If this might be defined as the emergence of a ‘liberal autocracy’, twenty-first century democracy may have begun to replicate the very totalitarian structures they were intended to combat.

Revolutionary Democracy (1789–1916)

Religion and politics in *contemporary* educational context need to be considered against a radical transformation of Church–State relations, a separation integral to a modernity whose roots can be dated to the Renaissance, a ‘rebirth’ of classical, Greek and Roman culture which in itself laid the sixteenth century ground for Reformation and Counter-Reformation, undermining the unifying power of Christianity in Europe. This formal separation of the ecclesiastical from political power had its philosophical parallels in the European Enlightenment, with the domination of secular, rational epistemologies, marking the seeming end of theology’s reign as the queen of the sciences (Burleigh, 2006; Himmelfarb, 2004).

The Enlightenment thus marginalized religion from the arts and humanities, from philosophy and science as much as public life: Enlightenment reason was encapsulated by Kant, defining the bounds of metaphysics and theology, and the scope of human reason; methodologically, Hume’s empiricism and Auguste Comte’s positivism defined the parameters of modern social scientific enquiry; across Europe, the Romantics – Coleridge, Wordsworth, Goethe – espoused the individual human spirit of art and aesthetics, the emotional wing, if you like, of Enlightenment reason. Arguably, however, it was the *political* changes that had the most obvious effects in the lives of the people of Europe. Emergent from earlier conceptualizations of rights and citizenship in post-Reformation Grotius, Hobbes and Locke, it was the age of The Social Contract (Burleigh, 2006; Himmelfarb, 2004).

Rousseau embodied this philosophical and democratic mood, and his (2007 [1762]) *On the Social Contract* epitomized this, framing the idea of the indestructible will of the people that could legitimately be universally imposed upon humanity for its own good, if necessary by force, by revolutionary violence, as indeed in the French Revolution it was. Rousseau’s ‘Man is born free, but is everywhere in chains’, became a rallying call of the French Revolution, as much as liberty, fraternity, equality. Thus the origins of our modern democratic polity – linking citizenship to human rights under a nation-state was, *revolutionary*, that is *enforced* and *violent*. The Terror substituted the authority of Church and aristocratic power

with the ideals of revolutionary democracy. Here, religion was suppressed, and atrocities were witnessed equivalent to those seen in Reformation England a century and a half earlier. Yet in eighteenth century France, to be religious was to be against the revolution. Now, politics was all the religion the people needed, and revolutionary democracy became an all-encompassing system of metaphysical explanation and societal order – revolutionary democracy had become a political religion (Burleigh, 2006; Talmon, 1961).

The anti-religious spirit of revolutionary democracy was further encapsulated in Paine's (1791/1792) *Rights of Man*. Edmund Burke's condemnation of revolutionary violence in Paris had been a means of condemning the Revolution itself – *Rights of Man* attacked Burke, defended the revolution, and presented a famous attack on religion:

In casting our eyes over the world, it is extremely easy to distinguish the governments which have arisen out of society or out of the social compact, from those which have not; but to place this in a clearer light than what a single glance may afford, it will be proper to take a review of the several sources from which governments have arisen, and on which they have been founded.

They may be all comprehended under three heads. First, Superstition. Secondly, Power. Thirdly, The common interest of society, and the common rights of man.
(Paine, 1791: 69)

Thus by superstition Paine means religion, by power he means tyranny and by the common rights of man he means democracy.

Occurring themselves against the backdrop of the post-Reformation wars of religion, ending in theory with the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, high amongst political priorities within French and American revolutionary democracies was the formal separation of Church and State. However, we need to distinguish between the American and French 'separations'. The motivation in France was based on the scepticism of religion, whereas in America, separation was based on the faith-committed search for religious freedom. In France, the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was followed by deeply unsettling violence against religion as much as aristocracy and monarchy – where the guillotine remains an abiding image of the time – with formal separation of Church and State occurring in 1795. America, by contrast, was founded on – and its 1776 Declaration of Independence, 1787 United States Constitution, and the 1789 Bill of Rights all encapsulate – the search for and protection of religious freedom. The French separation of Church and State embodies a faith in the state and conceals scepticism of religion, while the American separation of Church and State embodies a faith in God while concealing scepticism of the State.

The nineteenth century saw tensions between, on the one hand, those broadly satisfied with the theorization of democracy that could be refined and improved – Tocqueville's (2003 [1836]) *Democracy in America* or Mills' (2008 [1859]) *On Liberty* – and, on the other, radical nineteenth century theorists who considered the eighteenth century revolutions had not gone far enough. For Marx, the revolutions of the eighteenth century were bourgeois revolutions, removing aristocracy and royalty from power, merely replacing them with the autocracy of the

bourgeoisie. Like the eighteenth century American context, the nineteenth century liberal democratic polity too is fraught with internal ironies and contradictions. So, the time of heightened democratic movement throughout Europe is also the time of European Empire and oppression abroad. Colonial exploitation and revolution aside, even in supposedly democratic heartlands, there was far from universal enfranchisement.

Yet the moves to democracy and enfranchisement *were* on their way. Growing mass, democratic politics is also the era of mass *education*, a significant correlation between politics and pedagogy, between aspiration for governance and education as a means of obtaining political goals. It was one of the unexpected outcomes of democratic revolution that a mass education would become necessary in order to sustain the polity of the masses by the masses. Rousseau had realized this in publishing both *Emile* and *The Social Contract* in the same year (Rousseau, 2007 [1762]; 1968 [1762]). As I have commented elsewhere (Gearon, 2009; 2010), an indirect consequence of democratic political revolutions in the eighteenth century was national education systems in the nineteenth, but it was a topic which divided political and economic theorists – Smith’s (2008 [1776]) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* argued that education should be private and competitive while in *On Liberty* Mills (2008) [1859] argued education and not schooling be compulsory. Arguably, the strongest case for state intervention in nineteenth century political theory arguably comes from Marx and Engels’ *Manifesto of the Communist Party* where education was regarded as critical to the advancement of the masses (see Gearon, 2009; 2010).

After Tocqueville, another American, John Dewey, encapsulates the moves even to develop an integral connection between politics and pedagogy. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916) presents a threefold history of education in relation to politics: *first*, he presents a sympathetic, rather generous reading of Plato’s *Republic*, suggesting that Plato’s democratic ideals would have gone further but for the anti-democratic forces of his time. Though today this is an unsustainable reading of Plato, it is insightful for establishing the link between politics and pedagogy as ancient – if Plato’s *Republic* is in large part and obviously a work of political theory it is also in large degree a work of *educational practice*. *Second*, Dewey leaps from Plato to the Enlightenment, reading Rousseau – *Emile* as much as *The Social Contract* – to suggest the eighteenth century as a model of cosmopolitan citizenship, in other words, a citizenship bound by a positive, noble understanding of human nature itself. *Third*, Dewey outlines the parallel emergence of democracy and rights with strong nation-states. Dewey argues the nineteenth century educational implications are first evident in Germany’s introduction of compulsory schooling to inculcate national sentiment and further the goals of the State (see the innovative early work of West 1979; 1991; 1994).

However, Dewey’s analysis is entirely secular, and in this regard entirely partial. Like so many other post-Enlightenment thinkers, any contribution of religious tradition to democratic polity is almost wilfully neglected. We only have to see the way that Dewey historically leaps from Plato to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to see this. The future role for education in this context is secular and

religion is conceived as nothing more than the common concerns of this earth, as the pragmatism concerns of democratic politics. In educational terms, Dewey represents the sacralization of the secular politics through the educational deification of democracy.

More widely, the age of revolutionary democracy and its aftermath was increasingly sceptical of religion. If separation of Church from State limited the political influence of religion, its philosophical power was weakened by the intellectual triumphs of the Enlightenment. Thus the Age of Reason ushered in an era of more militant attack upon religion per se: from Feuerbach and Nietzsche to Freud, from Marx to Durkheim, the truths of religion and theology were deemed illusory, a human projection of unfulfilled desires upon an indifferent universe, the work of a primitive stage in the human imagination, and the surpassing of which was the mark of all things progressive. Simply put, it was envisaged that the mind of man could replace the mind of God. These philosophical and political developments provided the ground for the totalitarian experiments unleashed upon the twentieth century.

The Totalitarian Imagination (1917–1945)

In the aftermath of eighteenth century revolution democracy, then, religion essentially lost much of its philosophical credibility as well as its capacity for political influence. This provided new utopian opportunities based not on theological imaginings of an illusory heaven but upon ideological dreams constructed within the bounds of physical reality on earth. The totalitarian experiments of the twentieth century were exercises in even greater freedom from the influence of religion, constructing from first principles up, earthly utopias; and as eighteenth century revolutionary democracy sought often to create utopias by force, the totalitarians also took violence to even greater extremes. So the Russian Revolution of 1917 – a mere year after Dewey's *Democracy and Education* – ushers in a form of politics whose features seem so new and strange, the term revolutionary will no longer seem quite appropriate to the form of governance which it created.

Scholars generally agree that the origins of the term 'totalitarianism' itself arose within Mussolini's Italy when the expression 'uno stato totalitario' – the notion of a total state – was coined by Gentile for Mussolini. If it is questioned whether Fascist Italy was totalitarian, this is in part of the problem in defining totalitarianism itself. Indeed, the detailed definition and analysis of totalitarianism largely post-dated its political actualization, and only after the Second World War was serious political analysis applied to the phenomenon that had come to be loosely applied to Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany as well as to Stalin's Soviet Union. The mid-twentieth century history was thus an era seeking political moderation in an age of ideological extremism, replete with attempts to conceptualize and dramatize what I term 'the totalitarian imagination' (see also, Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1967; Friedrich, Curtis, & Barber, 1979; Gleason, 1998; Roberts, 2006; Zizek, 2004).

Amongst the earliest treatments was Popper's (1946) *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, recognizing the political antecedents of twentieth century totalitarianism in the revered figure of Plato and his revered philosophical work twenty-five centuries earlier. Popper's two-volume work firstly provides a critique of the totalitarian impulses of Plato's philosophy and politics – especially in the autocratic philosopher king, who would expel the poets from the republic, who establishes education only for the elite. The second strand of Popper's attack is on the totalitarianism inherent in Marx's historical materialism, and thus directly striking at the heart of the political experiment that was the Soviet Union. Popper's argument, though, is at the same time a warning too little heeded by democratic societies, that an open society needs to maintain a permanent guard upon those forces which might foreclose freedom and openness.

Arendt's (2004 [1951]) *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is unarguably the most famous of works from the period to address the term totalitarianism directly. Arendt's work remains foundational in defining the historical emergence and pertinent political features of totalitarianism, tracing an ideological causality from (i) anti-Semitism; through (ii) colonialism and imperialism; to (iii) totalitarianism. For Arendt, degrading the status of some human beings historically prepared the way for industrial scale abuse with twentieth century totalitarianism. Indeed for Arendt, totalitarianism is a modern phenomenon since only with the aid of technology can governments and state aspire to total, that is totalitarian control.

Amongst the most neglected but insightful of works of the period is Talmon's *History of Totalitarian Democracy*, a subtle and powerful articulation of the parallels between eighteenth century revolutionary democracy and twentieth century totalitarianism. Though his study received scant attention at the time compared to Arendt, Talmon presented some unpalatable comparisons between the violence and repression which underpinned late eighteenth century revolutionary democracies – an imposition of political will developed from Rousseau – and early twentieth century totalitarianism.

Other political theorists of the 1950s sidestepped this difficult quest for historical causality in the history of ideas, basing their theoretical considerations upon empirical and still very present observations of the totalitarian politics of the Cold War. In mid-1950s Harvard, Friedrich and Brzezinski looked back on Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, with an awareness that 'totalitarian' polity continued in the Soviet Union, presenting a sixfold typology of totalitarianism:

1. an official ideology, consisting of an official body of doctrine covering all aspects of man's existence to which everyone living in that society is supposed to adhere, at least passively; this ideology characteristically focused and projected toward a final state of mankind (*sic*), that is to say, it contains a chiliastic claim, based upon a radical rejection of the existing society and conquest of the world for the new one;
2. a single mass party led typically by one man (*sic*), the 'dictator,' and consisting of a relatively small percentage of the total population (up to 10 per cent) of men and women, a hard core of them passionately and unquestioningly dedicated to the ideology and prepared to assist in every way in promoting its general acceptance, such a party being hierarchically, oligarchically organized, and typically either superior to, or completely intertwined with the bureaucratic organization;

3. a system of terroristic police control, supporting but also supervising the party for its leaders, and characteristically directed not only against demonstrable ‘enemies’ of the regime, but against arbitrarily selected classes of the population; the terror of the secret police systematically exploiting modern science, and more especially scientific psychology;

4. a technologically conditioned near-complete monopoly of control, in the hands of the party and its subservient cadres, of all means of effective mass communication, such as the press, radio, motion pictures;

5. a similarly technologically conditioned near-complete monopoly of control (in the same hands) of all means of effective armed combat;

6. a central control and direction of the entire economy through the bureaucratic coordination of its formerly independent corporate entities, typically including most other associations and group activities.

(Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1967, p. 84)

They also suggested totalitarian ideology replicates the explanatory possibilities of theology:

The totalitarian ideology consists of an official doctrine which radically rejects the pre-existing society in terms of a chiliastic proposal for a new one. As such it contains utopian elements, some kind of notion of paradise on earth. This utopian and chiliastic outlook of totalitarian ideologies gives them a pseudo religious quality. In fact, they often elicit in the less critical followers a depth of conviction and a fervour of devotion usually found only among persons inspired by a transcendent faith. Whether these aspects of totalitarian ideology bear some sort of relationship to the religions which they seek to replace is arguable. Marx denounced religion as the ‘opium of the people’. It would seem that this is rather an apt way of describing totalitarian ideologies.

(Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1967, p. 85)

In this regard, Friedrich and Brzezinski too cannot resist the slippage into historical causality, speaking of ‘sharp conflicts between totalitarian ideologies on the one hand and the Christian and Democratic heritage on the other, it is only within the context of this heritage that the ideologies can be fully understood. Communism is not Christian, but it could not have taken root without the foundations laid by Christian belief in the brotherhood of man and social justice’:

These rational frameworks are then secularized and become ideologies. There is, to put it another way, a style of living involved that calls for transcendent explanations of what is right. When the theological explanations become untenable as a result of the decline of religious faith, these ‘secular religions’ then fill the vacuum. (Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1967, pp. 87–88)

This notion of an historical causality between the political and philosophical revolutions of the eighteenth century and the totalitarianism of the twentieth is gaining some ground: from Baumann’s analysis of the relationship between modernity and the Holocaust (Bauman, 2000); Burleigh’s analysis of how the French Revolution took on the guise of a ‘political religion’ (Burleigh, 2006); or Gray’s examination of the manner in which supposedly secular revolutionary utopias, even those avowing an atheistic outlook, cannot but help replicate the structures of the theological systems they seek to replace (Gray, 2007).

Liberal Autocracy (1945–Present)

Though the empirical evidence on the nature of education and totalitarianism is limited, certainly compared to the innumerable studies of education in democracies (cf. Bailey, 2000), it is precisely and explicitly against this backdrop of totalitarianism that *educational* policies were developed with wider political goals with the founding of a United Nations cast in utopian, if not religious terms (Schlesinger, 2003). So the Preamble of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) presents an often overlooked correlation between politics and pedagogy, notably when the General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ‘as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, *shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.* (UN, 1948: available www.un.org, emphasis added].

The terms and context of totalitarianism remained naturally important throughout the Cold War. As Gleason (1998) argues, the term totalitarianism was of critical use in the last years of the Cold War, and perhaps even influential in winning the ideological battle. Particularly notable here was Reagan’s use in the 1980s to describe the Soviet Union as an ‘evil empire’. Thus it was Reagan’s Secretary of State, Jean Kirkpatrick who refined the debate in terms of American foreign policy, distinguishing between autocratic and totalitarian regimes. So if the United States could not deal with the latter, it could justify involvement even political support for the former, it was a post-hoc, realpolitik justification for many notorious dictatorships (Gleason, 1998).

In the wake of the end of the Cold War, the immediate *post-Cold War* period the West hubris was encapsulated by Fukuyama’s ‘end-of-history thesis’ (cf Fukuyama, 2006, 2007). It was the language of supremacy, Fukuyama directly using the historical determinism, the language of Marxist historical necessity to reinforce this sense of supremacy. The ideological battle had seemingly been won, one which had been based on equal rights and citizenship emergent in those eighteenth century revolutionary democracies. Educationally, the political ‘end-of-history’ thesis on the victory of liberal, democracy becomes reflected in, indeed integral to UN’s educational policy, notably through the United Nations International Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004), the subsequent (2004–2007 and ongoing) World Programme for Human Rights Education.

Huntington’s (2002) *Clash of Civilizations* was a retort to this ideological complacency. In brief, Huntington suggested that tensions between civilizations will in the future be based not upon political ideology but on culture, and especially religion. Huntington’s crude carving up of the world into conflicting civilizations has been rightly criticized for its naïve geo-political and historical generalizations. He has also been criticized as irresponsible for bringing to the post-Cold War world a lexicon of conflict. Yet for many, 11 September 2001 seemed to confirm

Huntington's thesis. The United Nations (2008) '*Alliance of Civilizations*' remains a rearguard action to counter Huntington with a more conciliatory view of the relations between cultures. In all of this, the persistence of *religion* in the public sphere presents a challenge to the secularizing assumptions of modernity embedded in them all.

The implications of this are significant politically, theologically and educationally. Though the picture of course is both complex and emergent, I argue that there are subtle but increasingly apparent parallels between the new interest in religion in public life – a marked shift since its marginalization in the eighteenth century – and development in religious and citizenship education which reflect these developments, and in this regard I identify four critical contexts (see note).

Religion, Politics and Education: Four Critical Contexts

Critical Context 1: Religion and Politics

If the role of religion in public and political life has been historically underplayed since the European Enlightenment, there is now increasing evidence of the importance of religion in post-Cold War public and political life. Often, though not exclusively, this centres on issues of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. This trend has been highlighted by a number of theorists of religion: Burleigh (2006; 2007); Casanova (1994); Davis, Milbank and Zizek (2005); de Vries and Sullivan (2006); Fox and Sandler (2006); Gearon (2002; 2006a; 2007a; 2009a); Hanson (2006); Haynes (2006); Harpviken and Rioslien (2005); Himmelfarb (2004); Hoelzl and Ward (2006); Jackson (2002; 2004); Jackson, Miedema, Weisse and Willaime (2007); James (2006); Juergensmeyer (2005); Runzo, Martin and Sharma (2004); Rushton (2004); Smart (1969; 1999); Swaine (2006); Trigg (2007); Ward (2003); Woodhead (2002).

Critical Context 2: Religion and the United Nations (UN)

The UN system incorporated and defined freedom of religion or belief since the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights but the early history of the United Nations tended to downplay religious and ideological diversity. After a long neglect (or low level treatment) of religion explicitly, the UN system from the late 1970s and with the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981) began to recognize the international significance of religion for a stable world order: Ayton-Shenker (1995); Bennett and Finnemore (2004); Bowles (2004); Boulden and Weiss (2004); Forsythe (2000); Jackson et al. (2007); Harpviken and Rioslien (2005); Krasno (2004); Lerner (2000); Marshall (2000); Scott and Cavanaugh, 2007; Shattuck, (2003); Trigg (2007); UNESCO (2006); UNESCO (2006a).

Critical Context 3: Religion in Citizenship Education

The role of religion in citizenship education (and related curricula areas such as civics and human rights education) has been underplayed (Audigier, 1998; Crick, 1998; 2004; Davies, 2007; Heater, 2004; Huddleston and Kerr, 2006; Kerr, 2003). Reflecting broader global trends there is now increasing recognition of the importance of religion in citizenship and human rights education, although the recognition of the importance of teaching about religion remains arguably less strong in civic or citizenship education than in religious education: Ajegbo (2007); Arthur, Davies and Hahn, 2008; EPPI (2005); Gearon (2004); Lindholm, Durham and Tahzib-Lies (2003); McLaughlin (1992; 2000); NFER (2007); Osler and Starkey (2006).

Critical Context 4: Citizenship in Religious Education

The political has been underplayed in religious education, and contentious historical contexts sidestepped, including notions of citizenship (Grimmitt, 2000). Yet the exponential growth of civic or citizenship education around the world has forced religious education to consider the political and historical, a matter itself forced upon education by manifold changes in the world in which we live: Ajegbo (2007); de Souza, Engebretson, Jackson and McGrady (2006); Gearon (2006a; 2007a; 2008; 2009a); Jackson et al. (2007); Lindholm et al. (2003); Osmer (2003); Sterne (2006).

We might accept then, that the international emphasis upon the *public* aspects of religion is a reversal of trends towards religion's marginalization from the philosophically and politically revolutionary contexts of the eighteenth century (critical context 1), and that post-1945, this is reflected in a new interest within the United Nations which had previously sought to downplay religious difference in favour of universal, secular values of citizenship, democracy and human rights (critical context 2). The question to ask here, then, somewhat ironically, is whether religion is in danger of becoming no longer *marginalized* by politics and public life but *subsumed by it*, *over-politicized* and *over-integrated* into secular public-political life? Are politicians and educators in danger of not now ignoring or overlooking but *manipulating* religion what Milbank (2006) in *Theology and Social Theory* called 'policing the sublime'? Such developments appear inherently benevolent: who could be against a UN agency which promotes freedom of religion and belief? Yet subtle moves to break down the distinction between public and private, and ever more intrusive attempts to universalize political assumptions into religious life increasingly resemble a benign totalitarianism.

We might accept too that education in citizenship, democracy and human rights had previously neglected religion in favour of the aforementioned values of eighteenth century revolutionary democracy (critical context 3), and that in religious education citizenship, democracy and human rights, and the wider political contexts of religion have been neglected in favour of less conflict-based models of education (critical context 4) and that attention is increasingly being paid respectively

to religion in public life (critical context 3) and politics in religious life (critical context 4). There are thus grounds, I argue, for suggesting a sudden predominance of citizenship, democracy and human rights as a dominant value system, extending an influence far beyond or beneath the surface of public life. In parallel with the benign totalitarianism evident in religion's increasing subjugation to secular politics, then education can be seen an adjunct of what Wolin (2008) has called the 'specter of managed democracy and inverted totalitarianism'.

If the most effective forms of totalitarian governance are those which make thinking outside of the system barely conceivable, then a system where political control is sought over private life, especially in the most personal searches for cultural meaning and religious self-definition, a system which indeed breaks down the barriers between the public and the private to make these two cohere through notions of community cohesion, where the parameters of citizenship, democracy and human rights are less and less open to challenge, then might this not also be regarded as an emergent liberal autocracy whose early origins are to be seen in revolutionary democracy and totalitarianism?

Conclusion

The twentieth century was also a period in which artists and authors projected into imagined futures the fears of their present; yet works like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* seem closer and closer reflections of our own.

With the aid of technologies – and thus the means of control – unrealized by past totalitarian regimes, governmental and inter-government agencies demonstrate clear political intent on using religion and education in the furtherance of a singular political goal, promulgating universally the values we first saw emergent in eighteenth century revolutionary democracy. Yet, the more the states and inter-governmental agencies like the United Nations begin to intervene in and breakdown the barriers between public and private the more the United Nations and its nation-state agencies begin to replicate the very totalitarian structures they were constructed to combat. If totalitarianism has a lineage worryingly close to revolutionary democracy, the more contemporary democracies seek control of cultural and especially religious life the more they resemble the tyranny they claim to defend against.

Acknowledgments The Totalitarian Imagination develops ideas originally delivered in germinal form at a presentation given at the Nobel Institute, Oslo, Norway. In addition to drawing upon published sources (Gearon, 2002; 2003a; 2004, 2006a; 2006b; 2007a; 2007b; 2008; 2009a; 2009b; further developed in Arthur, Gearon & Sears, 2010), this chapter also draws upon some of my recent work with UNESCO in religious, citizenship and human rights education, and my contribution to a working consultation on *UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education*, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris [Published November 2006, Paris]. UNESCO have also formally published a precise record of our deliberations as *Expert Cultural Meeting on Intercultural Education Report, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 20–22 March 2006* [Published November 2006, Paris].

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Avoiding an Obvious Conflict? 'Religion–Neutrality' in Human Rights Education in Europe

Claudia Mahler and Reetta Toivanen

Introduction

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this [Universal] Declaration [of Human Rights], without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty. (UDHR Art. 2)

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. (UDHR Art. 18)

When we carried out the research project Teaching Human Rights in Europe in which we analysed human rights education initiatives since 1995, we noticed how absent the themes religiosity and belief were in the programmes we studied (Mahler, Mihr, & Toivanen, 2009, pp. 19–39).¹ Even courses that would address, e.g., Muslim girls in Berlin did not discuss religiosity or the right to freedom of religion or belief at all. Teachers and project managers explained to us that in a multi-religious school class religion, ethnicity and culture are taboo themes. Therefore, it is easier to try to ignore the religious or ethnic differences as far as possible and try to stress that human rights are the same ones to everyone without any distinction depending on one's religion or ethnic background. During the research project which was carried out in six European countries, we learned that in many human rights education projects religion and belief were treated as something which belongs to the private sphere. The human right to freedom of religion was almost always on the agenda,

C. Mahler (✉)
Human Rights Centre, University Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany
e-mail: mahlerclaudia@aol.com

¹The research project was carried out by an interdisciplinary team consisting in addition to the authors of Anja Mihr. The project was financed by Volkswagen Foundation as a Tandem research project 2003–2007.

but the question whether human rights mean something different for a deeply religious vs. atheist person was not taken up. Some activists stressed that human rights are actually replacing other religions so that the belief in human rights is a universal system of belief or even a religion (Mahler, Mihr & Toivanen, 2009, pp. 20–21).

In a world as it is today, Europe is especially in our focus in this chapter, the fact that people have different beliefs, differing interpretations on religious traditions or do not believe in any spiritual powers has always been a source of severe and fatal conflicts. Interestingly, exactly the religious conflicts and tensions in Europe lay at the heart of the development of international human rights law. This explains why prohibiting religious or ethnic discrimination and enhancing freedom of religion and belief have such a major weight in human rights treaties. At the same time, when religion plays an important role in the establishment of human rights, it plays no significant role in the education on human rights. Very few teachers, according to our study, shared the opinion that teaching human rights would suit well to the subject religious education (or similar subjects such as ethics or in Germany LER (which means lifestyle–ethic–religious education and is a new subject in Brandenburg which replaces religion)) (Hillerich, 2003).² We are here, however, not so much concerned with whether teachers of religion or ethics teach human rights but would like to discuss why the right of freedom of religion and belief is absent in human rights education materials. We will in the following scrutinise on the role of religion and belief in human rights education materials. As we will see, the role of religion is marginal. This will invite us to think about why religion and belief are avoided so carefully when creating human rights education projects.

Religion and Human Rights

The UN legal human rights documents have a number of norms which protect the right on freedom of religion or belief. Still, the expression ‘freedom of religion or belief’ is not defined in the international law regulations. The missing definition is a sign of differing interpretations of the term by UN member states during the drafting of resolutions and treaties. Religion and belief has forced people to powerful decisions and actions throughout the history. Common concerns that religion and belief are a source of conflict are visible around the world. The ethical principles of religions are seen as a purveyor of the establishment of human rights, but have also been the starting point of wars and armed conflicts (Boyle & Sheen, 1997, pp. 12ff). Still today, religion and religious revivalisms play a significant role in politics.³

One of the core ethical values underlying all religions and systems of belief seem to be that all individuals are equal in respect to their humanness (Bahiyih, 1996 pp. 14ff; Schäfer, 1995, pp. 107–117). According to internationally agreed human

²In original: *Lebensgestaltung – Ethik – Religionskunde*. For further information see http://www.uni-potsdam.de/db/ler/index.php?ID_seite=4.

³Eg. conflict in ex-Yugoslavia or between Israel and Palestine or the debates on Mohammed cartoons and the freedom of speech vs. freedom of religion.

right treaties, all human beings must have equal rights and opportunities, and should refrain from discrimination. If this is the ideal, in practice deep religiosity is often bound to certain uneasiness towards people believing in other gods. Intolerance and discriminatory behaviour based on religion cannot be prevented and eliminated by legislative measures and legal remedies only. Additional means are needed to combat discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. The prevention and elimination of practices and patterns of religious intolerance is a slow process which can be influenced by non-legal remedies. Education and interreligious dialogues in particular are seen as fruitful strategic tools to change people's minds.

During the last few decades religious fundamentalism has increased all over the world. In the Middle East and Northern Africa Islamistic fundamentalism has been on rise and had unpredictable political effects in many countries. In Central and Eastern Europe the religious extremism was one ground for the emergence of the conflicts after the Cold War. These interreligious disputes illustrate the wide relevance of the protection of the right to religion and belief nowadays.

Another phenomenon which is tangible in all European countries is the raising 'Islamophobia', especially after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001. In the times of the 'war on terrorism', the freedom of religion and belief are easily derogated with the argument that freedom increases insecurity and restricting rights of religious expression increase societal security (Toivanen, 2008). Profiling based on characteristics such as race, national origin and religion violates human rights. Especially vulnerable to profiling in European context are foreign residents, refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants who are Muslims of Arab origin. Especially Muslims have been targeted as potential terrorists and stigmatised by these surveillance techniques (Goldman, 2005, paras 32–62; Scheinin, 2007; Möckli, 2005).

The religious dimension provides great energy for the development of human rights, even when this dimension is often unrecognised (Bahiyih, 1996, p. 23; van Dijk, 1995). There is a close connection between religion and international law: during the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993), the representatives of states reconfirmed that human rights are universal, interrelated and indivisible (Boyle, 1995).⁴ The Member States formally affirmed that all human rights are universal which mean that the right to freedom of religion is a universally protected human right. Therefore, the international community has set standards to protect the human rights 'freedom of religion and beliefs'. This human right was set up during the Cold War – period and needs to be fulfilled also in times of war on terror (Lerner, 2006, p. 186ff). The international community needs to find new ways to inform all human being about their granted human rights. Human rights education is one means to learn about the rights which all people of the world are entitled to. It is a useful notion to combat discrimination on grounds of religion and belief and to spread the message on human rights around the globe (Mahler, Mihr, & Toivanen, 2009).

⁴Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights June 25, 1993, UN Doc A/Conf.157/23.

International Regulations

UN Framework

The human right to freedom of religion is incorporated in several universal legal documents. These international regulations show the scope of the minimum standards for freedom of religion and belief in the international community (Lerner, 1996 and 2006, pp. 13ff). The right is explicitly protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁵ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)⁶ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICSEC).⁷ Furthermore is this fundamental right enshrined in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,⁸ the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁹ and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination,¹⁰ and many other UN documents.

By smoothing the path for the establishment of the United Nations, the American President Roosevelt called in his State of the Union report to the US congress for four freedoms. One of these was religion. In Roosevelt's vision on international human rights, freedom of worship and speech were linked to such freedoms as economic and social welfare and peace and security for all peoples and persons (Roosevelt, 1987). But eventually, the Charter of the UN (1945) did not include an explicit reference to freedom of religion or belief. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights can be seen as an agreed arrangement about the scope and content of ideal human rights. It incorporates provisions that directly concern freedom of religion and belief in the Preamble and Articles 1, 2, 16, 18 and 26. The most important with the specific provision is Article 18 of the UDHR¹¹ (Scheinin, 1999).

By drafting Article 18 of the UDHR many controversial discussions took place. The most prominent one concerned the inclusion of the paragraph granting the right of a person to 'change his religion or belief'.¹² This part seemed to be necessary to be included, were as other parts as the freedom to maintain one's religion or belief was not deemed worth of mentioning (Krishnaswami, 1960). Even though the UDHR is not a legally binding document, its powerful influence and prominent role

⁵Universal Declaration of Human Rights, December 10, 1948, UN Doc. A/810, p. 71.

⁶International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, December 16, 1966, UNTS Bd. 999, p. 171.

⁷International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, December 16, 1966, UNTS Bd. 993, p. 3.

⁸Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981.

⁹Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Doc. A/RES/44/25 20 November 1989.

¹⁰International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of December 21, 1965.

¹¹See for the content of the Article 18 the introduction of this paper.

¹²Especially Saudi Arabia was against the inclusion of the phrase and was of the opinion that this clause is contrary to traditional Islamic law.

for the drafting of internationally, regionally and nationally binding human rights documents was much stronger than expected. Today it is considered as a firm part of international customary law and in that sense, a moral and for some part, as a legally binding document (Humphrey, 1978; Buergethal, 1988).

As it is shown above there are several provisions of human rights law which guarantee every human being the right to freedom of religion. The core content of freedom of religion is not disputed. The substance of the Articles of the declaration has been made part of the International Covenants, which are binding legal treaties. The most widely accepted binding regulation on the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion for the member states of the Covenant can be found in Article 18 ICCPR (for many Nowak, 2005). The Article was agreed on without the controversial phrase on the recognition of the freedom to change one's religion or belief. Instead, the phrase stating that everyone has the right to adopt a religion or belief of his choice was seen as practically covering the right to change one's religion (Parsch, 1981). The missing of the determination that one can change his religion or belief is seen very critical. Hence, it can be read in the first paragraph as included, but the member states can also interpret this phrase slightly different. Therefore, it is not clear if the right to change one's religion is included in the scope of Article 18 (Bahyyih, 1996, pp. 87ff).

Article 18 is a non-derogable right which means that the freedom of religion and belief is one of the mentioned rights in Article 4 of the ICCPR which means that no derogation, lowering of legal standards, is permitted in any circumstances of emergency. In General Comment 22¹³ the Human Rights Committee, which is the treaty body to monitor the implementation of the ICCPR, clarified the content of Article 18 (with detailed information on case studies Joseph, Schultz, & Castan, 2004)

The Committee is of the view that article 18.4 permits public school instruction in subjects such as the general history of religions and ethics if it is given in a neutral and objective way. The liberty of parents or legal guardians to ensure that their children receive a religious and moral education in conformity with their own convictions, set forth in article 18.4, is related to the guarantees of the freedom to teach a religion or belief stated in article 18.1. The Committee notes that public education that includes instruction in a particular religion or belief is inconsistent with article 18.4 unless provision is made for non-discriminatory exemptions or alternatives that would accommodate the wishes of parents and guardians. (UN doc, 1993, 6)

In 1962, two parallel resolutions setup two different declarations one with a special focus on all forms of discrimination and the other with discrimination on grounds of religion and belief.¹⁴ But it took a long time period until the

¹³General Comment 22: The right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Art. 18) UN Doc CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4, July 30, 1993.

¹⁴Declaration and convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and a declaration and convention on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance. CERD was adopted December 21, 1965. But, the convention on religious intolerance was never agreed upon. The discussion today does not really focus on the adoption of a new convention. There are some voices

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief was adopted by the General Assembly in 1981. The Implementation of the Declaration is reviewed by a Special Rapporteur. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief has gained considerable strength and significance since the post was established in 1986 (Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1986/20). There have been debates over some characteristics of freedom or religion, e.g. concerning freedom to change religion. During the Cold War the status of freedom of religion was controversial and the governments could not agree on a special UN Convention to Protect the Human Right on Freedom of Religion.

But in 1993, at the UN World Conference in Vienna, the delegates of UN member states and representatives of civil society expressed their 'dismay and condemnation that gross and systematic violations and situations that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of all human rights continue to occur in different parts of the world. Such violations and obstacles include (. . .) religious intolerance'.¹⁵ The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 in Durban recognised the close relationship between racial discrimination and religious intolerance in the declaration which was adopted at the conference.¹⁶

Current UN Special Rapporteur (Jahangir, Asma) on religion and belief stated that the Declaration on the Elimination of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief constitutes a benchmark in identifying and demonstrating which situations around the globe are of serious concern. This is demonstrated with allegations on violations of religious freedom in close relation with other human rights. The Declaration is a living and dynamic instrument which is a useful means to strengthen the protection of religious freedom (Amor, 1994, 1995; Odio, 1986). The annual reports of the Special Rapporteur to the Human Rights Commission and nowadays to the Human Rights Council confirm a miserable reality that an increasing number of confrontations and situations of intolerance towards those who differ in religious belief even within religious communities can be observed in many countries. A significant aspect of the fundamental rights of freedom of religion and belief is that not only state actors, but also other actors violate the right of others.

For the UN, the urgent need for interreligious dialogue had latest become apparent when the terrorist attacks took place in New York in September 2001. When World Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders' Inaugural Meeting of Steering Council took place in October 2001, the participants underlined in their statement that the terrorist attacks on New York and Pentagon on September 11, 2001, gave a new urgency to promote religious understanding. They asked in their statement

which plaid for an additional Protocol to the ICCPR and other are of the opinion that it might be wiser to implement all the standards which already exist.

¹⁵Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, U.N. Doc A/Conf. 175/23, Pt. I, para. 30 (1993).

¹⁶Report on the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance UN Doc. A/CONF.189/12 August 31–September 8, 2001.

'what could World Council do to abate the dangers of religious extremism and the consequent terrorist activities?'¹⁷

In 2007, the General Assembly convened 'a high-level dialogue on interreligious and intercultural cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity, in coordination with other similar initiatives in this area' (UN, 2006). Religion and belief emerge as a topic at the UN and other international organisations when the right to freedom of religion and belief is at stake or when religion becomes politicised for issues that endanger world peace. The right to own religion is one of the core rights in the whole human rights law framework. This is also apparent in the European regional system of human rights.

Regional Framework in Europe

The protection of the human right to religion can also be found on the regional level. Regional human rights frameworks were established over the last half century. All systems are inspired by the achievements at the universal level, namely the International Bill of Rights. The rights related to religion can be found in the main regional systems of human rights (the African, the European and the Inter-American system). Regional affinities are an important source in the establishment of such frameworks. The most satisfactory protection of the individual's human rights is currently available in Europe when compared with other regional systems.

Most relevant for our survey was the framework provided by the Council of Europe which includes provisions to protect the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion most prominently in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.¹⁸ There are very similar Articles in other regional conventions for the protection of human rights.¹⁹ The European system for the protection of human rights has a special focus on religious rights which is also visible in the scientific literature. The amount of the academic research shows that the theme is very topical. The activities of the European Court of Human Rights and the decisions of the former Commission on Human Rights have an increasing influence on national developments in this area (for further information on the European constitutional and case law, see Uitz, 2007).

¹⁷<http://www.millenniumpeacesummit.com/resources/wc/10.22-24.01%20-%20World%20Council%20of%20Religious%20and%20Spiritual%20Leaders%20Rationale%20and%20Concept.pdf>, visited November 14, 2008.

¹⁸Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, November 4, 1950, ETS No. 5, protocol No. 11 new version; BGBl. 2002 II, S. 1055.

¹⁹For example, in the regional American system Freedom of conscience and religion is proclaimed in Art. 12(1) of the 1960 Convention on Human Rights, Art. 8 is the pendant in the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.

National Level

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights has systematically influenced the development of human rights provisions in many national constitutions. The standard setting on the international level were extended by binding treaties and soft law resolutions and declarations which are tangible in new regulations on the national level. There also exists several monitoring mechanisms which can be seen as a purveyor by implementing human rights on the national level.

The elimination of prejudice towards people with a different religion requires besides the use of law prohibiting and sanctioning religious discrimination additional action such as education. The countering of bias and ignorance through education has been acknowledged as an effective means to support the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Human rights education can be seen as one tool to combat violations of human rights and also the violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief in particular (Mahler, Mihr, & Toivanen, 2009).

Human Rights Education

The right to human rights education is itself a human right (Lehnhart, 2003, pp. 89–95; Mahler, Mihr, & Toivanen, 2006, p. 170). This means that each and every one in any society has the right to receive education on the existing human rights articles and develop understanding of her rights and the rights of others. But what is meant by human rights education? Human rights education consists of activities that are developed with the explicit goal of disseminating practice-orientated knowledge and understanding of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948), related conventions and their systems of protection. Human rights education can be classified in three different ‘ways’ of teaching: ‘explicit human rights education’ means that the teacher uses Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other UN human rights treaties as teaching materials, second ‘implicit human rights education’ does not include the use of legal human rights documents but instead exemplifies through the teaching what kinds of rights do people have, just by being human, such as a right to religious freedom, and third ‘education with human rights approach’ (orig. Menschenrechtliche Erziehung) meaning education which takes as its starting point human rights in every aspect of education (Müller, 2002, pp. 7–9). Shulamith Koenig, one of the leading activists in human rights education, has emphasised that the basic aim of human rights education is to evoke critical thinking among people (Koenig cited in Flowers, 2004, p. 112).

Human rights education, which aims to question hierarchies, hegemonies and customs, is always about challenging governments. This is why human rights education may prove to be incongruous with other educative goals. It is exactly this unavoidable tension that makes the teaching of human rights challenging for teachers and means that targeted training for teachers and other educators is necessary.

Human rights education is, however, vital if the state intends to fulfil its commitments towards the international community. In 1995, the United Nations launched a Decade for Human Rights Education. The aim of the Decade was to raise awareness on human rights and pay attention to both the quality and quantity of human rights education (Ippoliti, 2009). In the proclamation it was stated that the most important task during the Decade would be the dissemination of information and knowledge about human rights as they are formulated in the UDHR. The member states and other partners were also expected to seek to endorse the furtherance of a 'culture of human rights' (basically meaning promotion of values and attitudes endorsing human rights) and to actively promote and defend human rights wherever and whenever human rights abuses occur (Mahler, Mihr, & Toivanen, 2006). A year into the Decade the UN and the UNESCO launched jointly an International Plan of Action for Human Rights Education with the aim of providing guidance for governments in fulfilling their responsibilities (UN, 1996). The Action Plan defines HRE as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights through imparting knowledge and skills, and moulding attitudes.

The commonly shared assumption behind the documents which explain and elaborate on human rights education is that the contents of human rights are universally understood and agreed upon. There is a certain kind of intended blindness in-built in the discourse which means that neither the human rights activists promoting HRE nor the authorities implementing the goals of the Decade question this underlying assumption of common interpretation. However, there are several human rights which are infringing to each other (such as the right to freedom of religion and belief and the right to freedom of speech; Baatz, 2006; Mückel, 2007). There are several human rights which need a constant discussion on their limits (such as freedom of speech). The right to belief or religion is one of the matters which current European debates have tried to avoid. The emphasis is instead put on religion-neutral matters basically because there is a fear that people might not agree upon what and in which way can and should religion be addressed in the public sphere. Especially the tendency seems to be that while educating people on their human rights, the religious differences are ignored on purpose in the hope that this would promote societal peace.

The Role of Religion for the UNESCO Human Rights Education Initiatives

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded on 16 November 1945. The purpose of the Organization was, as defined in its Constitution, 'to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental

freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations' (Article 1 (1)).

Major activity fields of UNESCO include education, natural sciences, human and social sciences, culture, and communication and information. The homepage of UNESCO gives a detailed overview of the fields in which the organisation is active. Religion or belief is not mentioned separately as fields of activity. Only when addressing its work in the field of culture, it says that UNESCO's priorities include 'cultural policies as well as intercultural and interfaith dialogue and understanding'²⁰ UNESCO tackles religion and belief as so called 'negative rights', which means that no one shall be discriminated or treated unequally on the basis of his or her religion or belief. It is not the aim of any UNESCOs efforts to promote religious diversity but in order to achieve a culture of peace and contribute to the creation of a just world implies that religious intolerance must be eradicated.

UNESCO has actively supported interreligious dialogues between representatives of different religions. For example, in 1992 UNESCO initiated a dialogue with the representatives of different religious traditions and peace research centres. The aim was to contribute to the creation of a culture of peace. In April 1993 Centre UNESCO de Catalonia in Barcelona organised under its auspices and in cooperation with UNESCO and with the support of the Government of Catalonia a collaborative conference called 'the Contribution by Religions to the Culture of Peace'. The first meeting was attended by 50 representatives of religious groups and peace centres and it was considered a success because it managed to gather together a prominent group of representatives from different religious and world-views and started a peace dialogue between religions. The follow-up meeting on the 'Contribution by Religions to the Culture of Peace' resulted in the adoption of the Declaration on the role of religions in the promotion of culture of peace in 18 December, 1994 (Singh, 1994).

The signers of the Declaration state that they are 'deeply concerned with the present situation of the world, such as increasing armed conflicts and violence, poverty, social injustice, and structures of oppression'. They recognise that religion is important in human life and that they 'know that religion is not the sole remedy for all the ills of humanity, but it has an indispensable role to play in this most critical time' (para 2). The declaration further states: 'Cultures give religions their language and religions offer ultimate meaning to each culture. Unless we recognize pluralism and respect diversity, no peace is possible' (para 3). 'Religions have contributed to the peace of the world, but they have also led to division, hatred, and war. Religious people have too often betrayed the high ideals they themselves have preached' (para 6). The parties to the Declaration 'emphasize education for peace, freedom, and human rights, and religious education to promote openness and tolerance' (para 16).

²⁰UNESCO, major Fields of Action and Priorities, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6406&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, last visited November 2008.

This Declaration is clearly drafted under the auspices of the UNESCO headquarters but has a non-governmental character. And it forms an exception among UNESCO documents as it discusses religion, religiosity, faith and belief. For example, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity does not mention religion once. It only refers to beliefs as part of culture in its preamble (UNESCO, 2002).

There are UNESCO chairs in comparative study of religions in Tashkent Islamic University (Uzbekistan), Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (Kyrgyzstan), Saint-Joseph University (Lebanon); University of Letters, Arts and Human Sciences (Tunisia). There is also a UNESCO Chair in Education in a Multinational and Multi-Faith Society in Bashkir State University (Russian Federation) and two UNESCO chairs in Interfaith Studies, at the University of Birmingham (United Kingdom) and at Elijah Interfaith Institute (Israel). When looking at the locations of the institutes, we can clearly see that they are potential or actual places of conflicts in which religion or belief system play a political role. The chairs aim to contribute to the goal of UNESCO, culture of peace by combating religious nationalism. The general UNESCO chairs for human rights and democracy do not, interesting enough, address questions related to religious matters or beliefs at all.

UNESCO has either supported or commissioned the publication of series on studies in Islam. These are mostly high level informative books on different aspects of human heritage and can only in a limited scale been seen as contributions to enhance awareness on the role of beliefs and religions in a human society (see, Bouhdiba & Ma'ruf al-Dawalibi, 1998). These books do not contain human rights educational elements.

In 2007, UNESCO published a book called *Education for All by 2015 Will we make it?* (Oxford UP: UNESCO Publishing, 2007). This book concentrates on religions, religious education and faith in a much more profoundly manner than earlier UNESCO documents. It stresses the importance of education in promoting tolerance towards different religious communities and interfaith dialogues to foster understanding between different religious groups. It also takes a critical look to religious schools and how religions are taught. The authors also pay attention to the problem that some religious schools and classes fail to cultivate tolerance and understanding towards other religions and cultures.

All in all, after careful analysis of the existing publications, declarations, policy papers, conference proceedings and the like, it seems fare to state that UNESCO has more or less factored out religion in its agenda, expect for the support for books on high-culture religions. Instead, interculturality, culture of peace, tolerance and internationality form the core of the UNESCO activities in the field of human rights education.

This conclusion is supported by the fact that one does not find headings directly addressing religion or faith on the homepage of UNESCO. This is by no means to say that religion would not be seriously in the centre of UNECO activities. But religious diversity in the UNESCO is in best case dealt as an aspect of cultural diversity or under the heading of intercultural dialogue.

In 2007 UNESCO cooperated in the organisation of the World Conference on Dialogue Among Religions and Civilizations in Macedonia. This World Conference resulted in a Declaration for Promoting dialogue and mutual understanding among religions and civilisations in Ohrid 2007 (UNESCO, 2007). The parties to the declaration state that they ‘strongly condemn all forms of religious violence and its justification’. They also ‘condemn the abuse of religion and all types of discrimination and actions that humiliate human dignity’ and ‘ask believers of all religions to act according to the principle of reciprocity: let us treat others now as we would like them to treat us’. The declaration further stresses that ‘Love is in the foundation of every religion. [...] Aware that prejudice, mistrust and fear give birth to terrorism we, the participants in this conference, are committed to promoting mutual respect of cultures and confessions’ (para 5). The participants of the conference proposed that a Steering Council of Religions would be established under UN auspices that could promote dialogue among religions, cultures and civilisations.

In his speech at the World Conference, Engelbert Ruoss, the Director of UNESCO Office in Venice, said on that ‘we should bear carefully in mind that all faiths convey a message of peace, justice and human solidarity and that religious leaders, like all other community leaders, have the potential to exercise a positive influence on how people in society understand each other and interact. Reconciliation of religious views is an increasingly significant challenge of our age. This also entails the need to create more awareness among peoples and government authorities about the need to respect the diversity of cultures, in particular with regard to the use of religious symbols, images and expressions.’ (Ruoss, 2007) This quotation nicely wraps up the official UNESCO point of view. The main objective is to pay special attention to the contribution of religion on culture of peace, mutual respect and cooperation.

On the Regional Level: How to Deal with Religion in Europe?

One educational initiative of the Council of Europe is called ‘Education for Democratic Citizenship’. The programme had different phases.²¹ The main focus of the programme is on education for democratic citizenship, which means that

EDC is a set of multifaceted practices and activities developed as a bottom-up approach to help pupils, young people and adults participate actively and responsibly in the decision making processes in their communities for the purpose of promoting and strengthening democratic culture based on awareness and commitment to shared fundamental values, such as human rights and freedoms, equality of difference and the rule of law, for their own benefit and for the benefit of society as a whole. It focuses on providing life-long opportunities for acquiring, applying and disseminating information, values and skills linked to democratic principles and procedures in a broad range of formal and non-formal teaching and learning environments.²²

²¹ Overview under <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/> visited March 2007.

²² Ibid., p. 14.

The initiative Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) was launched in 1997 (Duerr, Spajic-Vrkas, & Ferreira, 2000). The background of the scheme was to strengthen democratic values among the youth through education in preparation for democratic citizenship.²³ The path for EDC was paved by more traditional programmes, such as civic education or civic instruction (Osler & Starkey, 2005; Gearon, 2003; Sliwka, 2006). EDC initiative focuses on encouragement of a 'culture' of democracy and human rights (Nowak, 2001; Human Security Network, 2003).²⁴ Individuals should participate in the process of promoting this culture. The vision is that a democratic culture should be based on awareness and commitment to shared fundamental values. In this context, participation is defined as one of the basic rights of individuals in a stable democracy (Mahler, 2008a, 2008b).

During the first phase of the programme one goal was to promote pupils' skills to practice effective democratic citizenship. Member States of the Council of Europe should implement EDC as an educational initiative in different educational fields. But the idea of EDC goes far beyond the school environment and must be seen as having an inclusive curriculum that must incorporate a wide range of formal and non-formal educational settings (Brander, Keen, & Lemineur, 2003, p. 21).²⁵ The main task for the second phase of the EDC project (2001–2004) was to bridge the gap between policy and practice.²⁶ The European Year of Citizenship followed 2005. The general objective of this Year was to 'bridge policy and practice by empowering policy makers and practitioners at all levels to set up and develop sustainable programmes for EDC/HRE'.²⁷ The goal for the Member States was the implementation of EDC while fostering sustainable practices.

The next phase had a special focus on the promotion of Human Rights. In 2006, a Programme for Activities based on the experiences of the previous steps was launched under the title 'learning and living democracy for all'. All categories of human rights are seen as integrated in EDC. It seeks to promote an integrated understanding of human rights, placing equal emphasis on all categories of human rights,

²³The Final Declaration of the Second Summit of the Council of Europe of October 11, 1997. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁴The culture on human rights is a universal goal.

²⁵'Informal education refers to the lifelong process, whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (family, neighbours, marketplace, library, mass media, work, play, etc.). Formal education refers to the structured education system that runs from primary school to university, and includes specialised programmes for technical and professional training. Non-formal education refers to any planned programme of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competencies, outside the formal educational curriculum.'

²⁶Ad hoc Committee of experts for the European year of citizenship through education, Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Programme of Activities (2006–2009), learning and living democracy for all, DGIV/EDU/CAHCIT (2006) 5, March 14, 2006.

²⁷Ad Hoc Committee of Experts for the European Year of Citizenship through Education (CAHCIT), Concept paper, Living and Learning Democracy, DGIV/EDU/CAHCIT (2004) 13 rev. 4.

including civil, political, social, economic and cultural or development rights. The Council of Europe gave a definition of HRE which reads: 'educational programmes and activities which focus on promoting equality in human dignity, in conjunction with other programmes such as those promoting intercultural learning, participation and empowerment of minorities'.²⁸

The programme 'Learning and Living Democracy for All' will end in 2009. The aim of this phase is the promotion of sustainable policies, to support good practices and to encourage cooperation between and within the member States. The main focus of the programme is on policy development and implementation with special regards on teacher training and democratic governance.²⁹

In order to promote human rights education, the Council of Europe has published several educational materials. One of the most relevant books is the *Compass*, which is a manual on human rights education for young people. The English version was edited in 2002, to date the manual has been translated into 25 languages and some six translations are under preparation.

Compass is a project under the auspices of the Council of Europe's directorate on Youth and Sport. The book is designed to support practitioners of human rights education working with young people. The idea behind it was to establish a manual for human rights education in formal and non-formal education environments. The goal of the editors was to take an inclusive approach to the life of young people in Europe with its geographically and culturally diverse reality.

The *Compass* has five chapters. The first one introduces the manual to the practitioner; the second holds an assortment of activities which cover different themes and rights, the third one gives practical advice to promote human rights through actions. The fourth chapter provides essential information on the international human rights standards and the last chapter comprises of supplementary background information. In the section on background information one can find the right to freedom of religion. This is discussed in conjunction with all kinds of discrimination. Discrimination on grounds of religion is introduced as one example of discrimination against a vulnerable minority group. It is explained with different examples, e.g. anti-Semitism, religious discrimination and Islamophobia. The major questions of this short paragraph deal with the images one has of Islam and what can be done to further the knowledge and understanding of other religions. The most common stereotype about Islam, namely that it would as a religion be incompatible with human rights, is also discussed.

Compassito is the manual on human rights education for younger children. It was published in 2007 by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe.

²⁸Official definition of Human Rights Education for the Council of Europe Youth Programme, cited in Council of Europe 2003. p. 17.

²⁹For further information Ad hoc Committee of Experts for the European Year of Citizenship through Education, Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights, Programme of Activities (2006–2009) Learning and Living Democracy for all, DGIV/EDU/CAHIT/(2006) 5, from March 14, 2006, see: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Source/Pdf/Documents/2006_5_ProgActivities2006_2009_en.pdf.

The main focus of *compasito* is to address professional adult educators who work with children. The manual provides theoretical and methodological information and substantial discussions of human rights themes. One example of how religion and religiosity is addressed in *compasito* appears in the section of board games. It is called *Moksha-Patamu* and the introduction explains that is originally Hindu game to teach about religion, allowing a player to ascend higher in life or fall to lower levels. The game was adapted to respect human rights without a special focus on religion. The chapter on discrimination based on ethnicity and culture shows and explains using the example of the Jewish minority in Europe how a religious group can be discriminated and with how terrible consequences (Flowers, 2007, p. 226). In the section on discrimination, the right of freedom of religion is explained in one paragraph and the particular example focuses on Islamophobia as a new problematic phenomenon connected to terrorism and other violent stereotypes.³⁰

In the section on peace we can find one paragraph on intercultural and interreligious dialogue. It is mentioned that people are becoming more mobile and because of globalisation there are also negative consequences varying from local social exclusion to international conflicts. The last sentence of the paragraph says: 'It is especially important to acknowledge the role religious communities play in this process of developing identity and to stimulate interreligious dialogue to overcome religious based stereotypes and discrimination at every level of society.' Teachers working with the manual are encouraged to consider the question whether there are religious groups in the neighbourhood. Pupils should be encouraged to consider if the religious groups have an effect on the life of people living in the neighbourhoods and should question if there are visible conflicts arising from religious differences which affect the children.³¹ The background in this initiative is to combat Islamophobic tendencies in Europe and discrimination against Christians in the Arabic countries.

In 2006, a new initiative which was launched by the Anna Lindh Foundation in collaboration with ALESCO and the Council of Europe is a teacher training programme with a special focus on cultural and religious diversity, sustainable development, education for human rights and democratic citizenship. The programme provides teacher training across the Euro-Mediterranean region and aims at improving pedagogical skills and materials to teach themes of intercultural education, interreligious dialogue and cultural diversity.

Germany

During the last decade several political debates have taken place over the role of religion in public schools in general and wearing of religious dresses in state schools and the showing of religious pictures and symbols in classrooms in

³⁰*Op cit.*, p. 227.

³¹*Op cit.*, p. 271.

particular. Similar discussions have been carried out in a number of European states. Some of the disputes can be seen as new chapters on an old controversy on the status of religion in a state and in society.

Germany has no official religion or established state church.³² This segregated approach is a strict separation of state and church. Germany is becoming increasingly secularised in terms of traditional religious practices, beliefs and church attendance. Nevertheless, there is a long tradition of cooperation between state and church. The states responsibilities include recognising churches as ‘public corporations’ and raising taxes from their members. The state upholds a neutral position regarding religious matters, but the role of religion in school has also a long history (McGoldrick, 2006). It is in the public interest to maintain links between the secular and the religious areas. Tight coordinated activities with religious communities may be refused where communities make an effort to indoctrinate pupils in religious classes or where they act against the free democratic values.

‘School is characterized as institution as the place where the cultural heritage, including the religious heritage, of the German society is transmitted to the young generation by the Germanys’ Federal Constitutional Court’ (cited after Häußler, 2001, p. 465). Freedom of religion of the parents and pupils in school would be protected. The Federal Constitutional Court decided that demonstrative religious behaviour like crucifix in classroom hanging on the wall should be prohibited at school. A classroom crucifix can be seen as a symbol of which demonstrates a religious belief.

Germany has a population of over 80 million people. The largest religious groups are the Lutheran, Catholic Church and the Islam. The Muslim population is the third biggest group with *ca.* three and half million believers mostly with a Turkish background. Originally many of them came as ‘Gastarbeiter’ (guest workers) as temporary residents to Germany but instead of returning, they stayed and brought their families and build large communities in which they settled permanently and acquired citizenship (Boyle & Sheen, 1997, pp. 313–314).

The second and third generations immigrants have discovered their own religious heritage and their traditional religious symbols or clothing are widely seen in German schools. Girls with headscarves (hijab) are a regular appearance in schools in some parts of Germany. Before the political discussion on religious symbols in schools started, nobody seemed to care about girls with headscarves. The discussion was more vivid when cases of teachers with headscarves were decided by courts (VG Stuttgart, decision 24 March 2000 – 15 K 532/99, NVwZ 2000, 959ff/VGH Baden Württemberg, decision 26 June 2001 – 4 S 1439/00, NJW 2001, 2899ff, VG Lüneburg, decision 16 October 2000 – NJW 2001, 767 ff.; Bielefeldt, 2003). There is also a slight difference in the behaviour of some Turkish parents compared to German ones, because e.g. some girls are not allowed to take part in sports lessons or attend school excursion.

³²Article 137 of the German Constitution of 1919 states that ‘There is no state church’.

During the UN Decade on human rights education the programme 'Demokratie Leben und Lernen' (living and learning democracy) was launched (Edelstein & Fauser, 2001; Georgi, 2006).³³ It was active during the time period between 2002 and 2007. It included a teaching module on human rights, but this was according to our research never put in practice within the project schools. It was easier for them to adapt projects with a special focus on democracy and democratic behaviour at school than take human rights education focus. In order to avoid religious conflicts and discussions on religion and create a secular approach to education in the schools, some German states decided to prohibit classes on religion and launched the subject ethics (also called LER). Long discussions have taken place in the public sphere whether it is a better approach to teach pupils ethics instead of just confessional religion and incorporate to ethic teaching information about religions without a special focus on the Lutheran and Catholic heritage. Neither LER nor ethics include teaching on human rights. Human rights are not integrated in the teacher education on regular basis, which means that human rights (also the freedom of religion) are taught only if the teacher has a special interest in them. Even though it would be easy to bring up human rights during the ethics or religious education, most of the teachers are not prepared to include human rights education to their work without ready-made educative support material and additional training.

Finland

Finland has two state religions. The freedom of religion in Finland is enshrined in the Freedom of Religion Act (453/2003). The Evangelical-Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church are governed by special legislation. The religious affiliation of a child less than 12 years of age is decided by the parents jointly. The affiliation of a child aged not yet one year can be decided by the mother alone. The religious affiliation of a teenager aged between 12 and 17 can only be changed by a joint decision of the child and his or her parents or guardian. Harri Saine (2000) explains how the curricula produced in the 1990s shows the appearance of new cultures and religions to Finland and emphasise investigation of personal views as well as pondering of ones own values and morals. In addition to the developments in curricula, the laws have changed recognising the ever more diverse religious affiliations of residents of Finland.

In the comprehensive and upper secondary schools, students belonging to a recognised religious community are given religious education and the non-affiliated are taught ethics. This is based on the law on the Freedom of Religion (453/2003), which was enacted in 2003 and required changes in the school laws in order to enable the pupils' parents to opt out for non-state religions' teaching (454/2003 and 455/2003). Accordingly, denominational teaching other than Evangelical-Lutheran

³³<http://www.blk-demokratie.de/>

and the Orthodox is since given if there are at least three pupils or students belonging to the same religious community and their parents request it. It is also possible to get education in other religions such as Sunni or Shia Islam. For example, in the city of Helsinki, confessional education in religion is given (in addition to the state religions) in catholic, general Islam (an attempt to satisfy different Islamic traditions), Buddhist and Krishna religion (Helsingin, 2007). There is at the moment no research on what is actually taught during the religions lessons and how the pupils taking lessons in other religions address human rights issues.

Many pupils are not members of any religious association and for them, according to the existing law, ethics is the substitute offered. This means that the most of the Muslim pupils, for example, attend the ethics instead of Islamic lessons. Looking from the point of view of human rights education, these children have an advantage: the curriculum on ethics is the only one which requires teaching in human rights and takes explicitly a human rights approach to developing ethical skills of the pupils (Salmenkivi, 2007).

To conclude: Finland has in the field of education rather opted for confessional teaching of religions instead of introducing a general ethics and religions approach. This is interesting thinking about the deep secularisation of Finnish society on the one hand and the revival of religiosity with the increasing immigration. The official approach is in Finland, however, to give a strong emphasis on the freedom of religion. Human rights education does not have an official status in Finland and is clearly not a governmental priority (Toivanen, 2007, p. 38). The Finnish human rights education materials address religion and belief basically from the perspective of prohibiting discrimination of ethnic groups (as the most members of the non-state religions are foreigners or foreign born in Finland) (Räsänen, 2007).

Conclusion: Avoiding Religion?

Human rights instruments, such as conventions and declarations, are not only means in the hands of monitoring bodies. These documents gain real impact, if publicised, invoked and implemented at domestic levels. This implementation can be furthered at all levels of civil society by human rights education. Human rights education programmes should function as tools and incentives in the minds of all organs of civil society, including religious organisations and institutions which carry a special responsibility in this regard. According to our research, many interviewees shared the opinion that ethics (or LER in Germany) or religion lessons would suit best for targeted teaching on human rights. At the same time, the whole human rights education material seems to degrade religiosity to interreligious dialogue in which belief does not play any role at all. This may be due to the fact that in the eyes of human rights educators, religion contradicts with its potential particularity against the ideal of universally agreed values. Religion is very often associated with dangers of fanaticism and extremism. This is again often related to a suspicion among dominant secularised activists towards religiosity. For the same reason that UNESCO and

the Council of Europe stress the importance of intercultural and interethnic education: instead of fully recognising a religious mind-set of a believer, human rights education is offered as a value-free peace-advancing vehicle. But as we have shown above the human rights approach has not really been taken seriously as a matter of fact and practice, and human rights education on the right of freedom of religion or religious diversity is missing in practice. Not only it is missing, but the interview material also shows that teachers and educators are afraid of the topic religiosity and belief because it is perceived as a 'hot potato'. In a class room with children with different religious backgrounds, the teachers may choose to speak about abstract human rights and importance of interculturality instead of opening up a path for a possibly conflictual theme of religion.

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Faithful Brokers? Potentials and Pitfalls of Religion in Peacemaking

Kristian Berg Harpviken and Hanne Eggen Røislien

Recent years have seen increasing interest in the potential of religion for peacemaking. This chapter conceptualizes the role of religious actors in peacemaking, starting from a distinction among three facets of religion: its normative aspect, its relationship to identity, and its organizational function. Each may feed into the emergence or escalation of conflict, and each is in itself transformed through exposure to armed conflict. Similarly, each facet forms part of the peacemaking potential of religious actors in various ways. Focusing on the identity aspect of religion, along with the extent to which a given identity is shared by both the broker and conflictual parties, we suggest that religious brokers may be of three distinct types: the “liaison,” the “coordinator,” and the “representative.”

Religion is an integral dimension within many armed conflicts. Hence, religion—as well as actors who identify themselves primarily in terms of their faith—is, in many cases, pivotal to resolution of conflict. However, the very diversity of religious traditions makes the task of constructively examining the role of religion in conflict resolution particularly challenging: What potential do religious actors have for acting as constructive peacemakers? What are the pitfalls in such a process? How does the fundamental identity of the peace broker affect the chances of success?

Interest in these questions is currently on the increase, both within peacemaking practice and in the academic sphere. Reflecting this rising interest, there is now a rapidly growing literature on the relationship between religion and peacemaking (see, for example, Appleby, 2002; Carter & Smith, 2004; Dduet, 2006; Johnston, 2003). There is tension between recognizing the intensity of religious involvement in a number of contemporary conflicts and finding appropriate ways of addressing those conflicts. The challenge, then, to analysts and practitioners alike is to overcome one-sided perspectives on religion, acknowledging religion’s destructive aspects and its potential for contributing positively to peacemaking (Appleby, 1996; Boulding, 1986).

K.B. Harpviken (✉)
International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway
e-mail: kristian@prio.no

In contemporary Western societies, there is a tendency to dismiss religious beliefs as mere opinions—or even superstitions—in contrast to empirically based knowledge, which is regarded as factual. Such a distinction veils the fact that both positions appear true and factual to the individuals holding them. Similarly, there is also a tendency to view strong religious convictions primarily as constituting a negative force, one that feeds conflict, undermines political and economic development, and prevents rational dialogue and conflict resolution.

Despite the increasing interest in the peacemaking potential of religion, then, there is considerable room for progress in terms of developing the necessary religious sensitivity among diplomats and sensible modes of involvement for religious actors. Indeed, as Bruce Lincoln (2006) states in his acclaimed work *Holy Terrors*, it is simple to regard the perpetrators of the 11 September 2001, attacks as evil, but their motives were also profoundly and intensely religious. What is needed, then, is greater clarity about what we take religion to be. As a first step, this chapter offers a conceptualization of engagement in religiously based conflict resolution.

The chapter is divided into four major sections: first, a delineation of the phenomenon of religion; second, reflections on the relationship between religion and conflict; third, an elaboration on the peacemaking potential of religion; and fourth, a threefold typology of peace brokerage.

Facets of Religion

Despite its intensity, influence, and magnitude worldwide, religion is a multifaceted phenomenon, impossible to pin down in a single consensual definition. Needless to say, how one defines religion shapes one's explanation of its very role in society, and the choice between kinds of definition is consequently a matter of strategy. Within the discipline of religious studies, it is common to distinguish between two basic perspectives: on the one hand, there is the substantive approach, which focuses on the elements that constitute religion, or what religion is; this is contrasted with the functionalist approach, which focuses on the social and cultural consequences of religion, or what religion does for a social group or an individual (see, for example, Hamilton, 1995; and McGuire, 2002). In this chapter, our ultimate interest lies in the second approach, and we elucidate some of the constituent forces from the perspective of what religion does. However, to facilitate further analysis, in the opening section we first seek to delineate what religion is by focusing on three primary aspects: religion as “normative system,” as “identity,” and as “organization.”

Religion as a Normative System

Religious faiths enshrine dogmas that constitute normative systems. When accepted, the latter serve as directives for how individual believers should live their lives. The normative systems relate each individual believer to the transcendent, to the ultimate

meaning of existence. They define objectives and offer conceptual frameworks and narratives that inspire action. In consequence, religion is both explanatory, explaining why things are the way they are; and normative, prescribing how things should be (Haar & Busuttil, 2003; McGuire, 2002). This normative basis thus constitutes a system of meaning for individual adherents, making sense of and legitimizing a particular social order. By reference to a transcendent authority, religious legitimizations make particularly forceful claims for the bases of sociocultural order. Thus, for the believer, religion is considered stabler and more real than a normative system that is simply the result of human practices and decisions (Berger, 1967; McGuire, 2002).

Contributing to shaping how the adherent understands the world, religious norms have cognitive implications. Accordingly, people locate themselves and their actions within a larger social order by reference to the normative systems defined by their religion (Berger, 1967; Hamilton, 1995; McGuire, 2002). Through a process of socialization, the communal meaning system informs the individual of the values and norms of the larger group of which he or she is part, and the individual comes to share a particular normative meaning system that separates him or her from those who do not identify with this system. Accordingly, the enactment of a normative conviction has social, cultural, and political consequences, hinting at its conflict-creating potential; religious norms enlighten the adherent about what action is good and desirable, and what is bad and ought to be avoided.

There is considerable variation in the extent to which religious normative systems are either dogmatic or open in character. Fundamental differences exist in terms of the ability of particular normative systems to adjust to their social and cultural surroundings, typified in the differentiation between rigidity and flexibility. For example, Judaism rests on a vast scriptural material in which a number of normative commandments, the *mitzvot*, are spelled out as explicit and all-encompassing directives for the lives of each and every believing Jew. In contrast, the normative standards and consequent religious practices of Hinduism relate to maintenance of the mythical divine universe of the Hindu tradition, rather than being the direct result of rulings by a religious elite, and consequently, tend to be more fluid in character.

Within any given religion, the degree of openness is reflected partly in the extent to which dogmas and their implications can be reinterpreted, leading to changes in religiously founded thinking and activity. Between religions, the degree of openness is reflected in the ability to debate similarities and differences, and in the ability to identify opportunities for acting together. The level of dogmatic rigidity is not given, however, but varies with the time period and the branches of the same religion. In a situation of pressure, such as armed conflict, the significance of particular aspects of a normative system may undergo change and become more rigid.

Religious communities may apply both soft conviction and harsh control measures to maintain the position of their religion among adherents. Irrespective of the character of the normative system, religious socialization is most successful when its cognitive framework is internalized within the morale of the individual, when it manages to create a “a commitment in the hearts of people” (Repstad, 2004, p. 35).

Religion as Identity

Religious belief systems have a particular identity-forming potential. Religion is not just individual; it is also social, offering each believer a sense of belonging to a community of fellow believers. With its reference to a transcendent source of truth and codification of shared norms, religion serves as a compass for the individual and the religious community alike, locating all believers within an extended ontological setting. An identity with a religious source may, therefore, be exceptionally robust: religion tells you where you belong and where to proceed.

There is no established method for measuring the intensity of religious identities, however. On the one hand, religion merely constitutes one of several identity indicators, others being ethnicity, language, and economic status. On the other hand, the combination of a normative system with ontological meaning and a sense of belonging can be particularly strong. When multiple identity indicators overlap, this may be the basis for highly coherent group formations, as with Afghanistan's Hazara ethnic minority, which constitutes the bulk of the country's Shia Muslim population. Originating from a distinct geographic region, the Hazara have historically formed an economic underclass within Afghanistan. This has laid the basis for a strong identity, within which "hazaraness" and "shiism" have alternated as dominant forms of demarcation.

Religious identities also interact with sociocultural and political settings, which may contribute to emphasizing some identity levels while downplaying others. For instance, most Muslim members of Hamas view their primary identity as "Palestinian," which unites them with Christian Palestinians. Conversely, most Muslim Tamils in Sri Lanka maintain that "Muslim" is their primary identity, which in consequence separates them from other Tamils. Most people have multiple identities, each of which is more or less relevant in particular areas of life.

Ultimately, though, the claims and pretensions of group religiosity are always to some degree political; as Jeff Haynes (1998, p. 5) argues, "There is no such thing as religion without consequences for value systems. Group religiosity, like politics, is a matter of collective solidarities and, frequently, of inter-group tension and conflict, focusing either on shared or disagreed images of the sacred, or, on cultural and class, in short, political matter."

Religious identities establish an "Us," a group of people sharing normative standards that are instructive for the value of their cultures, their social order, and their very existence. This Us is separate and distinct from "Them." Yet, given the diversities among and within religions, it is important to emphasize that there is considerable variation in the degree of exclusivity or inclusivity of particular religious identities. Some religious worldviews encourage maintenance of distinct boundaries between believers and others, where others might include people of other faiths or might be limited to individuals with no religious beliefs at all. Some worldviews are more inclusive, even to the extent of allowing adherents to commit to several religions simultaneously. In any case, differences among religions tend to establish a gulf between a group of believers and outsiders.

Religion as Organization

Religious belief systems are generally upheld by some form of organization, which is crucial to the ability of a religious community to express and spread its worldview. Although neither adherence to a normative system nor identification with a particular religion presumes a formal organization, both normative commitment and identity are greatly strengthened by the existence of one. Building formal organizations serves external purposes, in that it facilitates interaction with others, whether they be religious organizations, states, or other entities. Interaction with states, for example, is difficult if a religion is not formally organized with clear hierarchies and appointed spokespersons. Here, the Roman Catholic Church, with its unique status within the system of states, is in a favorable position. In contrast, interaction with states (and other formal organizations) is far more difficult for loose religious networks with no clear authority, as is commonly found in Buddhism and Hinduism. Participation in national or international networks adds to the influence of religious organizations. In the context of the Guatemalan peace process, for example, the Roman Catholic Church in that nation actively used its cooperation with international church networks, using it also to engage the Norwegian Church in order to increase its influence.

Analytically, one may categorize the forms of religious organizations on the basis of two dimensions of particular importance. One is the structure of the organization, which ranges from exceedingly hierarchical to entirely flat. Hierarchical structures define clear leaderships and roles; flat structures have more diffuse definition of roles and a leadership with limited authority over its believers, and at the extreme no leadership at all. The second dimension is the degree of dependence of the individual believer on the religious organization, the extent to which the religion becomes all-encompassing for the members, or whether it is seen as separate from other aspects of life, thus moderating the role of religious commitment.

On the basis of these two dimensions of structure and degree of dependence, one may further differentiate among four organizational types (see also McGuire, 2002):

1. Sectarian organizations, characterized by normative virtuosity and diffusion of the religious role. Sectarian organizations are exclusive and based on voluntary association, and membership is restricted to those qualifying for membership. Members have a high degree of dependence, while the structure may vary from flat to subordination under one influential leader.

2. Cultic organizations, characterized by separation of religious roles. Seeking a high level of spirituality and high dependence similar to that of sects, cultic organizations are pluralist and do not imply exclusive participation. Cults do not assert unique legitimacy. Structure may vary from flat to subordination under one influential leader.

3. Denominational organizations, characterized by separation of the religious role and other aspects of life, combined with individual commitment and dependence. Denominational organizations are pluralist, inclusive, and well integrated within society. They normally entail a prominent hierarchical structure.

4. Churchly organizations, characterized by “mass” standard religiosity and a religious role diffused throughout everyday life, with a low degree of dependence. They normally have a prominent hierarchical structure. Religious commitment is general, sustained by the whole fabric of society. The three first types—sectarian, cultic, and denominational—may all occur within a churchly organization. Hence, even among the believers of one religion, there are a number of various interpretations and congregations with their own types of organizational structure and varying degrees of dependence.

Armed Conflict and Religion

Religion often figures as a major cause of conflict. At the same time, religion is itself transformed as a result of conflict. In short, religions are constantly changing, and their relationship with politics varies over time (Haynes, 1998). This variable relationship is a challenge to formulating generalized models for the role of religion in war, with decisive implications for analysis of its peacemaking potential. However, on the basis of the aspects of religion discussed above, it is possible to point to some overall characteristics concerning the relationship between religion and war.

Religion as a Cause of Armed Conflict

In the aftermath of September 11 and as an effect of the so-called War on Terror, religion has reentered the political vocabulary of many Western states. It is increasingly argued that religion is a major cause of armed conflict. Although few analysts will argue that religion is a more prominent factor in conflict now than before, the alteration of awareness is in itself a significant change. As Oliver McTernan (2003, pp. 87–88) points out, this reflects the “opinion of a number of academics that have recognized in the midst of social, historical, political, cultural and economic factors the salience of religion also.” Using the three analytical facets of religion discussed earlier, we can delineate the potential impact that religion has on the eruption and maintenance of conflict.

First, religion may feed into conflict when, depending on social and cultural circumstances, its normative system is thought to legitimize the use of violence. The scriptures, narratives, and rituals of a religion are often drawn upon to find legitimacy for warfare and use of violence within a system of meaning of a higher order. Application of these resources may, at times, be dogmatic; and although dogmatism can, in part, serve as a vaccine against manipulation and misuse, it may also feed uncompromising attitudes once religion is drawn into a conflict. To illustrate, major differences in the interpretation of Christian doctrine by Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland have had enormous social and political repercussions. Fronts are hardened by the fact that, within Protestant circles, there is a strong conviction that

Republican violence has at least the tacit blessing of the Roman Catholic Church (McTernan, 2003).

Second, religion may lead to conflict because it tends to define unambiguous identities, hence marking fault lines between various groups of people. In the post-Cold War era, a majority of conflicts seem to follow identity boundaries that are ethnic, religious, or a combination of both. Exclusive religious identity is expressed through a low level of intermarriage, such as between Muslim Serbs and Christian Croats, between Shiite and Sunni Iraqis, or between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. Reinforced by the logic of war, cessation of intermarriage reflects increased segregation, hostility, and skepticism between conflicting groups. It is when religiously defined boundaries of inclusion and exclusion coincide with other identity markers that the dividing line between Us and Them becomes most clear-cut. Relations between groups that are close to each other may often be more conflictual than those between groups without contiguity. This is also applicable in the case of religion: relations between interrelated religious groups on the local level have often proven to be more conflictual than those between world religions. Many religious identities are fundamentally inclusive and welcoming of the other, but it remains a fact that some of the world's most exclusionary identities are religiously founded.

Third, the organizational basis of religion can feed into conflict. In its own right, religions may contain organizational setups or networks of followers that are recruited en bloc for the war effort. In modern interstate war, this was largely unthinkable; in the intrastate wars of today, it is not uncommon. For the Taliban, for instance, Sunni Islamic networks rooted in the madrasas—religious training institutions, in this case in Afghanistan and Pakistan—served as its organizational backbone. Somewhat counterintuitively, the Taliban was successful in pulling together those networks, which are both loosely organized and fragmented, under a joint command (Harpviken, 1997). Religious organizations may also contribute to war through their cooperation with other organizations, most prominently the state. Further, such organizations hold great potential as focal points for recruitment and mobilization, as illustrated by Islamist terror attacks in the United States, Spain, and the UK over the past few years. Organized religion, with its scriptures and standardized procedures, limits and restricts individual freedom of action and, therefore, has a decisive potential for altering the behavioral patterns of its adherents.

Ultimately, however, the question of whether religion is a dominant cause of conflict or whether it only serves to reinforce (or potentially moderate) other causes remains a matter of context. Douglas M. Johnston and Jonathon Eastvold (2004) offer an example from the Bosnian conflict. Arguing that religion was anything, but a root cause of the Balkan wars, the Authors, nevertheless, show how religion served, in various ways and to varying degrees, to reinforce the nationalist fervor that divided the Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians, primarily by reinforcing national identities with religiously rooted fault lines and drawing religious organizations into the conflict as representatives of the opposing parties, which had the result of fragmenting the normative consensus within society. Though but a singular example, this nonetheless captures the key insight that, even if religion plays a limited role in

initiating a conflict, it can, nevertheless, play an important role in perpetuating such a conflict once the latter is under way.

Impact of Armed Conflict on Religion

Many of today's wars are protracted civil wars, causing dramatic societal change. The transformations brought about by war define opportunities and constraints on the potential for religion to play a constructive role in conflict resolution. These opportunities and constraints vary with the degree to which religion is itself a central dimension of the conflict. Regardless of whether or not religion was part of the complex of causes starting a war, the significance of religion will be altered as a result of conflict, and its potential for peacemaking will change accordingly. Again, our proposed analytical framework lays out central aspects of the peacemaking potential of religion.

First, it is a general tendency that the room for open and nuanced dialogue between groups adhering to different normative systems is seriously constrained by war. Even fairly open normative systems may be transformed into dogmatic ones when their fundamental values are challenged. Religion is ultimately about coping with our existence, responding to the human quest for meaning. Consequently, in a situation of prolonged conflict the meaning of war may ultimately be integrated into the religious framework. This also implies that the fundamental ambiguity of most religious traditions is easily skewed, as normative justifications for conducting war are in demand by the entrepreneurs of war. In Afghanistan, for example, key Islamic concepts such as jihad have lost much of their traditional significance, as people realize how this vocabulary has been misused by successive rulers. In contrast, if religious normative foundations are not used to legitimize violence, they may be tremendously important for formulating alternatives.

Second, war tends to reinforce—or even create—boundaries between various identities. For example, the radical Jewish settlers in the West Bank have gradually demonized the Palestinians throughout the course of the al-Aqsa intifada. In addition, their self-perception as pioneers for God is reinforced by the opposition they face from secular Jewish-Israelis. When religion is a prime identity marker for belligerent groups, extreme pressure may be put on people who do not identify with the groups concerned. This is why, for example, some parties considered Bosnians living in mixed marriage as legitimate targets during the war in the early 1990s. If religious identities, on the other hand, do not coincide with the identities defining the conflict, religion is in an ideal position to cultivate contact between people who otherwise are under pressure to see each other as enemies. Here, the role that South African church networks came to play in deconstructing apartheid is one example.

Third, war may threaten to weaken religious organizational structures, particularly if the latter are closely associated with parties to the conflict. Furthermore, like other types of organization, religious organizations risk becoming more hierarchical and authoritarian in war. The demands on members' loyalty may be aggravated, with the result that people have either to engage fully and become relatively dependent or

loosen or even cut their connection with the organization. If religious organizations and their leaders stand outside the conflict, however, they may come to have considerable room for maneuver, exactly because other sources of order are undermined and the demand for alternatives is on the rise.

The Peacemaking Potential of Religion

The intractability of armed conflicts may be exacerbated by religiously based historical perceptions, theological or quasi-theological judgments, or popular myths. Nonetheless, religion is part of the cultural matrix and must be taken into consideration by brokers of peace. Simply bringing in religious actors or addressing religious questions is rarely sufficient. Yet, engaging religion may have considerable potential as it opens up a new path to discussing fundamental assumptions held by conflicting groups.

Owing to the many sociocultural and identity-related aspects embraced by religion, the potential for religious actors may be larger in so-called Track Two diplomacy, which is characterized by a high degree of informality (Agha, Feldman, Khalidi, & Schiff, 2003; Chigas, 2005). In Track One, the participants are diplomats and state representatives, and the broker is formally appointed, normally with a similar background. In Track Two, however, participants are not appointed by the parties and thus negotiate in an unofficial capacity. Hence, those engaged in Track Two diplomacy may have less of a stake in the conflict and its outcome and may be better positioned to discuss innovative solutions. In the words of theologian Paul Lederach (2000, p. 147), Track Two offers “more room to maneuver in that the actors are not directly in the limelight.”

In his celebrated article on spoilers in peace processes, Stephen John Stedman (1997) argues convincingly that excluding parties that have normative systems initially favoring only themselves may have severe consequences. Rather, such situations are particularly demanding; they require well thought out and timely policy arrangements to keep potential spoilers on board. Many religions are relatively independent of the state. Lack of official status, however, is not the same as lack of relevance, and neglecting religiously based actors may prove detrimental. Here, Norway’s involvement as a peace broker between Israel and the Palestinians, which resulted in the Oslo Accords, serves as a useful example. Despite the role of radical and religiously based groups such as Hamas and radical Jewish settlers in the development of the conflict, negotiations were conducted among the secular parties only (see also Hadjipavlou, 2007). The religious parties were neither involved nor consulted, and they have since opposed and violated the Oslo Accords, referring to their exclusion from the process as justification.

The Normative System in Peacemaking

Despite numerous differences from one religious entity to another, any established religion entails an ethical—implicitly also political—discourse. As

rabbi-cum-academic Marc Gopin (2000, p. 10) puts it, “World religions have a reservoir of pro-social values of profound subtlety and effectiveness that, if utilized well, could form the basis of an alternative to violence in coping with conflict or coping with devastating injury” (emphasis added). Religions rely on their adherents’ experiencing a certain level of dependence on the religion’s normative systems. There is a direct relationship between the willingness of members to contribute to maintaining the religion and their sensed dependence upon it, illustrated by the simple fact that if religious adherents have no faith in the normative system then the religion eventually ceases to exist. Peacemaking efforts are in need of similar mechanisms; the parties to the conflict must be willing to resolve the conflict, and without a certain level of dependence and commitment from the parties to achieve peace, peacemaking will not succeed.

As with all aspects of religion, the religious normative system is also fundamentally ambiguous, with both a constructive and a destructive potential. The potential for engagement in a peacemaking process is subsequently related to the form of the normative system. Dogmatic normative systems, with their relative rigidity, may limit the space that can be devoted to communication, compromise, and dialogue. This is not to say that dogmatic normative systems are necessarily more prone to instigating conflict than open ones; strict adherence to the Hindu sect that considers the doctrine of ahimsa (nonviolence) as the highest virtue, for example, entails categorically opposing violent behavior. Analytically, however, one may distinguish between dogmatic and open normative systems by identifying the extent to which adherents claim to administer the ultimate truth or a rightful way of living. Identifying constructive dimensions of normative religious values, these can potentially furnish a common platform that may foster establishment of moral relationships between parties in a conflict resolution process (McMaster, 2002).

For the peace broker, religion represents a decisive source—as well as a resource—for restraining war or bringing armed conflict to an end through its normative rationales for restraint that exceed the bounds of traditional diplomacy. Representing a normative code embraced in a transcendent framework which implies long-term commitment, religious systems entail the possibility of buttressing and fostering a shared foundation for peacemaking.

Additionally, peace brokering founded on a sincere normative commitment may increase both the capacity and the credibility of the broker in relation to the conflicting parties. In Mozambique in the mid-1970s, for example, the Roman Catholic community of Sant’Egidio became a key mediator in the conflict. The successful involvement of Sant’Egidio is commonly seen as a consequence of the community’s neutrality in the conflict on the one hand, and a result of the shared normative frame that the community’s ethos offered to the parties on the other (Appleby, 1996).

Religious Identities: Identifying Common Ground?

Peaceful coexistence rests on a notion of mutual recognition by groups in conflict. Religious traditions explicitly or implicitly inform collective ways of life.

Intertwined with other elements, such as ethnic and economic dividing lines, religion is even, in many cases, the main identity foundation among conflicting parties. Consequently, the peace broker is compelled to relate negotiations to core aspects of the identities of the conflicting parties.

However, identities exist in relation to others, and in a negotiation setting, parts of a given identity can become highly politicized. Conflicting parties may exaggerate some elements of their own identity to strike a contrast with the identity of the conflicting party, enhancing exclusivity. Accordingly, identity may even appear to be beyond the scope of negotiation (see Starkey, Boyer, & Wilkenfeld, 2005). Just as dogmatic normative systems are less open to amendment, religious identities resting on a notion of exclusivity and particularity are less open to negotiation. As we have seen, in cases where religious identities overlap with other forms of identity, the exclusionary process of “othering” may find fertile soil.

Exclusive identity formation is particularly prominent in religious groups that deviate from mass religion or from society at large. In such settings, the identity of the members is—in its most radical form—based on the perception of exclusive selectiveness, which also implies an element of restrictedness. This form of identity stands in contrast to more inclusive, pluralistic identities.

The fault lines between the conflicting parties, as well as between the broker and the conflicting parties, are acute in any peacemaking setting. For the broker, full awareness of his or her own identity is necessary if pitfalls are to be avoided and the potential for peacemaking maximized. The divide between believers and nonbelievers is deep, relating as it does to the cognitive foundations for how life is understood. Religious representatives and actors that operate on a secular basis have their own ways of expressing themselves. A secular diplomatic jargon of communication may not resonate with religious actors; nor is it necessarily appropriate for characterizing core aspects of the conflict.

The diplomatic *modus operandi* of peacemaking has mainly been based on secular premises, relying, to a large extent, on distributive or positional bargaining strategies on the assumption that negotiating is a zero-sum game. The culture of diplomacy is largely cosmopolitan and secular, with little reflection on the extent to which this represents a worldview of its own. Accordingly, traditional diplomacy is always at risk of ignoring religious differences.

If religious groups in conflict all have faith-based identities, religion has the potential to highlight common values among conflicting parties. “Being religious” may itself foster a sense of shared values, altering the premises for cooperation and a relationship based on negotiation, while shifting the focus away from transcendent identity issues. This is the case in Albania, whose population embraces a range of religions. Despite a high level of political tension in the country, conflict rarely occurs between Albania’s religious communities, as both religious leaders and the secular leadership recognize and respect internal differences in religious beliefs. Consequently, acknowledgment of religiousness *per se* has been a unifying factor among the country’s various religious communities, while emphasizing the significance of a number of other shared aspects of the Albanian national identity has been an important instrument in uniting the entire population.

The Role of Religious Organization

The organizational structure of religion has a decisive impact on the lives of believers and, therefore, also on religion's potential to be a constructive force in peacemaking. The level of dependence—seen as the individual orientation of the members and the degree to which religion constitutes a foundation for all aspects of life—varies greatly. Nevertheless, knowledge of the form of organization and level of commitment is essential to including religious organizations in peacemaking processes. Conceptualizing the patterns of religious collectivities enables the peace broker to understand the larger role of the religious collective, whether in terms of members' dependence on the organization or in terms of the very structure of the organization itself.

Churchly and denominational organizations represent mass religiosity. With heterogeneous orientations and hierarchical structures, organizations of this type have clearly defined boundaries and leaderships that are relatively distant from the regular members. Both churchly and denominational entities are generally integrated and respected organizations within society. In contrast to denominational organizations, however, churchly organizations often seek a dominant role in society, and they have considerable potential as outlets for popular opinion. The societal integration of organized religion was decisive when the Roman Catholic Church in Colombia became the grassroots arena for expressing opposition both to the state and to continued warfare. Similarly, in the early 1980s, Poland's Roman Catholic Church became an important channel for the voice of the people against state oppression.

Cultic and sectarian organizations represent a more "virtuous" religiosity, as relatively loose associations of persons with a private, eclectic religiosity. Often striving for religious perfection, these forms of religious organization are largely maintained through their members' intensity and willingness to invest in the realization of the group's ultimate goals. Cults and sects also have rigidly defined boundaries. Consisting of individuals who joined on the basis of conscious choice, these organizations generally tend to be limited in number, more interdependent, and with a clergy that is in closer contact with regular members.

Religious organizations conventionally include a clergy, a leadership that is given the moral power to direct the membership and to act on the latter's behalf. Accordingly, there is considerable difference between, on the one hand, religions that consider their leadership and the holy source of truth as one and the same and, on the other, those that draw a clear line of separation between the two. Consequently, religious leaders may potentially have significant resources for influence: a pervasive influence in the community; a reputation as a force beyond regular political divisions; leverage for reconciling conflicting parties; and the capability to mobilize local, national, and international support for a peace process (Johnston & Cox, 2003).

Above all, religious organizations derive potential legitimacy from their larger ritual role within society. Hence, they are well-positioned to serve as agents of conflict transformation, with a potential for communication both with their own grass

roots and with the broader public. By virtue of the organization and normative system they represent, religious authorities may have a credibility that it is difficult for a nonreligious peace broker to acquire. Leaders of religious organizations are in a position to negotiate with reference to the normative system of the religious group, and they may, at the same time, be in a position to issue altered theological interpretations of that normative system.

Further, religious authorities may have considerable influence throughout the wide network constituted by their adherents. Here, churchly and denominational organizations, with their mass memberships, are in a special position to reach out and communicate to an extended audience. Most official religions are, to some extent, part of intraconfessional and interreligious networks of religious organizations. These networks are based on cooperation and dialogue between religions, as well as among groups within the same religion. Although interreligious networks may constitute a strong basis for dialogue in conflict contexts where the parties hold differing religious identities, intraconfessional networks are based on cooperation within groups of the same faith and commonly transcend state borders.

In practice, drawing on such intraconfessional or interreligious networks has proven to give more force to an initiative, combining influence across multiple levels. In Angola in 1998, the Roman Catholic Church used a combination of direct contact and public protest to put pressure on the parties not to resume violence. The Church engaged both its grassroots membership and its international networks, but it also had critical support—both locally, among the country's traditional local leadership (the *sobas*) and internationally, from nongovernmental organizations and donor governments (Cain, 2001; Harpviken & Kjellman, 2004).

Yet, as shown earlier, it is not necessarily the number of members that is decisive, but rather the degree of dependence that individual members express. Therefore, despite the vast number of members in churchly and denominational organizations, the devotedness and dependence of their members may be limited, restricted perhaps to particular periods of life. Conversely, although the members of cultic and sectarian organizations may be limited in number, their dependence is strong. This has the potential to make these forms of religious organization particularly robust.

Religion and the Peace Broker

Examining the role of religion in peacemaking is an elusive enterprise. Religion reaches far beyond theology and has differing social and political consequences according to the cultural settings. Thus, secular Western diplomats operating in deeply religious societies may be surprised to find that they are perceived primarily as Christians, rather than in terms of their occupation or nationality. It is hard to formulate all-embracing, applicable models for religious peace brokering (Duduet, 2006). By moving the focus to the role of the broker, one can start to delineate various scenarios for mediation in conflicts where religion is a factor or where the mediator is religious.

The identity of the broker and the way he or she interacts with the identities of the conflicting parties is essential in any analysis of the foundations for negotiation. Focusing on the identities of the broker and the parties to the conflict—and implicitly also on the relationship between the broker and the conflicting parties—we suggest a threefold typology (inspired by Gould & Fernandez, 1989). Although our emphasis in the following discussion is on the religious broker, in principle the identity of the broker (as well as of the conflicting parties) may or may not be religious. With reference to the threefold conceptualization described earlier, the three templates presented here—the liaison, the coordinator, and the representative—are a starting point for analyzing the respective strengths and weaknesses of a specific broker under differing conflict settings.

The Liaison

In this scenario, the conflicting parties are rooted in distinctly different worldviews. The broker is an outsider, acting as a go-between. Here, the two conflicting parties have divergent normative systems and identities, and the broker in turn approaches the conflict with a third normative system that deflects fundamentally from that of the conflicting parties. Moving beyond differences to engage in a joint process may meet serious obstacles: “When racial, ethnic, and religious differences are involved, contrasting appearances, roles, and rituals often block the abilities of negotiators and the broader societies they represent to find what they share—some common values in addition to their competing ones” (Starkey, Boyer, & Wilkenfeld, 2005, p. 75).

However, the differences in the identity and organizational basis of the broker potentially serve as a basis for neutrality. As an outsider, the broker may be able to offer new approaches for resolving the conflict.

In the liaison scenario, both the broker and the conflicting parties may be secular or religious. At one extreme, the broker is religious, acting in a conflict not charged by religion. Here, the broker’s distinctly different—hence alternative—normative foundations, identity, and organization may be useful for demarcating neutrality and commitment, in some cases even serving as a basis to help the conflicting parties establish a substitute common ground.

An interesting example is the mediation of the Roman Catholic Order of Sant’Egidio in Mozambique. In this setting, Sant’Egidio was an external organization, using its religious identity to demonstrate moral integrity, long-term commitment, and an open-ended attitude to the conflict, over time gaining the confidence of both parties (Appleby, 1996). The Sant’Egidio representatives saw their role as one of mediation and facilitation, and they became personally familiar with leaders of both warring parties and other external actors involved in trying to bridge conflict lines.

Consequently, by establishing common ground distinctly different from that held by each of the conflicting parties, Sant’Egidio played a vital role as a broker, bridging the divide between the parties in conflict at crucial stages of the peacemaking process.

At the other extreme, the broker is nonreligious in a conflict between groups defined by religions. This model describes the traditional *modus operandi* of secular diplomacy, where the identity of the broker is defined with reference to a mundane, political organization. On the one hand, this implies that the broker may represent a normative system that makes no reference to the transcendental and thus offers a neutral—and possibly common—ground on which the conflict parties may start to approach issues from new angles. On the other hand, however, a categorical nonreligious approach to peacemaking risks ignoring the fact that most cultures are influenced by religion. Bypassing this may lead to ignorance of decisive identity constituents. Norway's mediation between Israel and the Palestinians, discussed above, is a case in point. Also, following the invasion of 2003, the early involvement of the United States in Iraq was also of a secular, Western character and related primarily to nonreligious Iraqi actors, which, in consequence, contributed to strengthening the fault lines between the intervening party, seen as the secularized diplomatic West, and various religiously based groups in Iraq. This has given the conflict an extra dimension as a conflict that is also about the rightfulness of religious worldviews.

The Coordinator

Here, the three parties have shared identity, implying that the broker has a religious normative system similar to that of both conflicting parties, and that the three share a number of identity indicators. In other words, the broker is in a position to communicate with the conflicting parties within a shared framework of understanding; the broker and the conflict parties have a shared language that may facilitate dialogue and increase the potential for successful mediation.

When a religious organization stands in a similar relation with each side to a conflict, there is considerable potential for the committed coordinator to succeed. However, it might be demurred that in a conflict setting where all parties, including the broker, emerge from the same religious society, the form and structure of the religion as organization is decisive for the outcome of the peace brokering. Because all parties in this scenario share the same religion, one may find that there are no longer any overarching issues of religious affiliation at stake. Rather, the conflict may concern external issues that transcend the religious framework or issues that follow internal fault lines, such as colliding understandings of the normative system or organizational authority.

For example, if the religion is churchly organized with a hierarchical structure, it may be of relevance which level in the hierarchy the broker represents. Additionally, the position of the broker in intraconfessional debate concerning theological quandaries may have a direct impact on the potential of the broker to succeed as a mediator. In other words, fault lines may be just as deep between followers of the same religion as between different religions.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban and the so-called Northern Alliance tried to tap their joint reference to Sunni Islam when they set up a commission of religious

scholars (ulama) in 1998. The joint committee was to come up with a framework for negotiations, based on their knowledge of the sharia and Islamic norms of warfare (Appleby, 1996). The confidence of the parties in each other was built up gradually through successful facilitation of prisoner exchange. Whereas the two groups perceived themselves as distinctly different—in terms of political ideology and in relation to ethnicity—this was an attempt to play on their common religious tradition, Sunni Islam, as a basis for conflict resolution. The Taliban was rooted in the traditional religious networks, making it difficult to distinguish between religious leaders and Taliban policy, while the ulama did not hold similar power positions within the Northern Alliance (Harpviken, 1997). Eventually, the brokering potential of the commission was compromised by the differing degrees to which religious actors held political power within the two parties.

The Representative

Here, the conflicting parties have distinct identities, while the broker shares identity with one party. We focus here on a case where the broker and the party that he represents are religious. Being closely affiliated with one of the conflict parties, the identity of the broker entails a similar religious normative system to that of one conflicting party as opposed to that of the other.

An example of this scenario is the mediation of Abdul Ghaffar Khan between the British colonialists and the local population in the North- West Frontier Province (NWFP) of present-day Pakistan, then British India. Ghaffar Khan rooted his principled nonviolent stance against the British colonial power in Islamic (religious) and Pashtun (ethnic/tribal) traditions. Nicknamed the “Frontier Gandhi” after his inspiration and associate, Ghaffar Khan mobilized a massive nonviolent army within the Pashtun population, which is otherwise perceived to cling to a traditional normative system that upholds the use of violence in the form of blood revenge and tribal feuds (Johansen, 1997).

The Ghaffar Khan example may appear exceptional. How can a broker be effective when seemingly identifying with the interests of one of the conflicting parties? Such close affiliation with one party may have critical consequences for the freedom of action of the broker, constraining and limiting opportunities for mediation. The broker is thus caught in a dangerous situation: on the one hand, the broker faces the risk of being viewed as a traitor among his or her own group and, consequently, losing credibility; on the other hand, he or she may also have problems in gaining the necessary confidence of the opposing conflict party.

The broker’s credibility problem may be reduced, as in the Ghaffar Khan example, if he or she is identified with the weaker party in a highly asymmetrical conflict. If the broker is identified with the stronger party, it is likely to be difficult to build confidence within the weaker party. Hence, it is generally advisable to engage a broker who is either neutral or represents the weaker party. Relatedly, a representative will be at an advantage when the first contact comes from the opposing

group—as opposed to being called on by his or her own compatriots—because this would indicate both confidence in the broker and a commitment to the process.

Conclusions

The current call for integrating the religious dimension in attempts to resolve conflict is well-founded and needs to be followed up concretely by

(1) ensuring that diplomats develop the requisite religious sensitivity and (2) engaging religious leaders and organizations in new roles. However, it is clear that there are no blueprints for using religion as a tool in peacemaking. Religion is always part of a larger societal context, where it is shaped by, and has an effect on, political, cultural, and economic processes. Hence, religion alone is unlikely to create peace, just as it is unlikely to be the main cause of any armed conflict. By extension, it is misleading to assume that religious actors have an inherent peace-making capability. There is a need for more research on the religion–peacemaking interface. This should be rooted in analytical frameworks that allow comparison and should also include cases where success has not been forthcoming.

In conflicts heavily charged by religion, working conditions for the religious peacemaker are difficult. If the broker is identified with one of the parties, credibility is at risk. Further, parties in religiously charged conflict tend to emphasize the religious identity of the peace broker, even if the latter does not. This is a necessary corrective to the professional—implicitly secular—ethos of international diplomats. Relatedly, isolating religion, for example, through exclusion of religiously based groups, has often proven detrimental. Even when religiously based groups appear unreceptive to conciliation, it is important to find ways of consulting with them, rather than risking stimulating religiously motivated spoiler groups.

The potential of religious peacemakers stems from their ability to offer original perspectives on the roots of a conflict, furnish alternative meeting spaces, and bring moral credibility to the search for solutions. A central resource for religious peace brokers is their ability to play on organizations that span multiple levels, from the local to the international. For this reason, the religious broker may face a dual threat, from states and from opposition groups, confirming the potential of the role they might play. Even when unacknowledged, religion is an integral dimension of most attempts to foster peace. For the diplomat and the analyst, therefore, the main threat lies in neglecting the role of religious actors in peace processes.

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Religious and Human Rights Literacy as Prerequisite for Interreligious Education

Cornelia Roux

Introduction

Secularisation and social construct of societies today have a direct influence on the position of interreligious teaching and learning. In some countries people tend to become less religious and others more fundamentalistic in nature. People simultaneously are more aware of democratic and human rights in general and of their individual rights (based on their cultural, religious and belief systems) in particular (cf. Ter Haar, 2007). Religions and beliefs have become polarised in many regions in the world due to international political, economical and social circumstances. Xenophobic attacks on foreigners in many countries raise questions on individuals' behaviour towards one another, be it political and/or economic refugees. The main question to be asked is, Can education on human rights issues – be it intercultural and/or interreligious – contribute to a better understanding of oneself and of the world the learner is living in? Ter Haar argues in his chapter 'Rats, cockroaches and other people like us' that during the twentieth century human rights issues have been largely a 'matter of legislation' (Runzo et al., 2007, p. 80). He recognised that theologians and scholars of religion recently added their voices to these debates. However, one should question how scholars in education could add another dimension to the arguments on human rights, religions, cultures and interreligious education. I would like to argue that education, especially in religion education, should propose educational arguments for human rights literacy and use the means to a more balanced view of teaching and learning interreligious education.

I would like to focus on three aspects in this chapter:

- the interplay between human rights praxis and academic enquiry;
- the contextualisation of these issues for teaching and learning in 'Religious Literacy' and 'Human Rights Literacy';

C. Roux (✉)

Teaching and Learning Organisations, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa
e-mail: cornelia.roux@nwu.ac.za

- a short report on a research project (2004–2008) in South Africa with in-service teachers and student teachers on the process and development of facilitation dialogue strategies in school praxis on human rights in interreligious education.

The Interplay Between Human Rights Praxis and Academic Enquiry

World events change all the time, from the freedom of oppression in South Africa, Eastern Europe and other countries in the world to the events of 9/11 in the USA and the effects thereafter in North America, Europe and the Middle East. Violence towards and alienation of immigrants is an emerging issue which starts to engulf the societal make-up of the African continent, especially in economically deprived environments. The reason might be that the importance of ethnicity, religions and cultures was not understood by its conquerors during colonisation and in some instances also not by its ‘democratic leaders’ in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

News on Afghanistan, Iraqi, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other war-torn countries and regions brings inhumane practices, suffering and poverty, from Africa to Asia, from the East to the West, from Europe to the Americas, into our homes. The rise of fundamentalism (be it cultural, ethnic or religious) in different parts of the world urges us to re-evaluate and reflect on our educational stances for the benefit and sustainability of education as an *education of hope*, as Paolo Freire (1998) describes it in his book *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

The question I would like to put is whether interreligious education in schools can really contribute to an education of hope where the next generation of teachers and children will be able to learn from each other and from the mistakes of previous generations? One should take cognisance of developments of social orders and interpretations of the function of societies, for example cosmopolitanism, with the notion that all humanity belongs to the same moral community, sharing basic values and norms (Booth and Dunn, 1999, p. 61). In South Africa one should also critique replacements or new introductions in educational systems due to the fact that these systems are not necessarily better opportunities for the social construct of a particular society in general and for Religion Education in particular (Roux, 2007c). The transformative democracy, with an emphasis of unity in diversity, and the introduction and the persistent redefining of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) in South Africa are examples of a continuous transformation of the social construct.

My contribution to the debates on interreligious education and human rights will be the notion that hermeneutical and religious literacy are prerequisites for religious teaching and learning in social contexts (interreligious education) and the understanding of human rights education. Arguments regarding the relationship between self-understanding of religion and interreligious education today are important, especially in countries and societies where rapid political and social

transformations are continuously influencing the social construct. These notions also influence the understanding of a multireligious and multicultural society as well as schools' teaching and learning environments.

Understanding One's Own and the Other

In many publications on understanding *the other* scholars have given philosophical, theoretical arguments and empirical analyses of the need to understand individuals who differ from one's religious, cultural and ethnic background (Du Preez, 2008; Levinas, 2006; Roux, 2007c). This understanding of *the other* seems to be more important when teachers as agents need to facilitate interreligious education, world-views and values, and where there should be a deliberate openness and sincerity to diversity and the plural make-up of students in their classrooms.

According to Knitter (2002, p. 6) in his book *Theologies of Religions* it is practically human to learn about *the other* and, therefore, important that one has to implicate the *significant other* culturally, religiously and socially. However, I would like to argue that it is not a natural process to learn about *the other* in a rapidly changing society, where diversity in all different aspects of life and in society has been politicised in the past, and where perceptions prevail that it is continuing to do so in the present. The social context plays such an important role in understanding and knowing about *the other*. Knitter's argument (2002, p. 5), that the *many religions* are a newly experienced reality, through television programmes, new immigrants, new neighbours, visits to local bookstores and dialogue, does not reflect all multireligious and multicultural societies, and should be questioned.

One wants to acknowledge the argument of Knitter (2002, p. 5) that the 'religious life of mankind from now on, if it is to be lived at all, will be lived in a context of religious pluralism . . .' and thus should be understood as a universal phenomenon. A creative process should thus be initiated in order to understand and to be involved in *the other* as part of a diverse cultural and religious society. This process of understanding *the other* has also the potential for interpretations and perceptions to fluctuate continuously. This fluctuation of one's own and *the other* can also influence the self-identity of the teacher in interreligious teaching and learning. In studies (Jarvis, 2008; Roux, 2007c) the self-identity of the teacher seemed to be under pressure when entering a religion education environment at schools that differ from their own understanding of teaching and learning about religions. The notion of the basic human right of religious freedom (as protected in the SA Constitution 1997) is not constituted in the teachers' understanding of religion in education. According to Jarvis's study '... teachers' religious identity affected their whole outlook on their teaching context, influencing everything they thought, said or felt' (Jarvis, 2008, p. 177). Jarvis further explored the fact that the teachers, who did not adhere to the majority religion in the schools, were victims of discrimination regarding their so-called *lack of virtues*. This study emphasised that these teachers had no other choice, but to identify themselves in terms of religious identity

categories (*cf.* Hogg & Abrams, 1998; Jenkins, 1996) with emotional significance attached to their religious memberships.

Knitter (2002) further wrote that '(T)he world religions are confronting each other as never before, and they are experiencing a new sense of identity and purpose because they, like atoms and humans and cultures, are sensing the possibilities of a more pervasive unity through better relationships with each other' (p. 10). This argument might be applicable in environments where academics and scholars in Religious Studies and interreligious education are engaging with one another in order to enhance their students' understanding of religious diversity. However, can this notion also be applicable to every diverse education environment? Students in Religion Studies, according to Knitter (2002, p. 5), increasingly feel that they have to be intact and firm in their own religion and, therefore, they have to be acquainted with others. I argue that hermeneutical and religious literacy and the understanding of the ontological self, influences the way a person deals with the *alterity* embedded in *the other*. The focus is on the *ontological self* as determinant of the understanding of *the other*. According to Levinas (2006) 'Our relation with him (the other) certainly consists in wanting to understand him, but this relation exceeds the confines of understanding. . . . To understand a person is already to speak to him' (p. 5).

However, I would like to argue that this situation can only be valid if students in interreligious education understand their own theology, ontology and identity as part of their social construct. This notion is also compelling to teachers in interreligious education. The argument I want to pose is that first understanding *one's self* might contribute to understanding *the other*.

The Classroom as a Meeting Space?

Responsible classroom spaces are needed as starting points for constructing and understanding diversity, otherness and equality in religions regarding different world-views, belief systems and values. However, what will happen when the teacher is not within his/her own inner space and does not buy into a process of reconstructing his/her perceptions and world-view or religious understanding of *the other*. Teachers' biographical context and understanding of their social identity becomes more and more important as it influences and shapes their understanding of religion education (Jarvis, 2008; Roux, 2007c), as does the school context. Jarvis's study showed that school principals and teachers, whilst paying lip-service to the importance of the basic right of religious freedom in schools, were in fact unable, in praxis, to articulate a substantial understanding of religious freedom, as expected by the SA Constitution, and more specifically, as embedded in the *SA Policy on Religion and Education* (2003) and the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (2001). It is thus very difficult to provide a sustainable environment and a classroom space as a safeguard for teachers as agents, and learners as participants of interreligious teaching and learning.

Skeie (2006) states that the classroom should be the meeting place of two cultures as well as a place for negotiation and education regarding religious and non-religious life interpretations. He argues further that religious education is not only a place to learn about religious differences, but also to work with 'concepts used to capture what religions and religiosity is' (p. 97). A meeting place should be on equal grounds when mutual understanding and respect, either for *the other*, or for one's self, and understanding should be the outcome of this meeting. When a captured audience (like learners in a classroom) in the meeting space and teachers' social construct is not within the expected paradigm, can understanding of *the other* really occur? As researchers we can argue that modern and traditional approaches in teaching and learning interreligious education within the context of social constructivism should try to merge a *sense* of understanding in order to enhance the *processes* of understanding *the other*. Research has shown (Roux, 2007c; Jarvis, 2008) that the social identity of the teachers from so-called mono-cultural environments (religious or culturally) in multicultural societies, influences the *meeting space* in the classroom and determines the outcome of the religious and value construct. This means that every curriculum designed for diversity and inclusivity in religion or values education has to take cognisance of the social construct of the teacher as the interpreter of the curriculum, the particular content and the learners as participants in this construct.

Skeie (2006) also states that '(i)n religious education we need concepts about people's religious and non-religious life interpretations, the way they understand themselves and the way they want to present themselves with others' (p. 97). This stance should be the ideal, and many of us are striving through teaching and learning in pre-service teacher education to become agents of good teaching and to generate an awareness of the social construct in schools' classroom praxis. The question however is, can we as researchers in interreligious education assume that teachers in religion education understand themselves and that they are in a position 'to present themselves with others'?

There is a tension between teachers as agents of interreligious teaching and learning and as representatives of their own life stances in an educational and multireligious environment. This tension is also compelling with teachers' interpretations of interreligious content and human rights in diverse contexts (Roux, 2007c). I argue that to overcome this tension and become the *rational* agent with reflection on the classroom interaction in all the activities, including understanding *the other* (students and contexts) is a hermeneutical process. The teacher interprets the inter-religious content and the social context of *the other* in the context of his/her own understanding of the context.

According to Atkinson (2004) teachers' interpretations of the value of the 'meeting space' (classroom) are complex. Teachers' reflection on classroom practice involves 'reflection on the self in action in terms of interrogation of one's beliefs, attitudes, assumptions prejudices and suppositions that inform teaching' (p. 380). Teachers should be the guardians of their classrooms as meeting spaces where understanding of diversity and inclusivity as well as teaching and learning should take place. This can then also constitute the teacher as a reflexive practitioner and be

defined as ‘a double hermeneutic process’ (Atkinson, 2004, p. 380; Du Preez, 2008). The complexity of teachers’ self-understanding of their own theology, their identity as well as inner and peripheral influences on their social construct will shape their hermeneutical framework and their own progress of religious literacy. If teachers develop a hermeneutical literacy it might also have the propensity to contribute and enhance valuable notions for religious literacy. These literacy processes will influence their teaching and learning strategies and their learners could develop the same capability dealing with understanding ‘otherness’.

The Contextualisation of Religious Literacy and Human Rights Literacy

Hermeneutical Literacy and Social Construct Curriculum Development

Berling, in Pollefeyt (2008) states: ‘Human understanding is always shaped by the interpreters’ location and experience, which may be quite different from the location and the experience she(he) seeks to understand’ (p. 26). He further argues that those experiences and issues that constitute or shape our past play a vital role in understanding other religions. Berling (2007, p. 27) constitutes different principles to understand the ‘entering of other religious worlds’ and argues that a course or programme on other religions should stretch and challenge the ways in which learners think and only then will the ‘otherness’ or the ‘differences’ of the religions properly being introduced. I would like to argue that hermeneutical and religious literacy are key elements in social construct curriculum development as well as interreligious teaching and learning. It should also manifest in the development of human rights literacy¹.

Hermeneutics has become more and more essential to bridge the gap between religious traditions and the social constructs of contemporary societies and religion education. This is even more important in interreligious teaching and learning with a changing social construct that continuously influences perceptions (Roux, 2007c). Hermeneutics is not merely the method of interpretation and understanding, but also an attempt to describe and explain the circumstances within which understanding must be able to take place (Gadamer, 1975; Roux, 2007c). The object of the *otherness* of the text (in this case interreligious teaching and learning curricula) must appeal to the interpreter (teacher or learner) in order for understanding to be possible. Understanding of the other is, therefore, a dynamic process, and thus interpretations and individuals’ perceptions can and will fluctuate continuously. The interpretation of the *action*, in other words how text/content/links are interpreted and

¹*Human rights literacy* constitutes the understanding of the processes and implications of human rights in social contexts.

then applied by the authors and the readers (*cf.* Roux, 2007c), can also be translated to the interaction between the *I* and *the other*.

This argument has a direct influence on the handling of interreligious teaching and learning within a social construct such as in a diverse educational environment and/or classroom. Learners and teachers are constantly involved in dealing interactively with the content and text that they interpret from their own and others' perspectives. The action (*praxis*) that they apply in whatever way in the teaching and learning environment thus becomes a direct product of a hermeneutical exercise. Hermeneutics teaches us to begin with the *I* and the ontological understanding of the *I* before *I/we* engage with *the other*. The teacher must provide the learner with the opportunity to understand and interpret the *otherness* (alterity) and in so doing try to change his/her prejudices to a richer and more developed understanding of *the others'* issues and problems. An attempt must be made to change concepts from learners' own notions of religion into opportunities for understanding firstly one's *own* and then the so-called *unknown* religious contents. This constitutes *hermeneutic literacy*.

Hermeneutic literacy becomes an important denominator and significant tool for teachers' training in interreligious education. It has the propensity within a context of changing social constructs to support teachers in their interpretation of curricula and promote reflexivity on their *praxis*. Research in educational change in a multireligious and multicultural society in South Africa (Roux, 1999; Ferguson & Roux, 2003a; 2003b; 2004; Roux, 2005; Roux & Du Preez, 2006, Roux, 2007c; 2007d) underpins the argument that hermeneutics in religion teaching and learning, from the perspective of social constructivism, provides relevant discourses for hermeneutical debates in interreligious education.

Social construct curriculum development (Gergen & Gergen, 2003) provides a foundation for this hermeneutical approach that is in line with interreligious learning, exploring one's own religions/religiosity and discovering aspects of the religions of others. With this hermeneutical approach teachers and learners have a direct influence on religious environments beyond the formal educational context and in the broad society within which the educational community functions. The educational function of revealing the truth and taking a position in order that the audience (in this case the learner) can understand and learn about it can be defined as the development of hermeneutical literacy of teachers, and should also be explored by the learners. A social construct curriculum development for interreligious learning provides a space for a new approach towards religious literacy which is founded in human rights literacy.

Research by McKenna, Iprgrave, and Jackson (2008) on learners' capacity for dialogue and to voice their understandings through e-mails on their daily lives and religious backgrounds gives valuable insights in understanding *the other*. The question, however, is: Was understanding *the other* done with reference to the *I* (me)? This further constitutes my line of reasoning that the social construct will influence the learners' hermeneutical literacy. The difference between rural and metropolitan communities, especially in developing countries, and the availability for interaction with, for example, technology by these different communities, will further influence

their approaches (hermeneutically) in understanding *the other*, be it culturally and/or religiously.

Religious Literacy

In literature it seems that the concept *religious literacy* does not have a monomorphic meaning and is defined according to the purpose of the context. I argue that religious literacy can be described as *the ability to develop a self-identification (the self) and to communicate with understanding with/or about world opinions (the other)*. Therefore, the hermeneutical must attempt to make sense of the content and explain the interaction between the past and the present concept of *understanding*. Communication must eventually become dialogue (Du Preez, 2008) where I situated my critical approach within a specific context, for example how I express myself; how I analyse the events or context; and whether I am critical of the influence of diversity of religions, world opinions and globalisation on my direct religious, social and living environment.

In our debates on interreligious learning in contemporary times, we may renounce any idea of affecting young people for or against a particular religious commitment. Religious education seems to be safe with this notion of religious literacy as an apparently innocent aim. In education systems, for example the South African model, the underlying principles and outcomes are knowledge, skills and values, which are imbedded in understanding the *I* and *the other*. Religious literacy requires thus processes of religious conscience in order to participate with *understanding* in discourses of diverse religious and social environments. I would further like to argue that understanding is always an interpretative process and one's own preconceptions and prejudices influence these interpretations (Gadamer, 1975; Roux, 2007c). Therefore, the art of understanding lies in the object of the *otherness* (alterity) that must appeal to us in order for understanding to be possible.

Roebben (2004, p. 204) stated that religious literacy is based on two components, namely the hermeneutical and the communicative. However, I want to challenge the idea that only these two notions should be taken into consideration. The importance and influences of social contexts and environments constitute a social construct curriculum development process as well as praxis in interreligious learning. These influences and demarcations are not necessarily taken into consideration in interreligious teaching and learning when approached only as hermeneutical and communicative.

I have evaluated a few Hollywood films on their stories and interpretations on religious diversity, interactions and humaneness. The Hollywood film *Not Without My Daughter* is a good example of the struggle between recouping one's religious identity and literacy, but negates the understanding of *the other*. In most of these stories on religious diversity examples are given on the influences of social construct and religious experiences and deconstructing *me and the other*. These images from films, for most regular movie-goers, can become integral parts of their (learners') experiences of the social construct, broad social environments and education

(*schooling*) for life and will influence their perceptions on dealing with religious issues within social contexts. The impact and influence of the social construct and environment on the development of interreligious teaching and learning compel teachers to *deconstruct* constructed, intrinsic, religious knowledge. This enables a *reconstruction* (within the social construct) of the relationship between the interpretation and meaning of the knowledge or content (hermeneutics) in order to attempt to understand diversity and inclusivity within the complexity of the social educational environment. The notion of how praxis entails the critical actions and decisions by responsible individuals (teachers) and the responsibility of the whole community to reach a common outcome is fully described in Roux (2007c). Learners should opt for the opportunity to integrate their religious praxis and opinions, and surround their own life philosophy with the social context of *the other*.

Human Rights Literacy and Interreligious Teaching and Learning

Most democratic states function from within a humanist frame of reference (collective or particularist) and determine the social construct of the society and the handling of ethnic, culturally and religious diversity. I would like to argue that different interpretations of secularisation, which also has a social impact on understanding religions, can bridge the gap between persons, groupings, social and educational environments. To redefine the role of interreligious education and human rights with a *pedagogy of hope* as Paolo Freire (1998) explained, one could argue that interreligious education should be conceptualised and reflect on its contribution to human rights education and literacy.

The question, however, is through which medium interreligious teaching and learning will be able to function more positively in an ever-growing and in a less politicised manner, but yet within the social construct. Many authors (*cf.* Runzo et al., 2007; Osler & Starkey, 1996; Gearon, 2004; Davies, 2000; De Tavnier & Pollefyet, 1998) debated human rights education and the interrelationship with religion and/or citizenship. My argument regarding introducing interreligious teaching and learning through the means of human rights education stems from the notion that in a diverse environment a common denominator (a human right) might overcome differences skewed by previous political dispensations with a history of violating human rights.

Gearon (2004, p. viii) argues that human rights are universal constructs and emphasises the international significance of human rights in education. Citizenship education seems to be the logical vehicle for introducing human rights with social responsibilities into education (i.e. schools). Arguments for or against the two notions on human rights being universal and/or particular are frequently being placed as opposites of one another (Gearon, 2002; Coates, 2002; Du Preez, 2008). The argument for or against universalisms or particularism will not be discussed (*cf.* Gearon, 2002; Du Preez, 2008). However, I will argue that I am not in favour of the bifurcation of the universalist and the particularist paradigm. My reason is that the ontology of *human rights literacy* and developing an understanding of the *I* and *the*

other merge these two notions as processes in human rights education. There are human rights issues which are universal and can be, as such, morally bound to international declarations and constitutions and applicable to all humans. On the other hand, there are also particularistic understandings to human rights issues and people respond differently in their cultural and/or religious communities and environments to these issues. By saying this one can argue that knowledge about human rights can be relative and seems to be particularist. However, it is not an excuse to abuse any universal human rights in the name of a specific cultural or religious praxis. The moral underpinning in understanding human rights and human rights values (Du Preez, 2005; 2007; 2008; Roux, et al., 2006) is a crucial element of human rights literacy. This should be upheld in any teaching and learning environment on human rights and religious and cultural diversity and inclusivity.

According to Ter Haar (2007, p. 82) there is no common moral language for all humanity. He further states that '(T)he central paradox here is that achieving such a goal requires the prior development of an indigenous human rights language within the various moral traditions'. It is in this regard that Du Preez (2008, p. 85) also argues for a moral underpinning in understanding human rights education. She further argues that in separating human rights from its 'moral significance' in human rights education will also be detrimental for dialoguing and infusing a culture of human rights in classroom settings in particular. Du Preez (2008, p. 105) recognised the importance and role of 'ethical communities' in classrooms. However, the fixed knowledge of a contextualised community on moral issues in human rights might 'undermine the vibrancy and intellectual sobriety needed to sustain a vigorous ethical community', thus arguing that knowledge is relative (Du Preez, 2008, p. 105).

The *South African Constitution and Bill of Rights* (1996) and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), together with the latter's support by many countries, provide a medium to approach religious diversity from a human rights perspective and principles. It also facilitates religious diversity in educational environments from that perspective. Individual rights and the rights of cultural minorities are imbedded in the SA Constitution. On the other hand, the liberal discourses in education failed to generate the development of individuals teachers' voices and/or ethical communities in classroom praxis (Du Preez, 2008; Jarvis, 2008). The exploration of human rights literacy as an important underpinning of interreligious teaching and learning (Roux, Du Preez, & Ferguson, 2009) reflects also the arguments constituting hermeneutic and religious literacy as underlying principles for human rights literacy. See graphical representation of arguments.

A further aspect in education as a whole is the growing number of non-religious learners and learners in educational environments, which compels a renewed critical reflection and secular understanding of their belief systems and values within the diverse social and economic environments. The growing number of non-religious learners cannot be alienated for the sake of the concept of religious diversity and inclusivity, and it can be argued that basic rights of association and cultural and religious freedom of individuals and groups must be protected and supported. This ambivalence is a challenge and a sensitisation to protect individual and

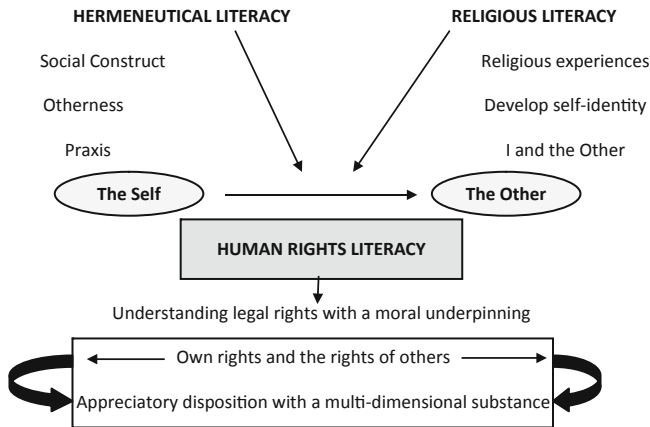


Fig. 1 Graphic representation to illustrate arguments on human rights literacy and religious literacy

communal rights at all costs. Educational environments are forced to enter into these debates of human and religious rights, underscored with a moral obligation, in interreligious teaching and learning, and to research this terrain so that dialogue and discourse between world opinions, religions and cultures can be promoted.

The Research Project: 2005–2008

Understanding Human Rights Through Different Belief Systems: Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

The impact of teachers’ teaching a culture of human rights through intercultural and interreligious dialogue across different social and cultural settings in South African schools should be placed against the backdrop of the understanding of human rights and the development thereof in the South African context. My contribution will not concentrate on the legality of children’s rights or human rights in society or schools. I have already discussed and emphasised the contribution of human rights literacy as prerequisite with a discourse of a moral code attached to human rights. South Africa’s human rights were articulated in the education realm through the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (2001), a support document to the National Curriculum in schools. The understanding of the shared and collective human rights is derived from the South African Constitution (1996) and should be infused into teaching and learning from primary to tertiary level. It is envisaged that all teaching and learning activities should be rooted in the *Manifesto’s* democratic values. These values are democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, human dignity, an open society, accountability/responsibility, rule of law, respect and reconciliation (Manifesto, 2001). The document also strongly refers to the interpretation of interreligious education and promotes dialogue in classroom

praxis. The theoretical and philosophical underpinning of dialogue as facilitation strategy in human rights education will not be outlined in this chapter (*cf.* du Preez, 2007; 2008).²

The identification of the research project has been underscored by different research studies since 2004 (Roux et al., 2005; 2006; 2009), as well as the lack of sustainable human rights education in whole school environments. It supports the need for research on the comprehension of transformative curriculum development aimed at learners, as the principal recipients of human rights education. Further the collaboration between human rights praxis and academic enquiry and the contextualisation of these issues for teaching and learning in ‘religious literacy’ and ‘human rights literacy’ were important theoretical underpinnings for interreligious teaching and learning. Colleagues and students of various South African Universities participated in an international research project and forum where religious, cultural and human rights literacy represented a new dimension within the educational context.

This section will present a short report on the description and evaluation of the process and development of facilitating dialogue strategies in school praxis on human rights and interreligious education (South African Netherlands Project on Alternative Development [SANPAD]). The research project 2005–2008 involved one University of the Netherlands; four South African Universities; 357 student teachers and 50 in-service teachers.

The Aim of the Project

The main aim of the 4-year-project was *to explore the impact on teachers’ teaching of a culture of human rights through intercultural and interreligious dialogue*. The research focus is ethnographic and qualitative in nature (*cf.* Hammersley, 1990, pp. 1–3, 25; McCutcheon, 1999), and theoretical notions with evaluative elements for programme evaluation and participatory action research guide it. The project had two subprojects (in-service teachers and pre-service teachers [students]). Three universities took part in the pre-service research and the fourth university commenced with the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) for in-service teachers³. The scope of the research included educators in two sectors: pre-service student teachers and in-service teachers (ACE students) (2005, 2006), and a phase of dissemination of results amongst educators as *communities of practice* and the development

²*Understanding religious education through human rights values in a world of difference* (C. Roux, P. du Preez, & R. Ferguson), in *Religious Education in a World of Difference* (Eds. Prof. Siebren Miedema & Wilma Meijer, 2009), reports substantially on the participating action research initiative in the pre-service training programmes, during the first phase of the project (2005).

³In the questionnaires the ACE students (in-service teachers) reflected on their experiences in their teaching classes separately. The feedback on this part of the project took a different stance as it was impossible to draw a comparison between in-service teachers and student teachers.

of a professional programme in human rights education. The reason for including educators in these particular sectors of education in South Africa was to engage all who are involved in teaching and learning about human rights and interreligious education and for them to become informed by way of the research process. At the end of every year a workshop was held to reflect on the previous year's results and to plan the next year's approach. These workshops were attended by all the researchers and students. The international collaborator and two critical independent referees (a researcher in Interreligious Education and a professor in Law specialising in Children's Rights), gave valuable inputs and influenced the dissemination process for the last phase in 2008. These results of the project thus far, and the feedback on the importance of the dissemination processes, ended in extra funding from the sponsor for dissemination processes in 2008.

The following research questions were put: (i) Are teachers in the South African school community capable of facilitating human rights issues across the school curriculum in multicultural and multireligious school settings and (ii) What type of dialogical strategies should be implemented in order to be successful?

Research objectives were identified as

- a critical and comparative review of existing literature in this field of study, focussing on ambiguities in terminology
- a critical review on literature regarding dialogical theories and strategies in ethnographic environments and research terrains
- to identify and analyse the curricula of identified service providers on human rights issues and different belief systems
- to explore the perceptions of the selected groups of teachers (pre-service and in-service) involved in facilitation strategies
- to describe and evaluate the process and development of dialogue as facilitation strategy by the service providers
- to describe and evaluate the process and development of dialogue as facilitation strategy across the curriculum and, in some instances, in Life Orientation programmes (where interreligious education is taught)
- to define a framework and guidelines for dialogue strategies for service providers and teachers through the process of participatory action.

The Process of Project Development

In October 2004 a start-up workshop was held at which the project was discussed in detail and the researchers' and students' different participation and research domains were defined. This process was very important as the working schedule and timetables as well as the theoretical underpinning of the management processes had been discussed. One of the most important aspects was the defining of the constituencies of the team members regarding the understanding of multiculturalism

and their personal position in the research team (Roux, 2007d). An issue being identified at the start-up workshop was the understanding of different cultural environments at tertiary institutions that may cause imbalances in teacher training. The problem being identified is that these imbalances cannot enhance or develop all the different aspects of diversity and inclusivity in education. Another reason for the collaboration of the five tertiary institutions was to conceptualise theories and to identify practical implications applicable to teacher training in a multicultural society and to enhance human rights across the curriculum in school environments. The short report and feedback in this chapter will highlight the role which human rights in interreligious education played and will not argue for the notion of human rights across the curriculum as outlined in the first research question of the project.

The First Phase (2005)

In the first phase of the project, the three universities responsible for pre-service teachers (third and fourth year students) took the lead. Data was collected using two empirical methods, namely, a qualitative questionnaire implemented to determine student teachers' understanding of human rights in relation to religious and cultural diversity, and reflective journals which students used and in which they reflected on their teaching practices in schools.

It was necessary to determine in the questionnaires whether the students had any understanding of the concepts 'human rights', 'interreligious' and 'intercultural', given the significant role that interreligious and intercultural dialogue would play in designing appropriate teaching and learning strategies to facilitate the infusion of human rights in classroom practice. The questionnaire was designed to determine the students' initial level of understanding of human rights and the extent to which they could establish a relationship between knowing about and understanding religious diversity and human rights and values. It was important to establish what the students understood about the various concepts before they could be guided towards the idea that interreligious education could serve as a vehicle for teaching and learning about human rights values.

The reflective journals (Morrison, 2000) were used to detect, first, whether human rights are infused integrated into the classroom by teachers in general; second, if human rights are infused across the curriculum; and third as a means of reflection by pre-service teachers on their lessons presented on human rights in interreligious education. During the first phase the students involved in the project were all enrolled in a module at the three universities on Religion Studies (multireligion and interreligious education). The connection between human rights, human rights values and different religions and belief systems was an integral part of the module. Students participated in designing and commenting on content knowledge and their hermeneutical understanding of content, context and interpretations thereof.

Short Analyses of the Questionnaires and Reflective Journals

Student responses to the questionnaire indicated that they were well-informed regarding human rights in general and human rights violations in particular, especially in cases where students' own rights had been directly infringed upon. The students were also positive regarding the facilitation of human rights in interreligious education, provided they were assisted in gaining the knowledge and skills to do so. Almost all of the respondents were able to provide good examples of facilitative strategies for investigating human rights and values in the classroom despite suggestions of being inadequately prepared to do so. Although the respondents were not always able to articulate human rights and values in relation to religious diversity, the theoretical clarification informed the development of strategies for coping with interreligious education in practice.

The analyses of the reflective journals indicated an alarming matter that most of the teachers in classes had ignored – human rights as an important aspect in teaching and learning. Students detected that special moments prevailed in the classes and gave teachers the opportunity to react and/or to introduce dialogue on human rights. It became clear that students' own strategies used to facilitate human rights should further be broadened in order to understand religious and cultural differences.

The Second Phase (2006)

In the second phase, the researchers did a follow-up of the pre-service students in their fourth academic year, during their school practices as well as with beginner in-service teachers. The main aim during the second phase was to observe students in their school practice, to give them the chance reflect critically on their teaching and learning, interpret interreligious content and critique their acquired knowledge (*cf.* Hornberg, 2002).

Students completed questionnaires on *explaining academic content and concepts acquired during their third year*. They received refresher courses where they were exposed to the key aspects of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, human rights and values in the context of various belief systems. Students were also required to write reflective notes on their experiences in school practices in relation to the new content they received. Various schools (interreligious, intercultural, rural and metropolitan as well as different economic environments) were visited and lessons observed. The reason for the follow-up exercise was mainly to determine whether students, after a year of initially being exposed to the relevant content, were adequately prepared to deal with human rights values where the diversity of religions and cultures are being taught. Each student was given a schedule. All students received a copy of the observation form, a form of consent regarding ethical issues concerning the taking of photographs during their lessons and recording individual interviews after the lessons.

An Example of the Integration of Human Rights and Interreligious Learning

A short feedback on the observations and interviews will be given to illustrate the process of exploring whether students could integrate human rights issues into interreligious learning (2007). The originality of interview was upheld.

Context

The context was an English-medium, co-educational, suburban, independent, working class, under-resourced secondary school. The school was relatively new and situated in two prefabricated buildings. The school had a small number of learners, with potential for growth. Learners with learning problems were readily accepted and because of the small class sizes, the success rate with these learners had been very high. The school had a Christian ethos,⁴ but both the staff and learner component were multireligious with Christianity, Traditional African Religion, Buddhism and atheism, amongst others, represented. The school had children from different ethnic communities.

Teaching and Learning – Content

The student started in a controversial manner by asking the learners if they had heard about South Africa's new *one child policy*. Learners had to pretend that they were at a dinner party and each given a role and had to respond to this new *one child policy*. Their perspective should be whether they were for or against the policy. The following scenarios were given and the roles introduced different perspectives from different cultures and religions.

Scenarios

- (a) You are an orthodox Catholic who is a devout follower of Pope Benedict XVI who does not condone the use of condoms. You believe that making use of contraceptives is against the will of God.
- (b) You are a traditional Zulu in whose culture children represent wealth. Whilst you need a boy to carry on the family name, daughters bring in 'lobola'.⁵

⁴Many public schools in South Africa have so-called Christian Ethos. This means that the governing body of the school has the power to determine the value system of the school.

⁵*Lobola* is a traditional custom in some ethnic South African communities where the son-in-law and his family pay a dowry to the father of the bride.

- (c) You and your partner are a childless couple who wish to adopt children, as you believe that there are already too many unwanted children in the world.
- (d) You are a Hindu and in your culture family is very important. The relationship between siblings is very important. Also, children are expected to look after their parents in later life.
- (e) You are a modern career woman who has no desire to have children. You know from your advanced education that the world is already too overpopulated.
- (f) You are a doctor who frequently has to treat abused children, who are unwanted by their parents.
- (g) You are a Muslim patriarch who needs sons to look after the family businesses when you are too old. In your eyes, women cannot suitably fill this role.

The following human rights were addressed directly and indirectly in the way in which the lesson was presented

Democracy: the class decided democratically on boundaries so that respect would be shown and the consequences be upheld if it was not adhered to rule of law. The student used a system of yellow and red cards to enforce the democratically established boundaries. She created an 'Open society', an environment in which there was free discussion without fear, nipping any disrespect by means of stereotyping.

Interview with Student

The student said that although the class were responsive they usually participated even more. She felt at ease with the class and felt that the lesson outcomes had been achieved. The composition of the class was multireligious and consisted of Christians (i.e. two denominations – Catholic and Latter Day Saints), Buddhists, African Religion and atheists. The student indicated that although different world-views or belief systems were represented in the class the learners respected one another and during her practice no occurrences of conflict happened during class discussions.

Analysis of the Researcher

The lesson helped learners to understand the complexity of overpopulation and measures taken to deal with the issue. Learners looked at the death rate caused by euthanasia, war and HIV Aids. An increase in population numbers, because of immigration and refugees, was also discussed, as well as the moral implications associated with some of the above issues.

The student coped very well with handling issues related to human rights in the classroom. She used class discussion and interreligious dialogue with a connection between human rights and religion. Issues related to human rights were consciously prepared for and well-executed. The student could have also mentioned abortion, as

this was a very important human rights issue as well as being in some instances a fundamental religious value.

Comments of Project Leader

The remarks of the researcher brought the possibility to take the teaching and learning experience to a higher level. The student should be able to understand the religious and cultural contexts, convey her/his own religious literacy and verbalise human rights literacy to the effect of different religions' values and fundamentals. This next level of teaching and learning could help the student to instigate inter-religious dialogue on human rights issues as outlined in the Bill of Rights (1997) and Manifesto (2001). The question I put was: Did the student suppress dialogue so that there was no conflict, or could she bring a new dimension to the chosen human rights issues? Dialogue on identified issues in the Manifesto (2001), for example, on over population, abortion, euthanasia, HIV and Aids and other fundamental issues on human life could be taken from the points of view of different religions.

Interviews with Beginner In-Service Teachers

Beginner in-service teachers (first year as professionals) who were students in 2005 were also visited and interviewed. The reason was mainly to explore the beginner-teachers' ability to cope in real professional circumstances and their approach after their professional training of 4 years. School visits were conducted during the first and second semester of the year. The follow up was conducted in schools in only one region and in metropolitan schools. The beginner teachers' teaching and learning were observed, written up and discussed by a senior researcher. Interviews were also conducted by an independent researcher of the project during a round trip to all the universities involved. The interviews were conducted after 8 months as 'professional' teachers in schools. The analysis of the interview (1) as presented below indicated that this young professional teacher could respond to the challenges put in his teaching and learning. In interview (2) it seemed that responses to interreligious learning and human rights were more specific.

Summary of Interview (1)

The teacher responded positively regarding human rights education. Human rights education seemed to be done in the school as a whole. He affirmed the importance of human rights, but mentioned the difficulties associated with teaching human rights in the school, which was very diverse. The teacher was not certain if the learners internalised the human rights issues although he addressed human rights in the classroom on a regular basis. He was uncertain as to how to integrate human rights

across the curriculum or whether or not his colleagues were including human rights ('I think they do, I hope they do . . .'). He was quite confident that he included human rights always in his own teaching. He gave some examples when he taught about different religions ('I have a broad . . . a very diverse class . . . it is quite nice to teach about all different religions'), included human rights specifically (refers to parent's smacking their children), learners being aware of their rights and already knowing how to exploit them ('take it over the top'). It was very clear that the teacher referred to human rights education in relation to disciplinary issues ('boy's fighting', 'ill-discipline in your class') and acted as facilitator between boys in fights about ethnicity.

The teacher further explored discussions in classes by encouraging group work and setting up debates where learners argued whether human rights are necessary or not. He mentioned specific incidents regarding human rights education and spoke about interreligious education and religions in a positive way. In an assignment learners had to draw up a 'Freedom Charter' and placed it in different classrooms for everyone to see and to work with. In the explanation of these assignments he indicated that the inclusion of religions was to affirm the learners' identity. This remark links what he had been exposed to in Religious Studies and interreligious education in the modules taken during the teachers' training programme at the specific tertiary institution and as part of the project. The teacher was confident that his dealing with facts about different religions and strategies was interactive, but did not recognise the implicit way in which he had included human rights.

Summary of Interview (2)

The teacher initially indicated that human rights education was not included overtly or addressed adequately in the school. She expressed the importance and the need to address human rights because of the behaviour of the learners in the school. The teacher stressed the need to address human rights explicitly or formally because she felt that parents were failing in their duties at home.

It was interesting to note that in the rest of the interview the teacher gave interesting examples of how she and her colleagues had included material with potential for reference to human rights education by including religion in a theme and that they were in fact affirming the religious diversity of the learners.

The following examples were given

- In the Social Sciences – ancient civilisations, including their religions, medicine and religion, or apartheid and democracy.
- English – speeches on learner's own religion and rites of passage.
- Natural Sciences – evolution and beliefs in religions.

The teacher seemed to integrate human rights unknowingly simply in the nature of the contents of her lessons. She was very conscious of the need to remain 'human

rights aware' and the way in which she dealt with unfair accusations or labelling of children (the Madrasah children who left her classroom untidy). She was confident and prepared to address human rights matters in the classroom. Other than in relation to discipline, she mentioned how the use of 'current affairs to introduce human rights issues like the war in Iraq, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, war between Lebanon and Israel, etc.', explore new issues in dialogue. The language choices of words the teacher used during the interview seemed to indicate serious problems with behaviour in the specific school ('we are not animals, we don't behave like that').

Comments of the Project Leader

The two young professionals seemed to cope in diverse and difficult situations with human rights issues in their classes. However, the infusion of human rights and interreligious content (teaching and learning) did not guarantee that learners will internalise the values underpinning the content (selected by the teachers) or show respect for one another. One could also argue that it might not be the teachers' intention to do so. From the interviews one could also detect that the modules in Religious Studies on interreligious education and human rights education gave them some tools to cope with. However, the question should be asked: Did these two teachers construct knowledge and give meaning to the actions they observed or applied to develop their own theory on their praxis?

I would like to argue that thus was not the case. Their comments indicated that one should further explore their own understanding of religious and human rights literacy in relation to their personal and professional context. Such an understanding might contribute to a broader perspective of understanding *the other* within the reference of the *I* (me) as explored in the first half of this chapter.

The Third Phase (2007)

The third phase was the first stage of the project's dissemination process with the community of practice (in-service teachers) (Wengler, 1998). The group of in-service teachers was selected in the North West Province of South Africa. The region was chosen because it was not covered by the previous empirical processes and investigations of the project. The research team wanted to explore the possibility of an *innovative curriculum and approach* in human rights with in-service teachers who never had the opportunity to be introduced to the content and teaching and learning approaches offered at that time at the universities involved in the project. The main aim was to perceive what the impact of interreligious and intercultural dialogue constituted to the infusion of a culture of human rights education. It was also important to detect if this initiative (*curriculum and approach*) could further be developed as a professional development programme for in-service teachers.

A qualitative intervention research study was undertaken from January till March 2007 in three diverse cases of in-service educators in the Mafikeng/Mmabatho area in South Africa (Du Preez, 2008). The intervention research design was chosen because it could serve as foundation for professional development programmes of in-service educators (dissemination 2008). The outcome of this process was the development of a pilot in-service professional development programme which culminated in a second funded dissemination strategy with selected schools and independent workshops in one of the provinces.

The Final Dissemination Processes (2008)

The focus in 2008 was on workshops with in-service teachers, disseminating and providing the participants with tools and materials to empower them in teaching and learning human rights in a sustainable manner. In the extended part of the research, participative intervention research, as framework for the refinement and further dissemination of the pilot professional development programme was developed (Du Preez, 2008). This research process consisted of pre-group interviews, introducing the professional development programme to selected in-service teachers, conducting post-questionnaires, unstructured group interviews and classroom observations.

The research objectives were

- to determine in-service teachers perceptions about human rights, dialogue as facilitation strategy, and working in interreligious and intercultural education settings,
- to determine how these in-service teachers assimilate the professional development programme into their practice through researching its impact by using a process-orientated participative intervention research methodology,
- to identify communities of practice, consisting of in-service teachers which could assist in identifying new challenges and processes for further research,
- to further develop and enable capacity building initiatives for post-graduate students and
- to provide more academic outputs and simultaneously to augment community interaction which is much needed to round off this research project and to set the scene for further research.

It was easy identifying schools that want to take part in the final dissemination process. However, it was also important to select schools that fit the profile of diverse cultural and religious school settings. The workshop was held in a common area at one of the tertiary institutions and six in-service teachers attended. They were from a predominately Xhosa speaking school in the Stellenbosch vicinity. The aim of the workshop was to determine the teachers' basic perceptions and experiences regarding the infusion of a human rights culture. Teachers were also exposed to a

programme (previously developed and used) about human rights and dialogue in religiously and culturally diverse settings. The entire research workshop and subsequent unstructured focus group interviews were video recorded for further analysis. Next, the programme presenter's overall feelings regarding this workshop will be provided.

Analyses of the Dissemination

The participants' basic discourse regarding human rights was very sophisticated. They had very specific ideas about the topic under discussion and demonstrated a good understanding thereof. Second, the most prominent feature of the interviews and general discussion concentrated on how teachers spontaneously started to engage in the debate of human rights being universal or particular (without using the terms as such). The following question was raised by one of the teachers: 'We should ask ourselves: what were first, human rights or culture?' The participants agreed that culture was more important and that they were the generation in which culture lost its significance in their community. They mentioned that it is their role to maintain their cultural values, but that many of these cultural values and ideas were in contradiction to human rights values and ideas. However, the teachers' discourse was characterised by inner-contradiction because they did not want to repudiate the significant role that human rights has to play in society. They indicated that human rights were more important for their learners (and children in general), whilst culture and religion were more important to them as teachers. It was argued that this notion lead to clashes between teachers and learners, and also amongst learners who grew up in the cities (townships) and those that come from the rural areas. (The former being more cosmopolitan and territorial, whilst the latter are more culturally orientated, but has to constantly attempt to fit into such cosmopolitan environment.)

Many more peripheral and important aspects derived from this research workshop, but the above notion (as described in the second point) was indicated by the research team at the most significant aspect to take to further research. A further investigation into learners' perceptions and experiences about their intercultural and interreligious relations (e.g. Xhosa-speaker learners from township and those from rural areas) seemed to be the next step in the project. There appeared to be a degree of ambivalence between teachers, who value culture and religion as important and their learners who value human rights more.

Apart from being a project funded for alternative development⁶ as specified by the financial sponsor (SANPAD), there were also numerous academic outputs. The dissemination strategies and outcomes of the project were in the form of international and national papers, publications in academic journal, post-graduate studies and an applied in-service professional development programme. The project funded

⁶The main aim of SANPAD is to sponsor research and to make a difference for development; academic outputs are also crucial for a sustainable development programme.

five MEd and two PhD students. Four MEd and one PhD student were successful in their completion of their studies at the end of 2008. One PhD student has still to finalise her studies on the ACE project.

Conclusion

The growing influence of different social orders on the social construct have a direct impact and influence on how we constitute our role as interreligious educators in classroom praxis. Should interreligious education not reconstitute its ideals to infuse a classroom with human rights in order to understand the other? In many countries and especially in developing and transformative democracies, education can become an influential tool to bring about change in understanding the other. Respect for the *I* may engender respect for the other. I believe that understanding the other is more complex in developing multicultural and multireligious societies and the challenge is to understand *the other* within the reference of the *I*.

This project tried to explore possibilities to infuse human rights and interreligious teaching and learning in such a manner that teachers might be able to engage in the complexities of human rights and interreligious education and to apply and develop their own theory on their praxis.

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Diversity, Epistemology and Dialogue in Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Karin Sporre

If you bring Swedish and South African undergraduate students together in a semester's joint study of Human Rights and Democracy – can they understand one another? Can they learn how to interpret and understand students coming from that other, remote, country: Sweden or South Africa, respectively? Will they through the learning processes get more perspectives on the knowledge they had beforehand, for instance concerning their own country and its contemporary challenges? Or to phrase the question just slightly different, can a group of South African and Swedish researchers discussing Human Rights and Democracy understand one another? Or are their background experiences from their respective societies informing their research and theories so different, so as to make understanding impossible and consequently a joint colloquium a waste of time and money? My answers to these questions are that it is not a waste of time and resources to bring the researchers together, and yes, they can understand one another after some time of exchange of views (*cf.* Odora Hoppers et al., 2007a,b; Sporre & Botman, 2003) As well do the students develop a capacity to understand a different country, its socio-economic and cultural context and to interpret persons coming from that country even when the persons express differing opinions. Further, the students often testify to the radical new understandings they have of their own context when coming back. For a few years back this kind of co-operation has been going on between Högskolan Dalarna, Sweden, and two South African universities, University of the Western Cape and University of Stellenbosch. In both countries we as teachers can testify to such learning processes having taken place.

At Stake – in This Chapter

In this chapter I will deal with epistemological issues forming the background to questions like these. I will do so by drawing on a research project mainly reported in Sporre (2007) but also in Sporre (2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d). In that study

K. Sporre (✉)

Unit for Teaching and Learning, Umeå University, SE-901 37, Umeå, Sweden
e-mail: karin.sporre@svshv.umu.se

I returned to an epistemological discussion within feminist theory from the early 1990s where questions of differing views related to differences in societal positioning were dealt with. I chose then to focus on the work of the Canadian feminist philosopher Lorraine Code, whose work I will draw on also here. It will form a core of this chapter. In addition, I will initially place the issues of diversity, citizenship and human rights education in the critical framework of a few feminist theorists: Donna Haraway, Seyla Benhabib and Iris M. Young, both to formulate the questions more precisely and actualize contemporary challenges. Before that I will discuss different understandings of diversity; this as it forms a crucial concept in this context and I will also comment a few words on universalism and contextual issues. When I have dealt with Lorraine Code's epistemology, I will insert the political practice of Gandhi as an example of how dialogue, truth and moral claims can be kept together – without the dialogue resulting in relativism. While concluding I will summarise the argument of this chapter in relation to citizenship and human rights education. The main questions at stake could be said to be: Does taking diversity seriously with necessity lead to relativism, so that we neither can know 'for sure', nor find any common basis for values? The argument I develop as an answer to these questions points in the direction of a 'No'. We can take diversity seriously, and dialogue and discourse ethics could be very appropriate ways of moving ahead.

Diversity

Diversity is today a commonly utilised concept. It is often used together with the qualifier cultural, i.e. cultural diversity. It then refers to differences between people thought to originate from people's presumed belonging to one culture or another. If this is not critically discussed it might mean that cultures are understood as constant over time and not changing, and that people are more or less defined by their culture. Such understandings of cultures and people are named essentialist and criticised, e.g., by Benhabib (2002). What is critiqued is that cultures are understood to be constant over time, and having an essence that people carry. Such an understanding is not a necessary one as cultures can be seen to change over time and persons' identities to be constructed from different sources (Bhabha, 1994; Benhabib, 2002). In understandings of diversity as being cultural, ethnicity (i.e. the belonging to a particular people) forms a crucial aspect (Hylland Eriksen, 1993).

Diversity can also be understood to refer to other kinds of differences between people like sex, gender, age, race/skin colour or sexual orientation/sexual preference. In this understanding of diversity, differences between people other than ethnicity are seen as important to denote and examine, to understand as well as their impact. In feminist theoretical discussions differences like the above, and ethnicity also included, have formed an integral and important part, with an initial emphasis on gender, class and race; cf. 'difference' (Leng, 2002), 'diversity' (Alice, 2002) and 'gender' (Owen, 2002). During the 1990s, the concept intersectionality came into use to denote how these and other sources of discrimination/axes of

oppression were intertwined and could be described and analysed in more complex and nuanced understandings of power patterns (Crenshaw 1994; Young, 1997).

For those involved in religious education and research related to it the discussion on diversity is determined in the first place by another focus. Diversity then denotes plurality in terms of the presence of different religions and worldviews and the challenges this poses to society and educational institutions. The replacement in western Europe of more religious homogenous societies towards more of plurality represents a change towards a kind of diversity that countries like, e.g., India and South Africa have experienced for centuries and millennia. How to handle religious diversity then becomes a crucial challenge and has been the focus also of considerable research (Jackson, 2003; Østberg, 2003; Skeie, 1998; von Brömssen, 2003).

Being an ethicist it is interesting to note that differences between human beings, more or less ascribed, constructed and/or building on biology, are what is articulated and given importance, both theoretically and in practice when diversity is actualised. Further, most often the differences have a bearing on the common good of a society, whether a nation or the global society, and the distribution of its goods, material and other, e.g. education. This means that complicated ethical matters underlie today's discussions and the frequent articulations of identities, identity politics and rights and values in relation to what can be called common societal goods and their distribution.

In my understanding of diversity in this chapter, I will be operating with a wide understanding of diversity where differences like sex, gender, class, age, race/skin colour, sexual orientation/sexual preference, ethnicity, culture and religion form part of my critical discussion. The theoretical discussions implied above stem from different disciplines such as social anthropology, feminist theory, ethics, didactics and religious studies. One has to bear in mind that these theoretical disciplinary discussions cannot easily be fused, but demand careful consideration when asked to bear upon one another's theoretical discussions.

Universalism and the Local

When approaching discussions within citizenship and human rights education today one can further note that universalism is under strong criticism. It has special reference to discussions on human rights like in the question: Are human rights valid everywhere or are they a western invention, reflecting domination and so needing to be criticised? (Mutua, 2002). Or, do they need to be evaluated and further developed also from a gender perspective? (Gouws, 2005). However, concerning discussions on universalism one has to bear in mind that it varies what is meant by universalism and in which sense the concept is used. Does it, e.g., refer to binding global agreements by certain states like in an acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; or does it refer to tendencies of power centres of the west to impose its political agenda to the rest of the world; or does universalism represent efforts within an ethical discourse trying to find common ground for certain values?

Taking note of this, today one can clearly see a trend of actualising the local, the special and the particular as over against the general or universal – a trend dating some years back (cf. Taylor, 1992). Within theology this has been called contextualisation and started back in the 1970s (Coe, 1976). Philosophically one can see this trend, e.g., in the discussion by Lyotard (1984) on the times of the grand narratives to be gone and the grand narratives to be replaced by smaller ones. Within feminist and postcolonial theory you can also see efforts to deal with the tensions between the particular and what can be called the universal. For a discussion on human rights these trends challenge the claims that can or could be made to a common discourse where the rights of each and every individual could form the basis for a joint discussion. Further, through identity politics and migration the articulation of diversity in terms of identities poses crucial questions as to who sets the agenda for the content within curricula of citizenship education.

Knowledge as Situated

As a consequence of the tensions mentioned above, knowledge is often understood as ‘situated’ (local, contextual) which raises epistemological questions as to *what* is denoted local, particular and special; and *what* can be stated as universal, general or common. The examples of South African and Swedish researchers and students at the start of this chapter illustrates in practice how certain aspects of a discussion can be ‘local’ and other ‘general’ – and how this can be tested and found out in a joint dialogical practice. Questions like: ‘What do we agree on, and where do we disagree?’, point in direction as to what is what in terms of local and universal.

Within feminist theory, Donna Haraway actualised issues such as these in the essay *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* (1991). In the essay Haraway strongly criticises an epistemology where the researcher or scientist understands himself or herself as a subject elevated above historic and social conditions. According to the epistemology Haraway argues for, such positions for knowledge do not exist where one could like an all-seeing eye overview and evaluate like an impartial judge. No, rather knowledge is ‘tainted’ by the concrete historic-political situations it comes out of. But, and this is really to cut Haraway short, knowledge can when meeting knowledge coming out of other situations become extended, become less partial. And this Haraway sees as an ethical challenge for responsible knowing. Responsible knowers are challenged to an active positioning where the knowledge seeker, or researcher, actively tries out positions of others, positions other than their own, i.e. positions others than the one from where she or he starts their ‘seeing’/knowing (Haraway).

The point as I see it for actualising Haraway’s discussion here is that it formulates accurately the challenges for knowers in more multicultural societies. How can one coop with the diversity in how other knowers are situated, and differences and plurality in terms of points of views, in relation to the knowing oneself has from out of one’s own position? Haraway strongly emphasises the ethical dimensions of

knowing when she argues for a conscious, moving, critical positioning as an ideal for knowing – and dialogue in search of knowledge. Haraway further also points to the differences in power when it comes to knowing and knowledge and argues that ‘there is good reason to believe vision is better from below the brilliant space platforms of the powerful’ (pp. 190–191). This expresses Haraway’s opinion that to know the limits of one’s ‘vision’, what one knows, is crucial for objectivity. This can be interpreted to mean that those in power are more prone to take their knowledge, *their* limit vision, for the truth. Those with less power are more likely to be aware of the limits of their knowledge, being the reason why their ‘vision’ could be the better one (Haraway).

From Haraway, for my argument here, I take the concept and ideas of knowledge as situated. It illustrates a condition of knowledge where knowers are differently positioned. Of importance is her description of the conscious, moving and critical positioning as crucial in an ethical responsible knowing in multicultural societies.

Challenges to Citizenship and Human Rights Discussions

Seyla Benhabib – “Others” as a Challenge to the Citizenship and Human Rights Discourse

Moving now to discussions on citizenship and human rights what are the contemporary challenges? Benhabib (1992) criticises and develops the discourse ethics originating from Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel. In her work she holds on to basic aspects of the enlightenment tradition, but critiques other parts of it. She balances between modernity and postmodernity – in an effort to find foundation for an ethic, where ethics is not compromised to merely become social conventions as a consequence of cultural relativism. This means that she maintains that ethics has universal claims, but at the same time states that there is something wrong in the way ethics so far has been unable to coop with difference and its ‘others’, in particular, women and non-western men. While building on Habermas, Benhabib is questioning a presupposed substantial consensus which she finds in Habermas theory. Benhabib argues for a distinction between ‘consensus’ and ‘reaching an agreement’ (1992, p. 9), where the latter implies a form of readiness to communication in an open-ended moral conversation with the purpose of seeking agreement, something that is less demanding than a substantial consensus. Still, such an agreement presupposes efforts to listen and taking in the view of others. In Benhabib’s development of this, the concept of ‘enlarged mentality’ as laid out by Hannah Arendt is crucial (1992, pp. 1–19, 121–124). Arendt in her turn builds on Kant whose concept of ‘enlarged thought’ she elaborates.

Benhabib (1992) is the theoretical foundation for Benhabib’s further writings. In those she has moved on to thoroughly explore the foundations for citizenship against its contemporary challenges. Titles like *Democracy and Difference* (Benhabib, 1996), *The Claims of Cultures. Equality and Diversity in the Global Era*

(Benhabib, 2002), *The Rights of Others. Aliens, Residents, and Citizens* (Benhabib, 2004) and *Another Cosmopolitanism* (Benhabib, 2006) testify to this. To summarise her later writings one could say that a strong tendency is her explorations of the challenges to citizenship rights that migration poses, where she focuses on the situation for those who lack the status of citizens, i.e. immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Benhabib, 2004, 2006). Through this it becomes obvious how citizenship rights are geographically shaped and tied to nation states. When forming a moral philosophical foundation for her argument, Benhabib draws on Kant and Hannah Arendt (Benhabib, 2006), now more pronounced and developed as compared to her earlier writings. Consistently, she does let moral convictions form the ground for basic human rights. However, in her argument this is not given in a traditional substantialist ethical form where for instance a particular understanding of human nature is the foundation, but rather it is spelled out through her discourse ethical emphasis, briefly explained above, where the concept of ‘enlarged mentality’ from Arendt is what she builds on to (Benhabib, 1992, pp. 1–19, 121–124; Benhabib, 2002, p. 142, 170–171). This ‘enlarged mentality’ could be said to encompass a willingness and capacity to extend one’s own previous thinking into something new in the actual encounter with someone else.

In applying her discussion to concrete political realities, she discusses the situation of Turkish immigrants in Germany and their involvement in political decision-making through the granting of voting rights critically evaluated on local, national, regional or global level. In doing this Benhabib is displaying and principally commenting on the complex German discussion of these issues (Benhabib, 2006, pp. 62–69).

‘The scarf-affair in France’ is another political issue pointing to the tensions of today around citizenship and rights brought up by Benhabib and developed in a more lengthy discussion. In 1989 three young Muslim women came to challenge the French understanding of the principle of *laïcité*, meaning confessional neutrality in the public space, by wearing scarf in school. The question at stake was if religious symbols could be worn in public: could young Muslim women wear scarf to school, or was this colliding with the principle of religious neutrality in the public space? Benhabib describes these events, the judicial process, the decisive ruling on the matter – which still left the matter for local authorities to interpret. Benhabib finally argues that the voices of the young women were unheard through the actual process. They ought to have been listened to within the public space, this as they interpreted their own act not so much as one of traditional religious significance, but rather did they ascribe political significance to it – or it reflected complex negotiations between different significations. This, Benhabib lifts up, could indicate that they had a different understanding of the relationship between the public and the private which could be of interest to an open debate in public (Benhabib, 2002, pp. 94–100, 2006, pp. 56–57).

There are several issues of interest in Benhabib’s work. First, she has a consistent focus on the ‘others’ of democracy and human rights – those whose rights run the risk of being systematically distorted and those who might consistently be silenced by the way the general discussion does not see to their needs and concerns – and consequently how the democratic and rights structures need to be developed to

better accommodate those whose rights are jeopardized or negated. Second, she focuses the rights of women within groups. When describing the scarf-affair, she, after describing it at length, pushes the point of these young women, their voices, their interpretation of their own actions, this so as to secure them a voice of their own in the public discourse as free-standing actors (Benhabib, 2006, pp. 56–57). Third, it is also obvious how her discourse ethical approach resonates with Haraway's approach to knowledge and knowledge claims, knowledge as local and partial and a need for it to be negotiated. Final, it is further evident that questions of how religions form part of the public space are at stake at present.

Iris Marion Young – Justice and Recognition

Iris Marion Young (1949–2006), another moral philosopher and political theorist who has given considerable contributions to feminist theory and political theory, has focused on issues of justice and recognition when approaching the discussion on citizenship and inclusion of others who have been neglected and not accepted as citizens on equal terms. In *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Young (1990) developed her theory of five faces of oppression where domination and oppression are described as threats to the self-expression and self-determination of individuals and groups. In general, Young thinks of the human being as relational, she has a social ontology when understanding the human being. Further she develops her theory of five faces of oppression from out of the struggles from civil movements like blacks, women, gay and lesbians and others. This theory underlines how different aspects of diversity can be used as sources of oppression. As her theory emphasises social movements, the discussions on citizenship becomes more focused on the space and place of collectives and not so strongly as Benhabib on individuals as citizens. But, Young's concept self-expression also indicates how she sees actors also as individuals.

When Young discusses justice she makes the point in relation to John Rawls and other theorists of justice that issues of justice are not merely issues of distribution, but also non-material assets belong to what need to be distributed fairly in society (Young, 1990).

In her further writings on democracy, Young underlines the complexities of recognition for groups or collectives who have been excluded from the public conversation. Exclusion, domination and oppression create power structures that silence the voices of people. To turn such silences into articulation in political processes for instance, demands careful analysis of power structures to turn the processes to those of recognition (Young, 2000).

Diversity and Epistemology

It has become obvious from above that from the diversity of today, claims for recognition, for a voice and for rights are articulated and need to be negotiated. But, what kind of epistemology could resonate, or coop with such a situation? And where

does such a discussion take us in terms of relativism? Into my discussion I would now want to draw the work of Canadian philosopher Lorraine Code and her work on epistemology. It forms part of the discussion of the early 1990s within feminist theory concerning epistemology but, as already stated, I here limit myself to Code. In 1995, the book *Rhetorical Spaces. Essays on Gendered Locations* (Code, 1995) appeared. It followed other works by her like *Epistemic Responsibility* (Code, 1987), *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Code, 1991) and one of the early texts by her bore the title *Is the Sex of the Knower Epistemologically Significant?* (Code, 1981).

Critique of Traditional Epistemology and a Different Epistemology Emerging

One of the fears that a discussion such as the one I have spelled out above concerning knowledge as situated, or coming out of different positions, is the fear that it will lead to relativism, as well in terms of knowledge claims related to facts, as well as claims in the area of moral and ethics, i.e. value relativism. These issues are among those that Code discusses. As a background to her reasoning on this, I need to give an overview of her epistemology more generally. The second chapter in her book is named *Taking Subjectivity into Account* (Code, 1995, pp. 23–57) and serves this purpose well. Code then argues that a traditional philosophical epistemological approach searching for necessary and sufficient conditions under which ‘S knows that p’ (an often used format of a most crucial philosophic historical question) has but a very narrow range. It is, according to Code (1995), not the sole ‘nor central epistemological preoccupation’ (p. 24). Code argues that the conditions that can be established as necessary and sufficient for any knower, regardless of his or her identity, interests, and circumstances are limited to ‘artificially isolated and purified empirical knowledge claims, which might be paradigmatic by fiat, but are unlikely to be so “in fact”’ (Code, 1995, p. 23). As a background she spells out her opinion that if ‘one seriously entertain the hypothesis that knowledge is a *construct* produced by cognitive agents within social practices and acknowledges the variability of agents and practices across social groups’ (Code, 1995, p. 23) then the justificatory strategies for ‘S knows that p’ claims show their narrow scope. Code critiques the presumed point ‘from nowhere’ in traditional epistemologies. Her critique comes out of the crucial importance sex/gender, intersected with class, ethnicity and race, has proven to have in knowledge production within feminist studies and theory. She further argues for epistemologies where both the knower and the known have to be concretely taken into consideration and cannot be abstracted. At the same time Code warns for subjectivism, i.e. that all knowledge claims could be reduced to mere subjective personal opinions and not critically evaluated among researchers (1995, pp. 29–31).

Thus, Code can be said to question an epistemology where both the knower and what is to be known are abstracted and the knower, when a researcher, presented as

value-neutral. She also distances herself from an understanding of knowledge where what is known is abstracted and taken out of its context. However, her main point is not that knowledge cannot be abstracted, but rather that a lot of the knowledge human beings daily encounter and which also researchers have to handle, particularly in human and social sciences, is far more complex than the paradigms of traditional epistemologies have let us understand when they have dealt with knowledge primarily of objects and let that paradigm be the unquestioned norm for all knowing. One of Code's examples demonstrates these concerns of hers when she focuses on the knowledge that comes from knowing other persons, knowing people, which I will explore somewhat.

When persons in knowledge processes formed by traditional epistemologies are to be known, they are turned into objects, this in a process where they are described by observational methods which reduce them so that their subjectivity and specificity is lost. When Code questions this she contrasts knowing persons and knowing objects (1995, pp. 44–52). Concerning objects like 'cups, chairs, spoons, trees, and flowers' (Code, 1995, p. 45), 'they are *there* to be known' (1995, p. 45) – knowledge about them arises and the objects are reasonably constant even through change. However, Code argues, 'when one considers how basic and crucial *knowing other people* is in the production of human subjectivity, paradigms and objectivity take on a different aspect'. (1995, p. 45). Knowing other people, might as well according to Code, serve as a paradigmatic paradigm for knowledge claims. She states: 'Developmentally, learning what he or she can expect of other people is one of the first and most essential kinds of knowledge a child acquires' (1995, p. 45). Code (1995) continues

Other people are the point of origin of a child's entry into the material/physical environment both in providing or inhibiting access to that environment—in making it—and in fostering entry into the language with which children learn to name. Their initial induction into language generates a framework of presuppositions which prompts children, from the earliest stages, to construct their environments variously, according to the quality of their affective, intersubjective locations. (p. 46)

Here Code spells out the founding importance for further knowledge in a person's life the knowing of persons in relationships has. Concerning this knowledge Code (1995) further states, 'Knowing other people in relationships requires constant learning: how to be with them, respond to them, act toward them' (p. 46). Code underlines the complex responsive pattern that is implied in understanding this kind of knowledge. To my understanding also the potentially ethical implications that are present as part of such a responsiveness become visible, namely that in responding one way or the other, or in not responding, or in responding with power, or in equality, or powerlessness – a number of ethical alternatives come to the fore.

In discussing the complexity that her new inserted paradigm creates, Code (1995) argues that 'the stark simplicity of standard paradigms requires philosophers to re-examine the practice of granting exemplary status to those paradigms' (p. 47). She also acknowledges the presence of psychoanalytical and postmodern challenges to her paradigm, as could be phrased in the question 'can one really know a person?',

and suggests that such challenges are further to be dealt with. The model for scientific inquiry Code is arguing for, from an epistemological point of view, is a reconstructed, interpretative social science, liberated from positivistic constraints. Code (1995) prefers such a model to one from the natural sciences (p. 48). She also states that academic disciplines such as '[e]ducational theory and practice, psychology, sociology, anthropology, law, some aspects of medicine and philosophy, politics, history and economics' (p. 48) depend upon knowing people for their credibility and consequently cannot opt for a model from the natural sciences.

In another part of the second chapter of her book, Code (1995) argues against the presumed neutrality of the researcher and by examples shows what importance the subjectivity of the researcher actually has. The implied 'we' in scientific discourse has implied 'propertied, educated, white men' in the western capitalist societies (p. 33). She also demands responsibility from researchers – there is no place to hide behind methods which just give one result or the other. Research questions, methods and presuppositions behind are chosen by the researcher who in addition is responsible for his or her results (pp. 36–44). Given this critique by Code of a traditional epistemological paradigm and its strong normative influence on how to understand knowledge processes within research and also more generally, let us now turn to her discussion on relativism.

Knowers with Different Societal Locations

Code (1995) starts by describing what she regards as a strong discursive hegemony which has existed throughout most of the 20th century. It has made it impossible to deal with the possibility of knowers being located differently and being specific. Instead universalism and anti-relativism has been offered as the only possible alternatives and presented as purely epistemological requirements, whereby all suspicion that they could be expressions of political standpoints have been silenced. This emphasis has, according to Code, concealed that the privileged position epistemologically has been granted to white, western, middleclass men. When she argues against this model of knowing she uses an analogy from a discussion of one of Wittgenstein's biographers. In the story there told, the use of a particular term for a medical condition proved to be a hindrance for the doctors investigating it to accurately judge the real symptoms. First, when they had left the particular term aside that blocked their understanding of the situation they could approach it correctly. Analogously Code argues that to discover what happens when the discursive hegemony of universalism and relativism is left behind, one has to travel that road, i.e. one have to test the framework and opt for an anti-relativist position, to understand what the consequences of it would be (pp. 185–191). One has to note that Code here and further on mainly uses universalism as a negative term for an exclusivist position through which certain knowledge is granted status while other knowledge is denied it.

Code (1995) further argues that the empiricist, positivist and rationalist theories of knowledge have worked to discredit the knowledge of women, 'along with the

knowledge of people judged to be unlettered and the knowledge produced by people of races, hues, and cultures different from those of the epistemology makers' (p. 190). What Code (1995) asks for is a theory of knowledge that

should aim to inform and explicate practice—to determine how people can know and act within the specific symbolic, cultural, and social structures and institutions they inhabit, and to incorporate those understandings into its own articulation—then what matters is the practical impact of any theoretical project, and its openness to modification when practice reveals its shortcomings. (p. 190)

Code stresses here the practical relevance of a theory of knowledge and describes it as a resource that should inform and explicate practice within the specific situations that people live under. It is also a theory that is open for modification when it does not resonate well with practice.

A Common Construction of Relativism

Code phrases the question as to what hinders feminists from moving on in search of such an epistemology. She answers it by critically analysing how relativism has been construed. In doing so she as well critically revises feminists' arguments, i.e. those in favour of a more traditional epistemology. Code starts such an analysis with acknowledging the feminist critique of the distinctions between reason/emotion, theory/practice, culture/nature, mind/body, fact/value, objective/subjective. These distinctions/contrasts have been understood as dichotomies and the latter part of these same dichotomies have been construed as connected with women/the female. But, when feminists have deconstructed this, Code (1995) argues, and articulated a need for 'situated, specifically and locally sensitive, epistemological projects' (p. 191) they have found themselves caught in a 'most rigid, most essentialist and most reductive conception of relativism' (p. 191). In such an understanding relativism is depicted as the opposite to rationality, objectivism and realism. By proponents for such an understanding of relativism feminist inquiry has run the risk of being described as 'preoccupied with practical matters, "too subjective," "overly emotional," "value-laden" and "merely-political"' (p. 192) – judgements often also passed on to women's knowing more generally. Feminists in the academy have of course found it to be of importance to avoid having this judgement been passed on to them and so have tended to stay away from the label relativist, Codes argues.

An argument against relativism as an option for feminists analysed by Code is the opinion that the political cause of feminists could be undermined by relativism. Relativism is then understood as implying that anything goes and might be accepted as well as anything else. Is it then possible to choose between conflicting knowledge claims, i.e. does any criteria remain for judging one knowledge claim as better than another or for stating something to be intolerable? If this is how relativism is construed, Code (1995) argues, then it does not seem to be an option for feminists who struggle to name and resist oppression (p. 193). Still, another objection from some feminists to relativism is that the only ones who could really embrace epistemological relativism are the extremely privileged, because they are the only ones who can

sustain the illusion that they can make up/construct the world as they will. This way of describing/construing relativism Code judges as extreme. Code (1995) states

Few serious relativists would attempt to defend so implausible a claim as the one that we can make up the world according to our whims and wishes. Even the most thoroughgoing of constructivists would recognize that a good construct has to work with, and respect, the available materials. One cannot wish those materials into, or out of, existence; nor do they lend themselves to any or every purpose. (p. 193)

So, the critique Code formulates against her fellow feminists is that they are buying into an unreasonable understanding of relativism. She also critiques an understanding that only the supremely privileged are the ones able to pretend the illusion that they have access to the one true story (1995, p. 193).

A 'Universalist-Objectivist' Silencing Paradigm

To be caught in this kind of reasoning, Code argues, is to remain within the thought pattern where relativism is viewed as irrational, subjectivist and anti-realist. Instead Code (1995) argues for 'a well articulated, explicitly positioned, and locally sensitive relativism' (p. 193). One of her reasons for doing this is that the universalist-objectivist epistemological paradigm which she assesses critically can be described as having a foundationalist character. Crucial in this is that the voice of the scientist prevails over all other voices and so silences them. And when other subjects are confronted by the scientific one, they are turned into objects (p. 194). The active resistance Code (1995) wants to form in front of this is to point to the exclusions and closures such a paradigm produces and as she states it herself: 'especially in places where knowledge matters in people's lives' (p. 194).

In doing this Code continues to critically analyse the universalist-conformist tendency in understanding knowledge processes that goes along with anti-relativism. She challenges the hegemony of these understandings and their simplistic ways of viewing knowledge, i.e. that facts are there to be observed by each and every individual alike independent of their particular circumstances. Code (1995) advances her argument by posing an example: imagine that you bring physicists together from different parts of the world to a conference. They can well be expected to carry out their work within the speciality of physics which is theirs, but imagine that these same physicists are to create a common discursive space on other matters, for instance on how they view personal relationships, what is right or constitutes justice, or an arena for discussing value-judgments, then the situation of a common vocabulary, of agreement and understanding will be radically changed. Often, Code argues, such crucial questions for humanity at large as the examples stated above, are then dismissed as non-knowledge, mere cultural matters, not to be compared to the hard core of scientific factual questions as dealt with within physics, chemistry, biochemistry or geology. This reflects the hegemony of a universalist anti-relativist scientific paradigm that Code argues against (pp. 194–195).

Code's Reconstructed Relativism

So, what is characteristic of the reconstructed relativism Code argues for? Code (1995) describes it to be 'contextualized, realist, and cognizant of the situatedness of every epistemic position' (pp. 195–196). She further argues that her relativism recognizes 'that knowledge is constructed in positions of varying power and privilege' (p. 196), and further she distances herself from extreme relativists by holding that 'knowers are accountable *to* a reality that is often quite specifiable' (p. 196), and that they as well are accountable '*for* the products and consequences of their constructive activities' (p. 196). Such a reconstructed relativism Code states would empower and enable knowers, feminist and other.

Among the framework that needs to be critically reviewed Code poses another row of dichotomies: 'correspondence *or* construction, knowledge *or* interpretation, truth *or* anything goes' (1995, p. 196). These dichotomies, formed by universalists, and where the unwanted relativism is supposed to be connected to the latter part of the opposites, has as a consequence that relativism is undermined as an intellectual position. But, Code (1995) argues, if the dichotomies are resolved and instead what is discussed is: 'construction *of, out of, or from,* interpretation *of,* truths *about*' (p. 196), then the picture is a different one.

Truth Claims of Different Kinds

When Code (1995) discusses the truth claims that follow from her epistemology she points to that these differ from the ones within a traditional universalist anti-relativist position. In that epistemology the truth claims express a twofold relationship, between a statement and a certain state of affairs or of the world. However, in the truth claims of the reconstructed relativism she formulates, the truth claim expresses a relationship between three components: a statement and a certain state of affairs or of the world, for a person under circumstances X, where X stands for 'local, locational possibilities' (p. 198). In comparing these two different understandings of truths, Code's point is that the critique from the universalist, and when speaking of their understandings of truth she calls them absolutist, the universalist-absolutist may criticize her reconstructed relativism, but they do so from another ground, another thought paradigm. Their task then is to prove that theirs is a better one. Code phrases it in the language of rationality – the task is theirs to prove that their truth is more rational. Code then points to the irrationality of the so-called truths, how they have often proved to be unfair and oppressive as shown by feminists and postcolonial thinkers in their criticism (p. 195).

In the concluding part of her chapter nine, Code (1995, pp. 200–207) discusses different kinds of relativism, cultural and historical as well as epistemological, which she also names judgemental. She then argues that most of the questions of knowledge in the late 20th century are not of the kind as to whether the earth is round or flat and that we need an epistemological paradigm concerning that. On

such issues we can easily agree according to Code, but rather the knowledge issues with which we presently struggle are of such a kind that they demand a more dialogical and open understanding of truth claims such as the one she herself presents, where also the subjectivity of the knower is recognized (pp. 201–203).

The question as to how the reconstructed relativism, she argues for, can form a basis to evaluate conflicting knowledge claims, i.e. the question to relativists whether not all criteria for evaluative judgements are dissolved with their relativism, Code (1995) refers to existing experiences of people negotiating conflicting truth claims in processes of dialogue and listening (pp. 202–207). People and researchers do solve matters of prioritising between conflicting truth claims even when differences exist. Also, within the area of moral issues, Code argues, moral claims are negotiated. The fact, she states, that ‘God is dead’, i.e. that religion has lost its position of providing the norms for right moral action and also forming a community for evaluating knowledge claims within the ethical arena, does not mean that moral discourse has collapsed, i.e. that there is no basis among people for evaluating or upholding a dialogue of what constitutes right and wrong, or what constitutes justice (p. 203).

Reconstructed Relativism and Political and Pedagogical Practices

This chapter started out with questions arising from a pedagogical practice involving South African and Swedish students and with a meeting between researchers from these same two countries. I posed the question as to what extent the participants in these activities could reasonably be said to understand one another or whether their positions, given their backgrounds in their respective societies, were too diverse.

The framework of the reconstructed relativism by Lorraine Code opens up to an understanding of knowledge processes such as the South African–Swedish exchange. First, by the way that Code recognizes the ‘situatedness’ of the knower. Knowers are according to her epistemology situated in a particular context, which influences their knowing and which is taken into account in her reconstructed relativist epistemology. With South Africans and Swedes as knowers it is obvious that the societal, historical, economical and cultural factors of their respective societies do differ, but also to some extent can coincide. When students and researchers from these two societies meet, their perspectives on for instance the matter of how to build a human rights culture are influenced by the conditions of their societies. Added to this, the situatedness of the knowers according to Code is dependent upon how privilege and power structure the positions of them, i.e. they have sex and gender, they are more or less economically privileged, they differ in terms of their education, ethnicity and skin-colour, age, etc. – factors as well acknowledged in Code’s epistemology. Having recognized the situatedness or subjectivity of knowers, what then follows is a dialogical process where the differently situated knowers bring their views, their knowledge into a dialogue.

This leads to another important element in Code's epistemology namely the concept of truth that she introduces. Her concept of truth is dialogical, communicative and open to change. It builds on an understanding of knowers as situated and knowledge processes as continuous, not being static and fixed with a once-and-for-all character. It also reflects a communicative understanding of truth. Thereby, it challenges monological and absolute understandings of truth, where truths become universal and valid once established. Code's (1995) most profound criticism is directed against the domination of the scientific paradigm from the natural sciences, where knowledge is understood to be brought about by a single knower, who lifts up the results of his or her inquiry, and where the status of truth is guaranteed by the procedures, at the same time disguising a position of privilege that silences other voices (p.205). Code (1995) does not rule out a natural science paradigm, there are issues that can be dealt with from out of such a paradigm and with 'seemingly empiricist techniques' (p. 205), but such methods and the paradigms cannot serve as the only one. Instead of this as the main paradigm, Code puts a concept of truth which is dialogical and open, and states the necessity for it presently with the complex discussions on perspectives, identities, and power in knowledge processes that have arisen.

Now I would like to expand somewhat by an example the part of Code's discussion which deals with truth. I would like to do so by introducing the political practice of Gandhi through a recent book written about his life, his radical political activity and the ideas behind that. This as the book illustrates how dialogue can be combined with firm moral convictions – pointing to that value relativism is not a necessary consequence of dialogue.

The Practice of Gandhi

Hardiman (2003) in *Gandhi in his time and ours. The global legacy of his ideas* states his purpose to be

I intend to examine Gandhi as a figure whose life and work represented a dialogue between many complex strands of thought of his day, both Indian and extra-Indian, as well as his legacy in India and the world since his death. (p. 5)

In the third chapter Hardiman (2003) starts his presentation of Gandhi's dialogical resistance by historically placing mass civil resistance in the context of the post-French revolutionary period and onwards, as a means for civil society to correct excesses of state power and governmental authority (pp. 39–65). For Gandhi, Hardiman (2003) states, 'non-violence was a "truth" that could be worked through and understood only through a disciplined and arduous application in specific situations' (p. 41). It is obvious that even such a crucial matter as non-violence, was something that was understood not once and for all, but became known through a continuous practice.

Building on the work of others Hardiman (2003) provides a background to Gandhi's work with regard to mass resistance in India historically (pp. 41–51). In

the Indian society recognised forms of resistance existed to be used against rulers and others when matters were not judged to be handled correct. Basic for this resistance was that it exerted moral pressure on the ruler (or fellow citizens). As these practices were recognised within the culture they were ritualised and a response was expected from the person or societal institution addressed. Among these traditions were *dhandak* where people would march to the capital city and demand an audience with their ruler. The ruler would appear before them, listen and promise to look into the matter. After this the people would disperse. The understanding of the people would be that they helped their ruler by indicating that something was wrong within the state (p. 42). Other forms of such dialogical resistance was mass migration, *hijrat*, or self-inflicted suffering and violence (p. 43). Another action was *dharna*, to hold, or holding out, which denoted the practice to sit by someone's door if they owed something and would not pay back. The purpose of this was to embarrass the wrongdoer and so make him pay what he owed. The practice could involve other people than the actual person whose rights had been offended, i.e. others who would sit by the door on someone else's behalf. Lamenting could also follow this practice (pp. 44–45). The purpose of all these forms of resistance was to put moral pressure on a ruler or individual.

However, this last, old cultural practice, *dharna*, was forbidden by law by the British rulers. The reason given was that the laws of the state were to be the sole authority and the ones to be followed (Hardiman, 2003, p. 47). Here the voice of the colonial power and its intention to establish itself and its power is obvious.

Satyagraha and Ahimsa

A crucial doctrine that Gandhi formed was *satyagraha*, which is a word combined of two words *satya* (truth) and *agraha* (taking, seizing, holding). *Satyagraha* then means that one seizes hold of the truth. When Hardiman (2003) goes into an analysis of Gandhi's understanding of truth, it becomes obvious that Gandhi's understanding of truth is dialogical. One had, according to him, always to be open to the other side, seeking to resolve a concrete conflict by finding alternatives that could satisfy both parts involved (pp. 51–54).

In Sanskrit *satya* means 'true, real, actual, genuine, sincere, honest, truthful, faithful, pure virtuous, good, successful, effectual, valid' (Hardiman, 2003, p. 52). Further, it is based on the root *as* which means to be, to live, to exist. Gandhi gave his concept of truth a metaphysical religious grounding, it equalled God, but the search for what this meant in different situations became a lifelong search (Hardiman, 2003, p. 52).

Another aspect of Gandhi's doctrine was *ahimsa*, non-violence. In contrast to other strands of non-violence within his own culture, Gandhi's understanding of non-violence was based on altruism and the respect for the life and well-being of every human being. Gandhi deeply believed that there was no human being without some form of a moral conscience. When summarising Gandhi's work, in this very

brief overview, one has to note its thorough dialogical approach. Further Gandhi managed to develop and use a way of mass resistance which could counter an overwhelming power. It was based on secular nationalism, but opened itself up to other nations in an international attitude. It was empowering for people to take part in these manifestations and it was a powerful means in addressing rulers who would respond, either in realising their own weakness and/or responding to the concrete moral challenge.

Hardiman (2003) notes that Gandhi never used fasting when trying to influence persons he had no relationship to (p. 52). As I interpret this, Hardiman describes that Gandhi distinguished between people/rulers who through a relationship had engaged with him and his people, those who formed a 'we' in a sense of community, as compared to them who would construct their own 'we' as opposed to a 'them' – the people, those ruled over. Those who constructed others as 'them' would not likely engage in any dialogue, recognising a common ground, why fasting would not then be an effective mean. Hardiman (2003) also testifies to how *satyagraha* has continued to be an important political and moral force for mass action against rulers in India also since the death of Gandhi. It is seen to be important for rulers to respond dialogically to *satyagraha* and the moral force of it seems to be resting on the legitimacy of the claim, as seen to not to build on self-interest but to be an expression of values commonly held (pp. 63–65).

Conclusion

Now to conclude, where does it lead to take diversity seriously? By involving several feminist thinkers and the political practice of Gandhi, we have in this chapter had to critically rethink crucial issues in contemporary understandings of knowledge, truth and dialogue. These issues I argue are most crucial issues for educators to reflect over in relation to pedagogical practices particularly in citizenship and human rights education. This, as diversity of all kinds, is already present within most of pedagogical practices due to migration and identity politics. Speaking of ethics it seems obvious to me that the discourse ethics, or communicative ethics, of Seyla Benhabib resonates very well with the challenges of finding adequate ethical theory for guidance in times of diversity – and still Benhabib's individualist focus needs to be challenged by a more collective approach as, e.g. by Iris M. Young. These ways of approaching ethical theory could very well be brought to mind when you form dialogical practices in education – not the least as they actualise human relationships. When I initially discussed diversity I stated my ambition to understand religion, or religious pluralism, within the wider framework of diversity like sex/gender, class, race/skin colour, age and sexuality. Religion entered the scene here when discussed concerning the public space and the action of three young Muslim French women – and how their defiance of authorities should be interpreted. That such action today need such a complex framework to be interpreted seems obvious to me – also for education to continue to be a basic human right for equals. I would argue for the

need for the discussions of religious diversity and diversity within gender studies or feminist theory to be better integrated – to better understand the complex issues we are struggling to understand and conceptualise.

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Models of Religious Education in the Muslim World: Current Developments and Debates on How to Teach Religion and Ethics in Public Schools

Oddbjørn Leirvik

Introduction

In November 2005, an international workshop about “Teaching for Tolerance and Learning about the Other in Muslim Majority Societies” was held in Istanbul. The workshop came about through co-operation between the Centre for Values Education in Istanbul and the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief, which runs an international project called “Teaching for Tolerance”.¹ The workshop in 2005 brought together scholars and educators from a number of countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe, and resulted in the book *Teaching for Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies* (Kaymakcan & Leirvik, 2007).

The book title “Teaching for Tolerance” suggests that the issue of religious education should be seen as part of a larger question of how school education may contribute to tolerance, respect and mutual recognition between different cultural and religious groups in pluralistic societies (Plesner, 2004; Özdemir, 2007).

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of current developments and debates on how to teach religion and ethics in school – in *some* parts of the Muslim world (cf. Leirvik, 2004; Leirvik, 2008). More detailed information as well as in-depth analyses of the situation in different countries can be found in the aforementioned book from the 2005 workshop (Kaymakcan & Leirvik, 2007); in another book from 2007 entitled *Teaching Islam. Textbooks and Religion in the Middle East* (Doumato & Starrett, 2007); and in country reviews available on the Oslo Coalition’s Teaching for Tolerance website.²

O. Leirvik (✉)
University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
e-mail: o.b.leirvik@teologi.uio.no

¹<http://www.oslocoalition.org/t4t.php>

²<http://www.oslocoalition.org/t4t.php> (see under “Resources”).

In both the Muslim world and in the West, a wide array of models for religious education are currently being applied – ranging from no religious education in school (France, USA) via different types of confessional instruction (the most widespread model in both Europe and the Muslim world) to more recent attempts at establishing non-confessional, comprehensive subjects of ethical and religious education which includes all pupils (as in England and Scandinavia, cf. also the new subject “Values and Ethics” in Egypt).

When confessional instruction is offered, it can either be in the form of a single option (in that case, pupils not belonging to that particular religion or confession are normally exempted), dual options (many Middle Eastern countries offer Islamic and Christian education as parallel alternatives) or multiple choices in accordance with the number of officially recognized religions (like in Austria and Indonesia).

Religious Education: Its Political Context and Constitutional Frameworks

In trying to analyse different models for religious education in school, it should be kept in mind that religious education has to do with far more than pedagogy. It relates also to broader issues of national politics, notions of communal identity and different perceptions of citizenship.

A central expression of modern nation building, mass education has been a powerful tool for transmitting national identity and its symbols. As noted by Sami Adwan, education in the Middle East has traditionally been used “as a tool for promoting a certain set of ideological, religious or nationalist perspectives” (Adwan, 1998, p. 1).

Since “a society is not only dependent on some type of internal coherence, but also on the ability to distinguish itself from what is outside” (Skeie 2001, p. 238), religious education in school should be analysed with a view to the portrayal of both external and internal others. Thus a critical question will be how religious education reproduces – or challenges – conventional notions of “us” and “them”. In the age of globalization, one needs also to discuss how current models respond to the need for interfaith respect and ethical bonding across cultural and national borders.

The fact that religious education in school reflect notions of national identity means also that one should expect some correspondence between models of religious education on the one hand and constitutional frameworks on the other. Constitutional arrangements in countries with a Muslim majority population vary considerably, on the spectrum from secular (Turkey) via more or less Islamic (Egypt, Pakistan, etc.) to multireligious (Lebanon, Indonesia) constitutions.

Before taking a closer look at models currently applied in ethical and religious education, two other perspectives on religion in school should also be taken into consideration: the possibility of a particular religion dominating the entire school curriculum, and the way in which history education reflects (or not) the cultural and religious diversity of the country in question.

A Particular Religion Dominating the Entire School Curriculum

In countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran, particular versions of Islamic state religion has dominated not only religious education but the entire school curriculum as well.

Thus after the Khomeini revolution in Iran, an overarching aim of school education has been to create pious and politicized Shi'ite citizens, with a clear cut distinction between insiders and outsiders (Mehran, 2007a; Mehran, 2007b). In the case of Saudi Arabia, Wahhabi ideology has long influenced the education system, in tandem with educational influences from the Muslim Brotherhood and the legitimacy concerns of the royal family (Doumato, 2007, p. 168). After September 2001, several international observers have criticized the confrontational Islamic ideology that shines through in many textbooks, expressing the concern that Saudi Arabia's educational system has actually been fostering intolerance and animosity (CRE, 2006; CMIP, 2003; Stalinsky, 2002). Although some of these reports on Saudi educational ideologies may reflect a particular political agenda (in particular, on the part of the United States), they have highlighted the problematic consequences for both internal minorities and external relations when school textbooks portray the religious other as an outsider whom cannot be trusted.

With regard to Pakistan (Leirvik, 2008), the permeation of Islam in all school subjects corresponds to the islamization policies introduced from the late 1970s under Zia ul-Haq's dictatorship. Islamic education in Pakistani public schools is only for Muslims. But it does not help much that other religious groups are exempted as long as *all* subjects in school are marked by islamization policies. In post-9/11 debates, there has been a strong focus on the confrontational (even militant) tendencies in some of the *madrassa* curricula in Pakistan. From a minority perspective, however, the problem has been even more acute in public schools. According to a critical report published by Pakistani scholars in 2003 under the title *The Subtle Subversion. The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan*,

Madrasas are not the only institutions breeding hate, intolerance, a distorted worldview, etc. The educational material in the government run schools do much more than the madrasas. The textbooks tell lies, create hatred, inculcates militancy, and much more. (Nayyar and Salim, 2003, pp. 1-2)

According to this critical report, textbooks for Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics have implied

- (1) that Pakistan is for Muslims alone;
- (2) that Islamic teachings, including a compulsory reading and memorization of Qur'an, are to be included in all the subjects, hence to be forcibly taught to all the students, whatever their faith;
- (3) that Ideology of Pakistan is to be internalized as faith, and that hate be created against Hindus and India; and
- (4) that students are to be urged to take the path of *Jihad* and *Shehadat* (ibid., p. 11).

Similar critiques of Pakistani school curricula and textbooks have been launched in other reports and scholarly analyses (for an overview, see Leirvik, 2008). After several years of continuous critical attention to these curricula, in 2007 the Pakistani government announced its intention to eliminate biases from school textbooks:

Pakistan's Education Ministry is making important changes to the school curriculum so that textbooks used across the country will be free from biases against non Muslim groups. New textbooks will include substantial chapters dealing with equality between the sexes, peace, ethics and moral values, and they will be open about the country's economic, social and cultural foundations. (Qaiser, 2007)

Whereas Islamist groups voiced their protest, the government's announcement was received with appreciation from the religious minorities, although with some reservations as to the prospects of efficient implementation. Anyhow, the announcement of the Ministry testifies to the fact that informed critique and pressure from minority and human rights groups may potentially make a difference.

The Image of the Other in History Education

The question of religion in school has also to do with the way in which history is taught. In the case of Pakistan, Yvette Claire Rosser has demonstrated how the history of the Indian subcontinent is rewritten in textbooks so as to serve the Ideology of Pakistan. She finds that in general, Pakistani textbooks downplay or ignore the rich cultural and religious diversity of the area's history, in favour of the Islamic history of the region (Rosser, 2004).

Three further examples from the Middle East, all of them pertaining to Christian–Muslim relations, indicate how difficult it may be to find inclusive ways to teach national history. Christian Palestinians are concerned about the fact that the history of Christian Arabs has been neglected and that Arab and Muslim identity is often conflated in Palestinian textbooks. According to Nathan Brown, in new curricula and textbooks Christians are explicitly included in the nation, “even as the Muslim nature of Palestinian society is constantly affirmed” (Brown, 2007, p. 134). The Christian–Muslim Al-Liqa' Centre for the Study of Religion and Heritage in the Holy Land has repeatedly called on the educational authorities to improve on history, literature and Arab language textbooks in this respect (Khoury, 1998, p. 106).

In Egypt, similar concerns have been voiced about the under-representation of Coptic history and culture in relevant curricula (Pink, 2003). In the case of Lebanon, which has almost been torn apart by civil war, George J Hajjar notes: “Yes, Christians and Muslims have lived side-by-side for generations, but not really together. The Lebanese have been unable to agree upon an official national history textbook” (Hajjar, 2002, p. 2). The difficult process towards a formulation of a national curriculum for history education in Lebanon has been more closely examined by Munir Bashhur, who concludes that history education should encourage the students to reflect critically on the different ways in which national history can

be viewed, from different perspectives (Bashshur, 2007). A similar case is made by Yücel Kabapınar in his critical examination of the ideological biases in Turkish history textbooks (Kabapınar, 2007).

In Lebanon as well as in Bosnia, the question is how to teach history in an inclusive way in countries that have suffered severely from ethnic and religious conflict – even civil war. In such contexts, the question arises of whether different versions of the same history can be presented in school, as it has also been explored in the Holy Land by Palestinian and Israeli educators working together in a “Shared history project” (Adwan & Bar-On, 2003).

Religious Education as a Single Option, in the Framework of a Secular State

Turning now to the issue of religious education as a separate subject in school, let us first take a look at religious education as a single option. This can either take the form of Islamic education without parallel alternatives (as in the Saudi Arabian case), or more inclusive subjects of ethical and religious education. Turkey, which has a secular constitution with many similarities to the French one, has not followed the French tradition of banishing religious education from public schools. After having long been offered as a voluntary option, religious education became compulsory for Muslims in 1982 and is currently taught as “Religious culture and ethics”.

Although Muslims formally constitute almost 99% of the Turkish population, as reflected in a strong quantitative emphasis on Islam in “Religious culture and ethics”, the subject provides also some space for teaching about other religions, in order to “support the national and general culture” and “develop more tolerant attitudes towards the followers of other faiths” (as expressed by the Ministry of Education in 1992 and 2000 respectively, Kaymakcan, 2002, p. 53). As Recep Kaymakcan and others have noted, “neo-confessional methods” have long guided the portrayal of Christianity in the textbooks and controversial issues that distinguish Christianity from Islam have been dealt with from a traditional Muslim point of view (Kaymakcan, 1999). In recent years, however, important revisions have been in curricula and textbooks with regard to the image of the other, with the aim of conforming to the self-understanding of the religion in question (Kaymakcan, 2007).

In Turkey, both Jews and Christians have been granted the right to opt out from religious education in school, without having the opportunity of establishing an alternative form of ethical and religious education. As for intra-Muslim relations, it has been noted for some years that “some Alawi groups criticize this form of religious education, demanding that Alawi Islam must also be included in curriculum and textbooks” (Kaymakcan, 2002, pp. 52–53). In 2007, the European Court of Human Rights issued a ruling against the subject “Religious Culture and Ethics”, after a complaint from Alevi parents (*Hasan and Eylem Zengin v. Turkey*). In the

view of the Court, the Turkish subject is too much dominated by Sunni Muslim perspectives to be truly inclusive for all pupils.

The question arising from the Turkish case, then, is how a subject of religious education can be developed in a way which makes it acceptable to all religious groups that it is supposed to include. The general requirement of the European Human Rights Convention is that the State (as expressed in the First Protocol to Article 2) “in the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, . . . shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religions and philosophical convictions.” In the interpretation of the European Human Rights Court, this implies that the State (in any subject that is made compulsory) “must take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner.”

Interestingly, Turkey and Norway have been faced with quite similar challenges in this respect. In 1997, a new and compulsory subject called “Christianity, Religion and World Views”, was introduced in primary and secondary schools in Norway, replacing the previous system of multiple choices in which the parents might choose between (1) Christian Education, (2) a secularly oriented “World Views” alternative, or (3) no religious education at all.

In the new Norwegian subject, Christianity is taught alongside Islam and other world religions, as well as secular world views. Another important aim of the new subject has been to open an arena for interfaith dialogue in school. The subject has, however, been met with resistance from both the Muslim minority and the secular humanists who have felt that it was too much dominated by Christian majority interest to be fully inclusive. After formal complaints by the secular Humanist Association, the subject was criticized by the United Nation’s Human Rights Committee in 2004 for putting too much emphasis on Christianity. Then in 2007, the European Court of Human Rights issued a similar judgement against Norway, albeit with a narrow 9 to 8 majority (*Folgerø and others v. Norway*).

In the wake of these rulings, some revisions of the curriculum have been made and the name of the subject has been changed to “Religion, World Views and Ethics”. Parallel to these revisions, inclusive pedagogical classroom practices have made the subject more acceptable to the minorities.

In this process, pressure from international human rights agencies has played a constructive role. Global human rights principles presuppose that the minorities are the best judges of whether a common subject of religion and ethics in school does in fact do justice to all – be it in Norway or in Turkey.

Religious Education as a Dual Option Between Islamic and Christian Instruction

In the Middle East, many countries negotiate majority and minority interest by offering both Islamic and Christian instruction in school. This may happen in the

framework of constitutions that are either Islamic (for instance in Egypt) or multi-religious (Lebanon). This system of parallel options in religious education reflects the historic presence of relatively large Christian minorities, as well as nationalist ideologies that have emphasized a faith-transcending, Arab identity.

The parallel option of Islamic and Christian education in school has been offered in Egypt since 1907, in Syria since 1946, in Lebanon since 1968 and in Jordan since 1997 (Leirvik, 2004, p. 227). In the case of Egypt, the inclusion of Christian education on a par with Islamic education was part of the nationalist project in the first half of the twentieth century, when Muslims and Christians fought together against British domination and Western missionary influence. It was also facilitated by a strong movement for catechetical renewal in the Coptic Church (Morcos, 2002).

The revised curricula for Islamic and Christian education in Egypt, initiated in 1993, are still firmly confessional in nature. But increasingly, they are also expected to promote civic values such as tolerance of the other, human rights and co-citizenship. Furthermore, moral virtues and religious values are supposed to be mobilized as a shield against extremism (al-Dab‘, 2002; Shenouda, 2002). However, whereas friendly relations between Muslims and Christians are commended, stereotyped images of the Jews as inherently deceitful have continued to assert themselves in the textbooks.³ Indicative of a form of nationalism that leans heavily on the Islamic tradition, a section about the benefits of the month of Ramadan draws a direct line between the first Muslims’ historic victory over the idolaters at Badr and Egypt’s successful October War against Israel in 1973.⁴

In contrast, new Palestinian textbooks do not repeat such anti-Judaic stereotypes (IPCRI, 2003, p. 32). In Palestine, new curricula for Islamic and Christian education in public schools have been developed as part of the general effort to produce a full set of Palestinian textbooks. The teams for Christian and Islamic curriculum development have been working separately but a co-ordinator from the Ministry of Education has been sitting with both teams.

With regard to confessional subjects, the shared challenge in the subjects of Islamic and Christian education is how to include sound information about the other religion in one’s own textbooks. This applies both to internal relations between Muslims and Christians in the Middle East and to the relation between Islam and the West. Since the 1990s, some important project has been carried out between researchers in Europe and the Middle East, with the combined aim of improving the image of Islam in European textbooks and the image of Christianity in textbooks for Islamic education (Reiss, 2007; Ashmawi, 2007).⁵

³See for instance *Al-tarbiya al-diniyya al-islamiyya*, Fourth Grade, Part One (2002–2003), p. 33.

⁴*Al-tarbiya al-diniyya al-islamiyya*, Fourth Grade, Part Two (2002–2003). For more examples, see Reiss, 2003.

⁵See also the project “Images of the Self and of the Other. Muslim Societies and Europe” (<http://www.gei.de/index.php?id=464&L=1>), by the Georg-Eckert-Institut für Internationale Schulbuchforschung.

Multiple Choices in Religious Education

Moving eastwards to Indonesia, we find a different system of religious education that corresponds also to another type of national ideology (Leirvik, 2002; Said, 2007). Indonesia is known for its unique, multireligious conception of national identity known as the Pancasila ideology. According to the Pancasila principles (as stated in the preamble of the Indonesian constitution), Indonesian identity is bound together by the five beliefs in “the One and Only God, just and civilised humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the inner wisdom of deliberations amongst representatives, and the realization of social justice for all of the people of Indonesia”.⁶

Like in the Middle East, religious education in Indonesia is confessional. In public schools, religious education (*pendidikan agama*) has long been offered for adherents of the five recognized religions, which are Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism and Hinduism. The curricula are prepared in close co-operation between the Ministry of National Education and representatives of the various religious communities. The Education Bill from 2002 (MNA, 2002) states explicitly that every student is entitled to religious instruction according to his or her religion – taught by an educator who belongs to the same faith. But a minimum number of students are required for the group in question to be offered religious education by the local school. If no suitable alternative can be offered in accordance with the student’s faith, students have – in principle – the right to be exempted.

In the general curriculum, enhancement of “faith and piety” and of “morals and noble character” are stated as general aims of school education that should apply to all subjects, together with the recognition of “local religion and culture” and “the dynamic of global development” (MNA, 2002, p. 12). As for religious education, the 2002 curriculum states that all religions should be taught with a view to living faith and moral practice (i.e. not only as dogmatic subjects). Although the system is still confessional, the latest revision of the curricula may point in the direction of a more unifying vision that stresses the civic dimension of religious education.

In the case of Indonesia, confessional religious education in school should also be seen in the light of the long-established tradition of so-called “Pancasila education”, which has traditionally aimed at instilling in the students the national values and obligations. After the fall of Suharto, in whose era the Pancasila ideology was discredited because it was used as a stick against non-conformists, Pancasila perspectives have been integrated in Civic Education (*Kewarganegaraan*, literally “citizenship”), which also includes the subject of human rights. The overall curriculum seeks thus to balance the potentially divisive effects of confessional instruction in separate classes with a form of civic education that “aims at stimulating students to realize that in spite of having different religious affiliations or beliefs they are united in one nation that is Indonesia” (Said, 2007, p. 259).

⁶<http://inic.utexas.edu/asnic/countries/indonesia/ConstIndonesia.html>

Visions of and Attempts at Inclusive Forms of Teaching Religion and Ethics in School

During a visit to Israel and Palestine in 2005, I picked up the latest issue of the magazine *This Week in Palestine*. My eyes fell on a short reflection entitled “Knowing Thy Neighbour?” written by Nadia Najjab of the Department of Education and Psychology in Birzeit University (Najjab, 2005). Najjab relates a conversation with her 6-year-old daughter Nadine who questions why she and her Christian school-mate Koreen must go to different religion classes. “I wanted for us to be together in one class”, Nadine declares. Najjab also notes that her 8-year-old daughter Leen has become more alert to religious differences and started asking people around her: “Are you a Christian or a Muslim?”

Enquiring other parents about their experiences, Najjab’s impression is corroborated that Palestinian children are more than before looking for religious identity as a basis of distinction. Najjab describes this as a new development in Palestine, which is home to “a long tradition of sharing the national struggle under a common identity”. In line with this heritage, children may also react with surprise to the fact that religion is in fact treated as a dividing factor in school.

The vision of more inclusive ways of teaching religion in school is not a new one. A short story from 1969 by the Egyptian Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz entitled *Jannat al-atfal* (“The Children’s Garden”), suggests that children may harbour more inclusive intuitions than their parents. The story is about a Muslim girl who interrogates her father about the religious separation in school between herself and her best friend, the Christian girl Nadia. Nadia and I are always together, says the daughter, in the classroom, in the courtyard, and when we eat. “But in the religion class, I go to one room and Nadia to another!” In the course their conversation, the daughter presents her father with the challenging effects of a “modern pedagogy” that invites children to ask all sorts of hard questions to their parents. Reluctantly, the father gives in to his daughter’s inquisitiveness. They discuss similarities and differences between Muslims and Christians, agreeing that God is beyond and above all human difference. The conversation ends with the daughter declaring her desire always to be with Nadia, both here and in the afterlife – and “even in the religion class!” (Mahfouz, 1988/1969).

The separation of pupils according to religious affiliation is not at all specific to Palestine and Egypt. On the contrary, confessional religious education is rather the global rule, with relatively few exceptions of religion and ethics being taught as an inclusive subject in school (as it has been attempted in England, the Scandinavian countries and South Africa).

Tuning in with inclusive visions like the ones cited above, some Muslim majority countries have discussed the possibility of introducing new and inclusive models for teaching ethics and religion in school. In Palestine, the question of placing more emphasis on comparative religion was raised in a comprehensive report produced by the first Palestinian Curriculum Development Center in 1996 (Brown, 2001). Just before the revision of the religious education curricula, a study of the situation in religious education in Palestine was carried out by Sami Adwan, on the initiative

of the Al-Liqa' Center (Adwan, 2001). A parallel investigation was carried out in public and private Arab schools in Israel (Khoury, 1998). In the surveys, questions were asked about the basic confessional system and the desirability of an extra class per week about "common religious culture" (*thaqafa diniyya 'amma*) for Muslims and Christians together (Adwan 2001, pp. 195–198, p. 392). As of yet, however, these ideas have not influenced the educational policies of the Palestinian government. However, attempts at inclusive forms of teaching religion have been made on a project basis – in the context of teacher training courses and in some schools (Adwan, 2007).

As for attempts at teaching culture and religion to all pupils in the same class, it is interesting to note that two countries with a recent history of civil war – notably Bosnia and Lebanon – have developed models and materials for teaching what they call "The culture of religion". In 1998, the Lebanese government proposed to make confessional religious education optional and replace it with a new and compulsory subject of civic education that would include the issue of a shared religious culture. The "religious culture" proposal provoked a heated debate in the media and was opposed by religious leaders who strongly defended the confessional model (Dagher, 2000, p. 128). As a compromise, it was decided that new textbooks with a more ecumenical approach should be produced for the confessional subjects (Hajjar, 2002). For the university level, a new book on Islam and Christianity meant for introductory courses has been produced, sponsored by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2002). UNESCO has also sponsored the development of a teaching manual for teenagers about the cultural aspects of Christianity and Islam (Kreidi, 2007).

The possibility of introducing an inclusive subject called "Culture of Religion" has also been debated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The proposal of a common subject originates from the international community and its presence in post-war Bosnia. A project was initiated in 2000 by OSCE (The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) in co-operation with the Goethe Institute in Sarajevo, with the involvement of the cantons' ministries, the country's religious communities, teachers and other experts (Popov & Ofstad, 2006, p. 97; Ziemer, 2001). A similar subject was pioneered by the First Bosniak High School in Sarajevo as early as from 1995 (Baljević, 2007).

The aim of the subject is to give knowledge of religions, to enhance the understanding of religion's role in the development of cultures and civilization, to encourage tolerance and to develop dialogue skills. The new subject is not meant to replace confessional religious instruction (in Islam, Catholicism or Orthodox Christianity) that has been offered in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the early 1990s (Grabus, 2007; Popov & Ofstad, 2006). The proposal has received reluctant support of the religious communities and is currently being tried out in some regions.

In the case of Egypt, attempts at creating a common arena have focused not on "religious culture" but on "common values" instead. In 2001 the Ministry of Education decided to supplement Islamic and Christian education with a common ethical subject called "Values and ethics" (*al-qiyam wa-l-akhlaq*) – not instead of but in addition to the confessional subjects (Kouchok, 2007, pp. 159–161; Pink, 2007). In the preparation of the subject, the Ministry of Education established a committee

of both Muslims and Christians. Pivotal values to be propounded in the new subject are freedom, happiness, peace, solidarity, love, economic awareness, humility and tolerance.⁷ Regarding Muslim–Christian coexistence, a lesson about peace uses a picture of a priest and an imam holding a flag together showing the crescent and the cross (the nationalist symbol of the Wafd party from the beginning of the twentieth century).⁸

In Egypt, the introduction of a new subject of values and morals, detached from religious education, has provoked a heated debate similar to that in Lebanon. Islamists organized a media campaign against the new subject and several Muslim leaders argued that it is neither advisable nor possible to separate moral education from religious instruction. In the new subject, religious belief is not dealt with as a separate issue, but it is taken for granted and often referred to. In response to initial critiques that the religions' moral traditions were not explicitly referred to, the Curriculum Centre inserted some references to the Qur'an and the Bible in textbooks for the school year 2002–2003.⁹

Thus attempts at establishing more inclusive forms of teaching religion and ethics in school in Muslim majority societies have so far been made under the heading of either “culture of religions” (Lebanon, Bosnia) or “values and ethics” (Egypt). Except for examples of teaching religion in a non-confessional way in Bosnian high schools (Baljević, 2007), the cited subjects or project have come in addition to, not instead of confessional religious education.

Time will show whether further attempts will be made to replace confessional subjects with common subjects that are more pluralistic in nature, in line with how the Turkish subject “Religious culture and ethics” will probably have to develop after the 2007 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights.

Religious Education in Private Schools

The discussion above has focused on the role of public schools in fostering tolerance through new forms of religious and ethical education. To complete the picture, the role of private schools in this respect should also be taken into consideration. Several of the countries referred to above have a large percentage of private schooling – for instance, 60% in Lebanon and 30% in Indonesia, against only 6% in Egypt (not including semi-public Al-Azhar schools) and Palestine.¹⁰ The cited numbers include not only the *madrassa* (in Indonesia: *pesantren*) sector but modern types of private schools as well. In countries with a large percentage of private schools, the

⁷*Al-qiyam wa-l-akhlaq* (2001–2002), grades One-Three (cf. al-Dab', 2002, pp. 5–6).

⁸*Al-qiyam wa-l-akhlaq* (2001–2002), Second Grade, Part Two, p. 1. Cf. Pink, 2003.

⁹For instance in *Kitab al-qiyam wa-l-akhlaq* (2002–2003), Fourth Grade, one will find seven references to the Qur'an, one reference to Hadith and a single reference to the Bible.

¹⁰For references, see Leirvik (2003, p. 226) and Leirvik (2008).

private school sector is clearly co-responsible for how education contributes to the general cultural climate in the countries in question.

In this context, I will only briefly consider the role of private schools in Indonesia in fostering either intolerance or tolerance of other beliefs. Private Muslim schools in Indonesia are either so-called *pesantren* madrasas that transmit classical Islamic learning, or religious schools of a more modern kind. Most of them are linked with the country's two large Muslim networks, Nadhlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which have more than 30 million members each and encompass both conservative and liberal tendencies. The strength of these organizations and their involvement in private schooling implies that in Indonesia, the question of how civic and religious education may contribute to interreligious understanding is largely a question of what tendencies will prevail in these networks. In both Muhammadiyah and Nadhlatul Ulama schools, there are some examples that ideals of gender equality, democracy and religious pluralism have been included in the curricula at various levels (Munir, 2003; Leirvik, 2002, pp. 23–26). However, contrary tendencies can also be cited and relative weight of different tendencies in Muslim private schools will obviously be quite decisive for the future of tolerance education in Indonesia.

The same can be said of the future role of madrasas and modern private schools respectively in Pakistan. As demonstrated in a study by Tariq Rahman, the attitudes regarding equal citizenship for religious minorities and relations to India vary considerably between madrasa students on the one hand and public as well as modern private schools on the other (Rahman, 2003; Leirvik, 2002; 2008).

Conclusion

My concluding questions to the different models for religious education referred to above are as follows:

- How can the image of the religiously other be rectified, in confessional models of religious education?
- What kind of joint learning about religious cultures, values and ethics can be envisaged in public schools?
- Who are included or excluded, in attempts at more comprehensive ways of teaching history, religious cultures and ethics in school?

As for the latter question, the minorities are the best judges.

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The Impact of Religious Diversity and Revitalisation on Inter-religious Education for Citizenship and Human Rights

Gary D. Bouma, Rod Ling, and Anna Halahoff

Introduction

The unanticipated rise of religious diversity and the re-entry of religion to the public sphere have radically increased the need and demand for education about religions – how they contribute to social and cultural capital – and about the management of religious diversity. The global movement of people and cultures has brought religious diversity to nearly every major city. With diversity has come a renewed interest in the religious identity of others and how to incorporate religious diversity in ways that produce social cohesion, promote inclusive citizenship and protect human rights. Where atheistic secularism once prevailed, religious diversity has also raised interest in a values discourse. Faith-based social and health service delivery are now more appealing to governments but they are more challenging to deliver as societies have wider ranges of religious needs and lifestyles. Consequently, policies designed to promote social justice and peace have little chance of success without taking seriously the religious dimensions of issues. This context clarifies a need for students at all levels of education to learn about religion with opportunities including direct experience of the ‘other’; curricula that appreciate rather than demean different worlds of faith spirituality and religion; and learning that provides both historical depth and local reality. Some of this education will be in school, some in remedial work required for new generations of leaders raised in ignorance of religion, or trained to despise it. Indeed, at the turn of the twenty-first century, we live in increasingly interdependent and inter-religious communities. Therefore, the need to develop a greater understanding of religion is paramount for genuinely peaceful and participatory societies.

Religious diversity is then a significant factor in issues of citizenship and human rights. In many countries religious diversity is a fact of social life given global movements of people and increasingly effective means of spreading religious messages. Groups, who had only heard of each other a generation ago, now live in the same neighbourhoods, send their children to the same schools, visit the same shopping centres and share government services. However, social policy has remained

G.D. Bouma (✉)
Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
e-mail: Gary.Bouma@arts.monash.edu.au

grounded in the secularist discourse of religion's imminent extinction as scholars and governments failed to predict wider religious diversity and revitalisation. Policy has remained uninformed, failing to address the impact of religion on important aspects of social and cultural life, including education for citizenship and human rights.

In an effort to stimulate more policy discussion, this chapter looks at the consequences of religious diversity for citizenship and human rights education. Following a discussion of the consequences of increased religious diversity, we consider their implications for the desirability, conduct and possibility of inter-religious education for citizenship, productive dialogue and human rights. We then consider possible ways that governments can encourage dialogue, inter-religious education and human rights in multi-faith contexts.

Religious Diversity and Revitalisation

Increases in religious diversity have been partly responsible for the revitalisation of religion. Where there is no religious diversity, religion becomes invisible and is often presumed to be inconsequential. Under these circumstances the influence of religion is very diffuse and religion is hard to distinguish from other institutions. It becomes harder to perceive the difference between institutions of religion and state, and religious organisations and politics. However, when a society becomes more religiously differentiated, previously unnoticed informal channels of religious influence often become apparent. In Australia this has led to increased discussion on the place of religion in affairs of the state, as occurred a few years ago when an Anglican Archbishop was appointed Governor General. Increased religious diversity also renews debates about values as new religious groups seek to express their standpoints and subsequently, already established groups respond.

Religious difference emerges in two ways. First, religious difference can arise through internal differentiation or fragmentation. That is, it can arise within religious organisations and movements when sub-groups insist on different behavioural norms or the adoption of distinguishing beliefs. While some of this internal differentiation can be initiated locally, it can also be imported from conflicts occurring within organisations and movements in other parts of the world. Cases in point are the spread of strict and political *Wahabbist* forms of Islam, puritanical forms of Evangelical Christianity, and repressive forms of Judaism (Antoun, 2001; Armstrong, 1993; Bates, 2004).

For those involved, internal disputes on religion have had two unanticipated implications. The first is a richer understanding of their faith, and the second is an increased motivation to invest more resources in their religious practice. On these bases, internal diversity and disputation can lead to increased religious belief and practice. This includes increased salience of religious identity, and salience of sub-group factional identity. The classic case is the dispute that caused the permanent split in Islam between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims.

The second form of diversity arises through social differentiation, when religions disperse to places where they were previously absent or ‘unnoticed’, and broaden the religious diversity of their new host society. Migration after World War II and the Cold War significantly expanded the religious content of many countries, regions and cities (Bouma, 2006; Bouma, 1995; Cahill, Bouma, Dellal, & Leahey, 2004; Eck, 2002; Martikainen, 2004). For migrants who left behind majority religious status, as was the case for many Muslims and Buddhists now in Australia, sudden minority status was an incentive to learn more about themselves. New minority status also motivated migrants to express their identities in environments removed and unaffected by the assumptions and cultures of their religions (Bouma, 1994). In Australia, children of migrants from Muslim majority countries engaged their parents in discussion of religious identity with such questions as: ‘Kids at school say I am a Muslim, what is that, Dad?’ (Bouma, 1994). Children’s questions on Islam led some of the parents to establish mosques and schools.

The Case of Australia

The social and cultural context in which religious diversity occurs is critical to understanding the impact of religious diversity. Our recent research in Europe, Canada, the USA and the UK has made this absolutely clear. Given that the comments in this chapter grow out of the Australian context it is appropriate to describe that context. Australia is fortunate to conduct a census every 5 years and to include a well-defined and codified religion question (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005).

The rise of religious diversity in Australia is documented in the religious identification data from a series of Australian Censuses presented in Tables 1 and 2. The data in Table 1 trace the rise and decline of religious groups with their roots in British Protestantism. Current discussions of religious change including protests that Australia is losing its Christian character arise partially from the lived experience of older Australians who grew up in the context of dominant Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist denominations. These older Australians now find themselves among many who declare ‘no religion’ and experience the rising prominence and visibility of such groups as the Greek Orthodox – 3% of the total population and 6% of Melbourne’s population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008) – Buddhists, Muslims, and increasingly Hindus, Pentecostal groups and mega churches.

The data presented in Table 2 show the acceleration of the decline of British Protestants and Anglicans, the stability of Roman Catholics and the rise of those declaring ‘No Religion’, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and other religious groups. What these tables do not show is that with decline in numbers, British Protestants have become increasingly aged to the point that member replacement by fertility – the usual way groups grow and sustain themselves – is becoming increasingly biologically impossible. The issue for many is not will our children have faith, but can our faith have children.

The religious profile of Australia has changed profoundly. While those declaring ‘No Religion’ form a growing proportion, they do not dominate, but rather form one

Table 1 Australia: Religious identification 1901–2006 (% of Total Australian population)

	1901 ⁱ	1921 ⁱⁱ	1933 ⁱⁱ	1947 ⁱⁱⁱ	1961 ⁱⁱⁱ	1971 ^{iv}	1981 ^{iv}	1991 ^v	2001 ^v	2006 ^{vi}
Catholic	22.7	21.6	19.5	20.7	24.9	27.0	26.0	27.4	26.6	25.8
Church of England/Anglican	39.7	43.7	38.7	39.0	34.9	31.0	26.1	23.9	20.7	18.7
Uniting Church	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9	8.3	6.7	5.7
Presbyterian & Reformed	11.3	11.7	10.8	9.8	9.3	8.1	4.4	4.3	3.4	3.0
Eastern Orthodox ^(a)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7
Baptist	2.4	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.6
Lutheran	2.0	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.3
Penecostal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.1
Jehovah's Witness	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Salvation Army	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3
Protestant Undefined/Other	0.5	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.9	1.5	0.2	0.3	0.3
Seventh Day Adventist	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Church of Christ	0.6	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3
Latter Day Saints	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Brethren	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Congregational	1.9	1.4	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Methodist	13.4	11.6	10.3	11.5	10.2	8.6	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Christian ^(b)	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.7	2.0
Total Christian	96.1	96.9	86.4	88.0	88.3	86.2	76.4	74.1	68.0	63.9
Other Religions	1.4	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8	1.4	2.6	4.8	5.6
Religions Inadequate/nfd ^(c)	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.9	0.7
No Religion ^(d)	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.4	6.7	10.8	12.9	15.5	18.7
Religion Not Stated	1.5	1.7	12.8	10.9	10.5	6.1	10.9	10.1	9.8	11.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ABS Australian Census Reports 1933–2006

(a) Includes Greek, Russian and Other Eastern European Orthodox Churches

(b) Includes all other responses pertaining to Christian denominations incl. 'inadequately described', 'not further defined'; Unitarian. Oriental Orthodox. Assyrian Apostolic and Greek Catholic before 1961.

(c) Includes religious beliefs not further defined; religious beliefs 'inadequately described' and Theism. In 2006 the category was renamed, 'Other Religious Affiliation'.

(d) Includes Atheism, Rationalism, Agnosticism, Humanism, Socialism, Freethinker, 'No Religion not further defined' and 'No Religion inadequately described'. The 1933 Census placed Agnosticism, Rationalism, Freethinker and Socialism, under 'Religion Indefinite' for 1901 figures. These categories have been shifted to 'No Religion' in the above table.

(i) 1933 Census

(ii) 1947 Census

(iii) 1961 Census

(iv) Bouma (1992)

(v) 2001 Census Tables Longitudinal by Gender 1991–2001 ABS

(vi) 2006 Census Tables Cat. 2068.0 ABS

Table 2 Australia: Religious identification – Details of religious diversity 1991–2006

	1991	%	1996	%	2001	%	2006	%
<i>Christian</i>								
Catholic	4,591,779	27.38	4,798,950	27.03	5,001,624	26.65	5,126,880	25.82
Church of England/Anglican	4,004,755	23.88	3,903,324	21.99	3,881,162	20.68	3,718,252	18.73
Uniting Church	1,385,209	8.26	1,334,917	7.52	1,248,674	6.65	1,135,427	5.72
Presbyterian & Reformed	727,334	4.34	675,534	3.81	637,530	3.40	596,671	3.01
Eastern Orthodox ^(b)	473,778	2.82	497,015	2.80	529,444	2.82	544,160	2.74
Baptist	278,247	1.66	295,178	1.66	309,205	1.65	316,738	1.60
Lutheran	248,707	1.48	249,989	1.41	250,365	1.33	251,107	1.26
Pentecostal	143,500	0.86	174,720	0.98	194,592	1.04	219,689	1.11
Jehovah's Witness	74,648	0.45	83,414	0.47	81,069	0.43	80,919	0.41
Salvation Army	72,300	0.43	74,145	0.42	71,423	0.38	64,200	0.32
Protestant (Undefined/Other)	31,944	0.19	50,216	0.28	52,557	0.28	56,106	0.28
Seventh Day Adventist	48,136	0.29	52,655	0.30	53,844	0.29	55,251	0.28
Church of Christ	78,148	0.47	75,023	0.42	61,335	0.33	54,822	0.28
Latter Day Saints	38,059	0.23	45,112	0.25	49,915	0.27	53,199	0.27
Oriental Christian/Orthodox ^(c)	23,230	0.14	25,106	0.14	29,215	0.16	32,711	0.16
Brethren	24,015	0.14	22,063	0.12	19,353	0.10	24,232	0.12
Assyrian Apostolic	–	–	6,236	0.04	7,109	0.04	8,189	0.04
Christian Other ^(d)	178,693	1.07	219,167	1.23	285,926	1.52	347,283	1.75
Total Christian	12,422,482	74.07	12,582,764	70.88	12,764,342	68.01	12,685,836	63.89
<i>Other religions</i>								
Buddhist	136,919	0.82	199,812	1.13	357,813	1.91	418,756	2.11
Islam	146,653	0.87	200,885	1.13	281,578	1.50	340,392	1.71
Hinduism	42,969	0.26	67,279	0.38	95,473	0.51	148,119	0.75

Table 2 (continued)

	1991	%	1996	%	2001	%	2006	%
Jews	73,277	0.44	79,805	0.45	83,993	0.45	88,831	0.45
Australian Aboriginal	4,323	0.03	7,357	0.04	5,224	0.03	5,377	0.03
Other ^(c)	35,134	0.21	59,333	0.33	84,607	0.45	103,645	0.52
Total Other Religions	439,275	2.62	614,471	3.46	908,688	4.84	1,105,120	5.57
RELIGIONS	48,998	0.29	56,121	0.32	354,628	1.89	133,820	0.67
INADEQUATE/NFD ^(f)								
NO RELIGION ^(g)	2,161,430	12.89	2,948,888	16.61	2,905,993	15.48	3,706,555	18.67
RELIGION NOT	1,699,525	10.13	1,550,585	8.73	1,835,598	9.78	2,223,957	11.20
STATED								
TOTAL	16,771,710	100.00	17,752,829	100.00	18,769,249	100.00	19,855,288	100.00

Source: Australian Census: ABS, Cat 2068.0 (2001, 2006)

(a) Itemises only groups < = .03% of the Australian Population

(b) Includes Greek, Russian and other Eastern European Orthodox

(c) Includes Armenian, Coptic, Syrian and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches. Included Assyrian Apostolic in 1991

(d) Includes Christian not elsewhere categorised; Christian not further defined; Christian inadequately described

(e) Includes Sikhs, Nature Religions, Rastafarians, Church of Scientology and Satanists

(f) Includes responses with a religious or spiritual sense that cannot be coded elsewhere

(g) Includes Atheism, Rationalism, Agnosticism, Humanism and No Religion not further defined or inadequately described

among many sub-groups in a picture of great religious diversity. When in 1947 most Australians were British Protestants or Anglicans, there was little need for religious education, or education about religion. There was a 'taken for granted' form of religion that was 'normal', requiring no explanation or reflection. That is no longer the case. Many religious voices can be heard in public policy debates, encountered in the daily lives of most Australians and are present in the schools. Such religious diversity makes education about religions critical for citizenship and civic participation for all Australians, not just for those among minority religious groups. Indeed all religious groups are minority groups.

Religion and religious leaders from diverse faith traditions have played a significant role in the construction of social capital in Australia through contribution to the formation of values, education, health care, welfare, aid, philanthropy, social justice, multiculturalism and family cohesion. Concurrently, Australia's social capital and community security is at risk of being threatened by exclusion promoted by religion, religious extremism and intolerance, gender inequity and anti-Islamic views (Cahill et al., 2004).

It is disturbing that culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse (CRALD) communities in Australia have reported rising Islamophobia, migrantophobia and attacks on multiculturalism following the events of September 11. However, religious communities have been far from passive in their responses to the impact of these events by initiating inter-religious dialogue and educational activities in an attempt to dispel negative stereotypes and attitudes (Bouma, Pickering, Dellal, & Halafoff, 2007). These community-led programmes have often been supported and funded by state actors who have increasingly prioritised inter-religious engagement, particularly including Muslim communities, as part of social cohesion and counter radicalisation strategies (Bouma et al., 2007; Halafoff, 2006).

Following the success of these programmes, scholars and CRALD communities have recently called for Inter-religious Education to be introduced into all Australian schools in order to increase inter-religious understanding among young Australians (Bouma et al., 2007; Erebus International, 2006). CRALD communities also raised concerns that as Religious Education (RE) in Australian government schools was currently taught predominantly by Christian volunteers it thereby did not reflect the reality of Australia's increasing religious diversity (Bouma et al., 2007). While some government and faith-based schools, particularly Catholic and Islamic schools, have successfully implemented programmes in inter-religious education (Bouma et al., 2007; Erebus International, 2006) the majority of Australian schools currently do not include such initiatives and no systematic evaluation of the need for or efficacy of these programmes has been conducted in Australia (Erebus International, 2006). Consequently, recent studies have stressed the need for further research in this area (Cahill et al., 2004; Erebus International, 2006).

Furthermore, following the events of September 11 calls for inter-religious education have often been linked with calls for Values Education. Many Australian scholars and practitioners have recently advocated expanding current Values Education programmes to include more emphasis on values derived from multiple faith traditions and for new resources to be developed to facilitate this inclusion

(Erebus International, 2006; Pascoe, 2005; Toh & Cawagas, 2007; UNESCO, 2005). However, calls for Values Education in Australia have been associated with the promotion of a narrow nationalism under the former Australian Government led by John Howard who suggested Australian values were derived from Judeo-Christian values (Bouma et al., 2007; Halafoff, 2006). This has raised concerns that exclusive and divisive discourses, promoting Christian values over and above the values of other faith traditions and over universal values of tolerance and inclusion are liable to increase alienation and thereby possible radicalisation of youth in minority groups. These discourses also risk legitimising racial and religious vilification in host communities, as was disturbingly witnessed during the 2005 riots at Cronulla beach in Sydney (Halafoff, 2006). Conversely, promoting an inclusive multicultural and multi-faith notion of Australian citizenship is likely to minimise alienation and contribute to more harmonious societies (Halafoff, 2006). Consequently, the promotion of inter-religious education can be seen to be in Australia's national interest.

Despite an increase of inter-religious engagement following the events of September 11, the Australian experience indicates a limited level of understanding among policy-makers and the broader community regarding the need for inter-religious education to promote citizenship and human rights in increasingly religiously diverse societies and of how best these initiatives should be implemented. The following discussion aims to impart a greater awareness of these issues.

Consequences of Rising Religious Diversity

An unanticipated consequence of increased religious diversity is that as religious difference becomes more noticeable, religious identity becomes more salient. For some individuals, religious symbols and dress assert both religious identity and commitment level. A person declaring their religious allegiance by dress or food choices such as a Muslim dressed in *abaya* refusing alcohol may prompt an observer to ask themselves about their own religious identity.

Salience of religion due to increased religious diversity has another unanticipated consequence: the rise of religion as a significant dimension of identity politics. Consequently, religion has become a significant force in both inter-group relations and the development of social policy implementation among migrant and minority groups (Bouma, 2006; Thomas, 2005). For example, Muslim minority communities ensure: adequacy of their supplies of *halal* food; that burial practices are appropriate to their beliefs; and that their children receive faith-friendly education (Bouma, 1994). Also, public advocates initiate debates on moral, ethical and social issues, as motivated by their religious commitments. For example, some Christian groups attempt to stop abortion, limit access to contraceptive and reproductive technologies, and advocate their particular norms of family. Hence, while many in the last decades of the twentieth century expected religion and its role in public moral and ethical decision making to disappear, the twenty-first century has had a significant

resurgence of religion in the public domain (Thomas, 2005), which can be attributed to increases in religious diversity.

Thus increases in religious diversity have increased religion's salience in places formerly dominated by single religious orientations, or alternatively, by secularity. Increased salience of religious identity, belief and practice also lead to increased attempts to implement religious ideologies through public policy (Bouma, 2006). These attempts often bring to the fore issues about human rights, freedom of religious belief and practice and the conflict between them. Due to their secular standpoints, few policy developers, let alone journalists who report these conflicts have adequate education in inter-religious relations and the complexity of these issues in multi-faith and multicultural contexts. What is becoming increasingly clear is that secular positions are also value committed and grounded in metaphysical assumptions. They are neither neutral nor objective (Habermas, 2006).

Religious Diversity, Resurgence and the Need for Inter-religious Education

Religion began its return to the public sphere in the late 1970s with the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and then, the decision of American evangelical Christians to re-enter policy debates. Since September 11, 2001 and subsequent events of religious inspired terrorism – Bali, Madrid, London and Iraq – the role of religion in legitimating violent protest, as well as supporting peace-making activities has become clearer (Appleby, 2000; Thomas, 2005). The possibility of inter-religious or intra-religious conflict boiling over into serious local or even global conflict is a feature of the early twenty-first century. Some writers construct the history of the relationships between Christianity and Islam to emphasise the possibility of conflict (Huntington, 1993) while others point to the conflict within Islam as a greater threat (Nasr, 2006). While some radical Muslim minorities preach hatred of the West, and some similarly radical Christian groups preach hatred of Islam (Cimino, 2005), other groups, both Christian and Muslim, are deeply committed to dialogue, engaging with each other to promote inter-faith understanding and peace (Bouma, 2008).

The return of religion to the public sphere increases the importance of inter-religious education and dialogue among the religions and spiritualities of the world. The association of some elements of each religious community with violence makes urgent the need for deeper understanding of each group's diversity. It also places responsibility for managing religious diversity and promoting dialogue squarely in the hands of governments and NGOs.

The rise of religious diversity also brings competition among religious groups (Stark & Finke, 2000; Stolz, 2006) who often make contradicting claims about the validity of their religious goods. Religious diversity also raises the possibility of social conflict and tension between religious groups. These consequences of diversity lead societies to establish protocols and policies to manage religious diversity (Bouma, 1999). Among policy-makers attempts to manage religious diversity

require full appreciation of the nature of the religious and spiritual dimensions of life, the complexity of inter-religious relations and self-awareness of policy-maker biases and preferences in this area.

The management of religious diversity takes several forms (Bouma, 1999, 2006; Richardson, 1998). No society is completely *laissez-faire* about things religious. Some states including France and Switzerland, take the view that they need to protect their citizens from potential harm. Others like Australia and the United States prefer to let the 'religious market' decide what citizens want and need. Some states support religious monopolies like Saudi Arabia, Britain before the early nineteenth century, and Spain under Franco. Other states, such as Russia, Britain, Italy, Malaysia and Egypt have laws explicitly favouring one religious group, while permitting others to operate in their territory (Shterin & Richardson, 1998; Guan, 2005).

Some Goals and Topics Critical for Inter-religious Education for Citizenship and Human Rights

The need for inter-religious education has become clear. Those needing such education include policy-makers, religious leaders, government officials and ordinary citizen each of whom need to come to an appreciation of the diversity of religious belief and practice in their societies, but also an appreciation of the religious dimension of life which has been sadly demeaned in the secularism of educational institutions and research assumptions of the latter third of the twentieth century.

Moreover, the context of this education is best if it is inter-religious – that is comprises persons from a diversity of religious backgrounds. The mode of education is best if it embodies the ideals toward which the education strives (Bouma, Lentini, Dellal & Halafoff, 2007). In responding to a call to 'educate imams' a team from Monash University devised an inter-religious course for civic participation for all clergy – without exceptions for any faith – who had arrived in Australia in the previous 2 years. Participant clergy included Muslims, Buddhists, Latter Day Saints, Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostals, among others. The presenters included Muslims, Christians, secularists and Buddhists. The fact that these clergy would be serving in a multi-faith society was brought home in this inter-religious environment as they learned that they faced similar issues. Inter-religious education must itself be inter-religious in its mode of delivery.

In the conduct of inter-religious education a few distinctions are critical. These are distinctions which those without training or exposure to religious and spiritual life find difficult. The first is the distinction between religious competition and religious conflict. The instant there is more than one provider of religious goods in a society the need for management of competition arises. One group may be given a monopoly, due to the outlawing of religions; or all groups may be allowed to offer their wares to let the market decide in an environment of free competition. Competition may be 'fair' with open disclosure of intent, costs and opportunities; or 'unfair' with deception, vilification of 'the other' and misrepresentation of intent.

There are also examples of unfair competition where religions describe each other inaccurately or negatively as with the 'Jews for Jesus' programmes, which pose as Jewish organisations but in reality are Christian churches. Australia has laws regulating commercial competition which could also apply to inter-religious competition. For example, some Australian states have laws making religious vilification an offence, while in Canada religious vilification is a criminal offence. In competing, religious groups seek to increase or retain their share of the religious consumer market.

Religious conflict must be distinguished from religious competition. When religious groups are in conflict, each seeks elimination of 'the other'. Attempts to drive out groups such as The Church of Scientology in Germany and Switzerland are instances of religious conflict. This may be an attempt to retain or establish a monopoly, or to completely eliminate a particular group. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is a classic case – each has a religiously legitimated commitment to eliminate the other. The conflict between Catholic and Protestant in Ireland is another example. In conflict, one party seeks the elimination of the other.

A second set of important distinctions are those between religious resurgence, fundamentalisation and radicalisation. Religious resurgence is a general renewal of interest and commitment in religion. The history of religion reveals that levels of commitment to religion vary from time to time, and following a period of decline we are now in a time of revitalisation (Armstrong, 2000; Thomas, 2005). Many who were accustomed to secularised, intellectualised and tame forms of religion – like those of mainline American denominations and their counterparts around the world – have been startled by the rise of charismatic and Pentecostal forms of Christianity and by recent increases in the levels of faith commitment of Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus.

Throughout history, the religious commitment and the salience of religion have ebbed and flowed. Some had thought that the more recent ebb, which started in the mid-1950s, would be the end of religion. They were wrong. Some increases in religious commitment and involvement will be 'fundamentalist' which can be seen as an insistence on literalistic forms of scriptural interpretation, adherence to difficult beliefs and standards of purity. Both resurgence and fundamentalisation will be associated with increased attempts to put faith into practice and shape social policy to religious beliefs and ethics.

Radicalisation occurs when members of a religious group – usually characterised by a high degree of fundamentalisation given their failure to achieve desired ends by legitimate means – begin to seek extra-political ways to influence social policy, including the use of violence. The most dramatic example of religious radicalisation is the theological legitimisation of suicide bombers attacking civilian targets. Radicalisation usually occurs because a group is or feels excluded from legitimate means of social change by deliberate exclusion or repression. The role of inter-religious education in this case is to empower religious leaders to be more able to secure their needs by using legitimate means and to educate politicians and social service bureaucrats about the legitimate needs of religious groups and persons.

The rise of religious diversity, both within and between groups, raises the possibility of misunderstandings or conflict as some groups seek to dominate and impose their views on others. This may lead to unproductive relations among religious groups and the undermining of social cohesion. In this context inter-religious education may help both to prevent and reduce the negative consequences of inter-group misunderstanding and hostility.

Religious Diversity, Resurgence and the Conduct of Inter-religious Education for Citizenship and Promotion of Human Rights

Since the rise of counter-terrorism as a social policy response to September 11, governments have taken a greater interest in promoting harmony among religious groups. While much of their activities are directed at Muslims, presenting Islam as a particular challenge to Western societies, post-Cold War religious diversity is much greater than simply, 'Muslims vs. the Rest'. At national levels, internal religious differences threaten to become regional conflict (Nasr, 2006). Sri Lanka is beset with conflicts of a partial religious dimension (Appleby, 2000) and India suffers from conflict between Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. As demonstrated in these situations, dialogue among all religious groups is now essential to building and maintaining social cohesion. Increasingly, the role of religion in peace-building as well as conflict resolution is becoming evident (Appleby, 2000). In order to make this possible, leaders and ordinary members both require inter-religious education to learn essential skills and background information. Many also need education about their own religious background to enhance their confidence which is essential to healthy inter-group relations.

Groups who make the effort to participate in inter-religious education are exceptional. Without great discipline, dialogue between these 'agreeable groups' can descend into polite conversation, rather than exploration and appreciation of difference. Such dialogue is only based on commonalities. It quickly becomes banal and is far from 'cutting edge' in the development of inter-group understanding. Substantial dialogue involves the genuine encounter of the 'self' and the 'other'. Each party learns of the 'other', refrains from judgement, holds fear at bay and continues to be fully themselves, neither relinquishing their own place nor denying place to the other (Pratt, 2005).

Attempts to promote inter-group harmony often come from people outside existing religious groups. For example, the ecumenical movement, which aimed to reduce inter-group hostility and tensions among Christian groups, was primarily driven by, and resulted in, para-church organisations. These included the World Council of Churches, Reformed World Alliance and World Evangelical Federation. The ecumenical movement was also driven by inter-religious organisations such as the Anglican-Roman Catholic Inter-Church Consultation, National Associations of Christians and Jews, and the Jewish, Christian and Muslim Association. Some

of these groups were motivated to reduce the differences among Christian groups, which they found embarrassing to their attempts to spread Christianity. Others sought to reduce inter-religious conflict. Some Christian religious groups have adopted ecumenism as official policy, although many have not. The ecumenical movement also established an extensive educational programme to change attitudes toward religious differences, to promote mutual respect and productive harmony among previously antagonistic religious groups. In this it provides a model for inter-religious education in the twenty-first century.

In contexts of religious diversity, multi-religious peace-building approaches through dialogue and education are more likely to produce community building and deliver enhanced understanding and the interweaving networks necessary for lasting harmony (Bouma et al., 2007; Pratt, 2005). Unlike many other approaches to dialogue, this approach presumes and values diversity and does not denigrate or ‘paper over’ differences. Rather differences between religions are considered as resources. Focusing only on what is shared is a way of denying difference. It is often easier for groups to focus on non-religious issues and problems – such as social justice, poverty, hunger and the environment – than to dialogue about matters of faith. While there is much to commend this strategy in bringing groups ‘to the table’, it fundamentally leaves groups ignorant about each other and does not clarify mutual misconceptions and myths. Conversely, a multi-faith peace-building approach aims to reduce conflict, partly by increasing knowledge of the uniqueness of each group and the particular ways each group inculcates universal values – universal because they are essential to the sustainability of any social group.

The fact of increasing religious diversity heightens the need for inter-religious education, but consequences of diversity make inter-religious education problematic. Increased diversity brings increased intensity in religious commitment, a rise in the salience of religious identity in diverse societies, and more intense debates about social policy. Each of these consequences makes inter-religious education more awkward. Increased diversity also leads to religious revitalisation, and groups with recently renewed faith hold their positions with less confidence and more stridence, finding communication with others tense.

Inter-religious Education and Conflict Management by Governments

Governments manage religious diversity to promote social cohesion and reduce conflict (Richardson 1998; Bouma 1999, 2006). To discourage conflict between religious groups, governments can limit the range of religions that may have legitimate access to citizens; they may impose heavy sanctions for specific acts of aggression, or vilification; and they may actively promote harmony among religious groups (Cahill et al., 2004; Bouma, Lentini, et al., 2007; Bouma, et al., 2007)

Efforts to promote inter-religious harmony through religious education in the guise of inter-religious dialogue have become more prominent since 2001. For

example, in March 2007, the Australian government conducted the *Deliberative Survey*, a weekend of discussion on the social opportunities of Muslim in Australia. Representatives from across the various sections of Australian Islam; from other religions, and from secular viewpoints, spoke about Islam, Muslims and their meaning for Australia. Speakers included those with highly uncompromising and inflammatory views (Steketee, 2007). However, others spoke from viewpoints that were more tolerant and accepting of others and undermining to the uncompromising views. 'The dynamic that emerged was that Australians who had informed themselves about the issues discarded arguments they rightly saw as coming from the fringes. Instead, they accepted what moderates told them' (Steketee 2007). The conference, therefore, led to a substantial public discussion of all points, which was hopefully fair, democratic and educative for those of all views. Given the publicity of event and the social influence of many participants, the *Deliberative Survey* should also have been educative for the public.

Another example involving governments and powerful families was initiated during an official visit to Jordan in the 1980s when the British and Jordanian royal families discussed the need for efforts to 'counteract the tendency . . . of the media and others to concentrate on the excesses of extremism – not least religious extremism – and encourage a refocus on values which those who look to religion to guide their behaviour have in common' (Webley, 1996, p. 52). They decided that a pertinent context in which to confront this task was in business ethics. The two royal families, with Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, arranged meetings of Christians, Muslims and Jews from royal families and the business, academic and ecclesiastical professions to discuss business ethics within the context of their respective faiths. The meetings undertook to arrive at 'principles' and 'guidelines' based on common religious philosophies while acknowledging theological differences (Webley, 1996, p. 53).

The exercise itself was insightful for participants who 'realised that they had more in common than they originally thought and that the issues they were addressing were timely and important' (Webley, 1996, p. 53). Hence dialogue promoted stronger business and general inter-faith relations. The group discovered mutual concerns over the rise of values, such as 'selfishness and dishonesty' which they commonly saw as 'detrimental to the wholesome development of human beings', at the expense of 'generosity and integrity' (Webley, 1996, p. 53).

In 1994 at St James Palace, London, a document was released: *An Interfaith Declaration. Code of Ethics on International Business for Christians, Muslims and Jews* (Center for Global Ethics, 1993). The document recognised four ethical concepts common to the given faiths and relevant to international business. These concepts were 'justice', 'mutual respect', 'stewardship' and 'honesty' (Webley, 1996). Further, and pertinently here, the group advocated the inclusion of the *Interfaith Declaration* in formal programmes of business education (Webley, 1996). The activity that led to the production of the *Interfaith Declaration* was an example of educative inter-faith dialogue where issues of major importance were discussed and resulted in an initiative in effective inter-religious education for corporate citizenship and human rights (OECD, 2001).

Conclusion

Religion is becoming more diverse across the world and is in a period of revitalisation. One consequence of diversity and revitalisation is a rise in the demand for inter-religious education. People increasingly need to be aware of religious differences and sensitivities. They also need confidence and skills in addressing religious concerns in policy debates. In this context religious educators need to be able to deliver programmes about diverse religions, preferably in educational contexts that are themselves religiously diverse and to people from all walks of life and ages. Australian experiences demonstrate that while there has been documented success of inter-religious education in dispelling misconceptions and developing greater understanding of diverse religious communities, there is a need for further research in this area. Inter-religious literacy has become essential to the conduct of daily life, social cohesion and the exercise of the duties of citizenship in increasingly multi-faith societies.

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Children's Right to Religion and Religious Education

Friedrich Schweitzer

Introduction

This chapter introduces the understanding that children's rights must also include their right to religion and to religious education. In critical conversation with the 1989 Convention on Children's Rights of the United Nations as well as with earlier declarations of such rights, the author maintains that there is a need to become clearer about children's religious rights and about their educational implications. From his point of view, all children have religious or spiritual potentials and needs. They ask questions of an ultimate kind that require (potentially) religious answers. Children cannot adequately be supported in their development if this dimension of their growing up and of their making sense of the world is excluded from education. Moreover, basing one's approach on children's rights also makes it necessary to follow a child-centred approach to religious education.

This chapter deals, then, with an aspect of children's rights that so far has not received the attention it deserves, neither in the legal discussion nor in the educational debate.¹ It is rarely stated that children have a right to religion and that they are entitled to the religious education they themselves or their parents desire. If religion comes up in the context of children's rights at all, the focus most often is not on children's right to religion but on issues like the possibly detrimental influences of religious indoctrination or of religious abuse of children through some kind of upbringing that hardly deserves the name of nurture or education. Yet for children themselves, religion is much less a source of conflict or a field of injury. Instead, many children experience religion or spirituality quite positively as enriching and as valuable for their lives.

The attempt to establish children's rights has often been called one of the major twentieth-century projects, with the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights

F. Schweitzer (✉)

Evangelisch-theologische Fakultät, Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany
e-mail: sekretariat.schweitzer@uni-tuebingen.de

¹ The present article has been written for publication in this volume. It includes material published earlier, mostly from my book Schweitzer (2000), and from Schweitzer (2005).

of the Child being one of the final results. This Convention is rightfully considered a milestone in the history of childhood and on the way towards more humane attitudes towards children. Yet while the issue of spiritual development has played a clear role in the struggle for children's rights ever since the first declaration on children's rights – the Geneva Declaration – was accepted in 1924, the 1989 Convention is not very clear or explicit in its reference to children's right to religion and to religious or spiritual education. The aim of this chapter is to show in what sense the 1989 Convention is lacking in this respect and to investigate the possibilities for establishing such a right not only in legal terms but also on pedagogical grounds. Furthermore, the question is raised as to how a children's rights perspective must affect the understanding and the praxis of religious or spiritual nurture and education.

Terminology is always a difficult matter. This is especially true when terms like "religious" and "spiritual" or "nurture" and "education" come into play. These terms and their equivalents have different meanings in different languages, and even British and American English do not fully agree concerning the distinction between "religious nurture" and "religious education". This distinction is now more or less taken for granted in the United Kingdom while references to "religious education" in the United States can be much broader and consequently can include settings like the family or the congregation. In the following I do not intend to introduce new terminology or to contribute to the elaboration of existing distinctions. I use the term "religious education" in a very broad sense, asking readers to keep in mind that my use of the term includes the dimension called spiritual as well as the religious, and that it refers to nurture as well as to education.

Religion in the 1989 Convention on Children's Rights and in the Contemporary Discussion

Given the weight and importance of the 1989 Convention on Children's Rights, it makes sense to start out with some reminders concerning the ways in which religion is addressed in this Convention.

Children's Right to Religion and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

It has been noted several times that the references to religion in the 1989 Convention created many controversies among different countries. For the most part, such controversies focused on Article 14 which states:

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians and provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, morals, or the fundamental rights and freedom of others.

It is easy to see that the first two paragraphs can be in tension with each other. What if the child, exercising his or her "freedom of religion", refuses to accept the "direction" of the parents? And what about the basic educational rights of parents? Are they respected in this article?

In the debates before the adoption of the 1989 Convention, many doubts were raised against the wisdom as well as against the applicability of Article 14.1 (cf. Dorsch, 1994 for additional background information):

The Working Group which drafted the Convention warned that Article 14 could potentially become a charged issue. It was noted in the Working Group that "in many countries a child follows the religion of his parents and does not generally make a choice of his own".² Bangladesh submitted an observation to the Working Group in 1986 cautioning that the article "appears to run counter to the traditions of the major religious systems in the world and in particular to Islam. It appears to infringe upon the sanctioned practice of child rearing in the religion of his parents." They also warned that the "drafted article will give rise to considerable difficulties in application" (Veerman & Sand, 1999, pp. 386–387).

As I show below, after the adoption of the 1989 Convention this critical discussion concerning the child's freedom of religion as stated in Article 14 continued as well. The discussion has clearly tended to focus on the controversial questions raised by Article 14. This should not make us overlook, however, that the 1989 Convention includes additional perspectives on children's right to religion that may be even more important for education.

The second place where religion or spirituality figure prominently in the 1989 Convention has received much less attention and has not been under dispute in any way comparable to Article 14. I am referring to Article 27 that reads:

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.
3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

² The quotes are taken from one of the commentaries on the 1989 Convention, cf. Veerman & Sand, 1999, 386.

4. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to secure the recovery of maintenance for the child from the parents or other persons having financial responsibility for the child, both within the State Party and from abroad. In particular, where the person having financial responsibility for the child lives in a State different from that of the child, States Parties shall promote the accession to international agreements or the conclusion of such agreements, as well as the making of other appropriate arrangements.

The fact that there have been far less controversies around the regulations of Article 27 is probably due, among others, that it does not include strong or direct demands concerning religion on anybody, neither on the parents nor on the state or other institutions. Yet Article 27.1 clearly includes the duty to support the child's "spiritual development". It requires "standards of living" that make it possible for the child to develop spiritually as well as in other dimensions of human life. It seems obvious that there is at least a possible relationship between this clause and corresponding tasks for education, even if one has to admit that "standard of living" is not the same as education.

It is important to note that the reference to spiritual rights of the child has had a long history in the struggle for children's rights. The very first declaration on children's rights – the 1924 Geneva Declaration on *Protection de l'enfance* (the protection of childhood) – only comprises five points. The first of them states that the child must be in position to "develop normally, in material and spiritual respect" (quoted according to Dorsch, 1994, p. 330). In this case, as far as spiritual development is concerned, no distinction is made between standard of living and education. The spiritual development of the child is connected to both – material and educational provisions.

Compared to the more holistic 1924 statement on children's rights, Article 27.1 of the 1989 Convention seems to be more narrow. The context in which spiritual rights are placed in this case is about standards of living like health care and social security. Article 27.2 names the "primary responsibility" of the parents "to secure...the conditions of living necessary for the child's development" while the state is to support the parents in this respect through "material assistance...particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing" (Article 27.3 of the 1989 Convention). The next article in the 1989 Convention, Article 28, explicitly refers to education but does not mention spirituality or religion anymore. The placement of the reference to spiritual development primarily within the context of parental responsibilities and of the state's material aid to parents in need seems to imply that religious education is a private matter, most of all a parental concern and only indirectly refers to an obligation for the wider community and the state or for the educational institutions maintained by the state like, for example, schools or institutions of elementary education.

In sum, the 1989 Convention, in Article 14, prominently emphasizes the liberal idea of religious freedom – in the sense of non-infringement – which must be protected, most of all against the state's historically proven proclivity to safeguard its subjects' loyalty by determining their religious adherence, but possible also against

parental religious constraints within the family itself. With this second meaning, it highlights the changing roles of parents and children within the family by clearly giving more weight to the freedom of the child rather than to the “direction” exerted by the parents. The Convention is less outspoken about the child’s right to having access to the religious education that the child or the parents desire. From my point of view, this is a clear shortcoming of the 1989 Convention.

Articles 14 and 27 are the only ones in the 1989 Convention which directly refer to religion. Other articles concerning, for example, the identity of the child (Article 8), the child’s “personality, talents and mental and physical abilities”, the child’s “cultural identity, language and values” and even concerning aims like “the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance” (Article 29), that may be considered to refer to the context of religion – tolerance is often related to religious issues (Schweitzer & Schwöbel, 2007) – do not mention religion. From an educational point of view, they may have important implications for religious education (cf. Hull, 1998, pp. 59–62, Schweitzer, 2000, pp. 127–134) but the legal basis in the 1989 Convention for such inductions is not very strong.

This critical view can be supported further with the observation that Article 28 which states the “right of the child to education” also does not mention spirituality or religion as part of this educational right. According to the Convention, the child has no legal claim to religious education. Thus the 1989 Convention on children’s rights clearly recognizes the child’s spiritual development as an essential aspect of growing up but it falls short of the necessary consequences concerning education. It does not require the state to provide the educational opportunities necessary for supporting the child in his or her spiritual development. The absence of such a requirement most likely reflects the different opinions concerning, for example, religious education in state schools which prevail in different countries. Some countries that do not offer religious education as part of the curriculum in state-sponsored schools may have been afraid of the possible implications of an educational right of the child in relationship to religion. But such explanations can hardly be accepted as a sufficient answer to the critical question why an essential aspect of human development is acknowledged in general but denied or at least neglected for all purposes of education.

Finally, it is important to note that the 1989 Convention does also not include the equivalent to the following clause from the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief:

Every child shall enjoy the right to have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of his parents, or, as the case may be, legal guardians and shall not be compelled to receive teaching on religion or belief against the wishes of his parents or legal guardians, the best interests of the child being the guiding principle.

In this case, “access to education in the matter of religion or belief” is guaranteed to the child, not against his or her parents’ wishes but in line with them. This is exactly what the 1989 Convention is lacking in this respect. It does not include religion clearly enough with the educational rights of the child.

Contemporary Discussions

Religious educators were quick to point out the possible implications of the 1989 Convention for religious education. On the occasion of the United Kingdom's ratification of the Convention in 1990, John Hull – a leading religious educator in the United Kingdom – observes that “the spiritual rights of the child . . . are located by the Convention not first in the education of the child but in its standard of living”. Hull seems to appreciate this allocation of “spiritual rights”: “Spirituality, we are thus reminded, is not only to do with the ‘spirit’ but with the physical well-being of the child”. I think Hull is right that teachers “must be particularly concerned with those children who come to school under-nourished and poorly clothed, from homes struggling to escape the poverty trap” (Hull, 1998, p. 59). This is the positive meaning of placing spiritual rights in the context of living standards. Yet I am doubtful if the appreciation for this placement should also be maintained once we consider the broader context of education and religious education. Does the Convention really do justice to religious education? Is it a sufficient basis for giving this dimension its due place in education? My considerations concerning these questions above must at least raise serious doubts in this respect.

The legal debate following the adoption of the 1989 Convention has not paid much attention to children's right to religion. There are few authors who have spoken for this right and who argue that it should be addressed much more prominently (Veerman & Sand, 1999, Ahdar, 2002). For the most part, the legal discussion on children's rights has either neglected religion altogether or it has focused on conflicts, for the most part, around Article 14 of the Convention.

Conservative Christians in the United States in particular have taken offence with the 1989 Convention's liberal guarantee of religious freedom for the child because they perceive this as anti-family. Their “pro-family worldview” includes the claim to strong educational rights of the parents, among others in relationship to religion and to giving the child clear religious directions (cf. Butler, 2000, pp. 363–364). For example, according to this point of view, parents must definitely have the right to require a child to go to church, independently of the child's consent. Children's rights are considered an obstacle to this kind of religious nurture or education. Other discussions revolve around the issue of religious identity formation and of how far parents are entitled to influence this process. The background of this discussion is, among others, adoption, with its specific intersection of competing parental rights. Another background concerns the parents' right to choose some kind of religious education for the child (Scolnicov, 2007). Mandatory religious education within the state school can also be an issue in this respect because some parents may consider it as violation of their parental rights, their own religious freedom and of the religious freedom of their children (for example in Norway, cf. Hoestmaelingen, 2005, or in other countries with a state religion, Veerman & Sand, 1999). Finally, there are wholesale attacks on religious nurture or education in the name of children's rights. Recently, such fundamentally critical views have received much attention, for example, through the popular work of the Oxford evolutionist Richard Dawkins (Dawkins, 2006, pp. 349–387) but they have a much longer history, all the way

back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's plea for an education without religious influence in the eighteenth century or to Sigmund Freud's critique of childhood religion in the name of human autonomy in early twentieth century. Legally, these critical views are not necessarily convincing (for an evaluation see Ahdar, 2002). Yet their new prominence again indicates that the discussion on children's rights in relationship to religion after the adoption of the 1989 Convention has focused, at least for the most part, not on the possibly enriching aspects of religion or of religious education for the child but much more on the possible conflicts around religious freedom of parents or children, including children's freedom from religion.

I am far from saying that the issue of religious freedom should receive less attention. Religious freedom remains a basic right that must be protected, in the interest of parents and of children. Yet the focus on conflicts around religious freedom should not be everything to be said about the relationship between children's rights and religious education. Children do not only need protection from detrimental influences – they also need support for their development. This is why we need to reconnect the legal debate and the educational understanding of children's rights, especially children's right to religion.

From Legal to Pedagogical Perspectives: The Educational Rationale for Children's Right to Religion

Many educators tend to consider legal questions unimportant for their work. According to their point of view, education is about personal relationships and about inter-personal interaction and involvement. Personal involvement can hardly be enforced by law. It must grow from deep respect for the other and from commitment to the other, in the case of education, to the children and youth the educator is working with.

An educator myself, I can agree with this statement. In the praxis of education, children's right to religion should not be seen as a legal question in the first place. What really matters for children is not what is written in legal documents but what they actually experience in the process of growing up. Yet there can be no doubt that laws are important for educational processes as well. Legal obligations concerning mandatory schooling, for example, have clearly changed and, for the most part, such changes have improved the prospects for children by giving them and their parents more choices. Similarly, the requirement for schools to provide religious education can improve the accessibility of this kind of education. Moreover, children's rights can function as moral standards that can influence political will and general attitudes in society. This is why it remains important to continue with the struggle for children's rights. They are important for legal issues no less than for education and for society's attitudes towards children. This is also true for children's right to religion that has not only been neglected in the legal discussion but in education as well.

Children's right to religion or spirituality implies much more than the organizational provision of religious education as part of the curriculum. It refers to attitudes

and convictions of parents and teachers who, from the perspective of this right, should come to recognize that children need their support, affirmation, and guidance in respect to religion no less than in other areas of nurture and education. In the absence of such attitudes and convictions, legal guarantees will not have any helpful consequences, especially not in the field of religious education which, by its very nature, is concerned with matters of personal convictions.

It should also be clear from the beginning, however, that recognizing religious nurture and education as a right of the child has strong and far-reaching implications for the ways in which religious education should be carried out. In fact, this recognition forces us to reconsider most of the traditional understandings in this field. Traditionally, most often and in many places, the aims and contents of religious education were determined by authorities and not by the child or by the needs of children. Such authorities could be the parents themselves (whose right “to provide direction to the child” is again asserted in the 1989 Convention in Article 14.2). Or it was – and is – the authority of a religious tradition, of a church or religious community, or even the authority of the state with the attempt of inculcating some kind of civic values based on religion. Opposed to all views deriving the need for religious education from such authorities and from their claims on the child, a children’s rights approach will make the child its first point of reference. The question what children need inevitably becomes an important starting point, and the answer to this question can no longer be given by adults who presuppose that it is they who always know best about the true needs of children. Even if children, at least during their first years of life, cannot speak for themselves, we must be prepared to learn how to carefully observe, and to intensively listen to, what they may tell us in their special ways of communicating. We must be prepared that even young people might have something meaningful to contribute to their own religious development and education. Respect for the religion of the child is an immediate implication for any educational approach that claims children’s rights as its basis.

I am not arguing here for a return to the romanticist visions of the naïvely child-centred approaches of early twentieth century that, like in the well-known case of Ellen Key (1978), the author of the *Century of Childhood* first published in the year 1900, claim that children should discover their own religion without any adult interference. I am also not claiming that we should forget about and give up all religious traditions and authoritative sources like the Bible in order to invent a new religion that supposedly could better fit the child. This kind of romanticist attitude amounts to a naïve view of children and of religion which is no less distortive than the views which it tries to replace. What is needed instead is an attitude towards children as human beings who should be respected as partners in dialogue even if they continue to need our care and support in many respects. The choice is not between the completely dependent and the completely self-reliant and autonomous child. Rather, it is the continued combination and balance between perfect respect for the child and the need to make responsible choices for the child. It is easy to see, however, that this kind of balance presupposes new ways in religious education – or at least a critical examination of the traditional ways in which children have been nurtured or educated in religion. The critics mentioned above who reject religious education

altogether because they can only imagine it as some kind of indoctrination, certainly go too far. They are not willing to look into the benefits that supportive kinds of religious education will actually yield to the child. Yet their criticism must be taken seriously. All religious education should be clearly in line with the interest of the child.

In sum, the reference to children's right to religion must be translated into educational models, and it must aim for educational attitudes and approaches that take children seriously as active centres of experience rather than merely as objects of education. In terms of education, children's right to religion entails consequences and demands on educational institutions that are required to make religious education accessible for those who desire it, but also on the shape of religious education that must be fully adapted to the need of children.

This kind of understanding of children's rights follows the lead of earlier educationists like the Polish-Jewish physician and educator Janusz Korczak (1967; 1970, the original Polish publications go back to the 1920s and 1930s) who, as a pioneer in the field of children's rights, tried to translate the legal claims of the children's rights movement into educational models. One of his most famous books is about *The Child's Right to Respect* (Korczak, 1970) – which indicates the attitude which Korczak wanted to achieve. Children should no longer be treated as less valuable and as less respectable than adults. Their needs should be taken very seriously, their feelings should never be disrespected and their voices should no longer be silenced. In this manner, Korczak carves out a new type of philosophy of education in the name of the child (and his death in a German concentration camp, at the side of the foster children living with him, can be seen as the factual corollary of his powerful writings).

Consequently, one of the main tasks in the context of religious nurture and education is to convince parents and educators that children have a right to religion. In my own work in the field of religious development and education (Schweitzer, 1987; 2000; 2004b), I have tried to establish the understanding that there are questions which arise in the life of all children and which possess an at least potentially religious meaning. These questions are sometimes called the "big questions" because they refer to matters of life and death or to the meaning of life. They indicate that the spiritual or religious dimension is indeed a fundamental dimension in the process of growing up and that this dimension should not be neglected.

Over the years, in my empirical as well as historical and hermeneutical research on religious development and education, I have identified five such questions of potential religious meaning (for a fuller description see Schweitzer, 2000, also Schweitzer, 1987; 2004a, Chapter 2, 2004b). They include questions which children pose to us explicitly. But they also include questions which children *are* for us and which they confront us with through their being with us as their parents or educators.

The first of these questions refers to death and dying. All children encounter this question sooner or later, and many of them encounter it all too soon in this world of violence and aggression. But even with the most protected childhood, children will eventually come across the dead bird on their way home from school or they will

learn of the death of their friend's relative and maybe even be confronted with the death of a parent.

This is not the place for an extended discussion of the different ways in which children deal with the issue of death and dying or of the attitudes that different cultures and religions may include – this would be an important topic of its own. Yet some examples may be helpful – not for proving my point but at least in terms of illustration. The following conversation between a German child at the age of approximately 5 years with his father (taken from Biesinger, 1994, p. 16) indicates what questions can ensue from children's encounter with death and dying, at least within a broadly Christian setting:

Child: All people die, right father?

Father: All people die.

Child: But you will not die. (Pause) Then I am so alone.

Father: Of course we will also die. But now we are still alive.

Child: And who decides when you die? (Pause) Does God make this decision?

Father: God decides. You know, when one is old, maybe one does not want to live any longer.

Child: But you are old already. And where shall I go?

Father: God will send you to a new father.

Child: You will not die before I grow up, and even one day later. And after you die, I will go to my grandmother.

This conversation shows how a child brings up the question of death and dying. It is important for this child to think about what happens if his parents die. Death appears to be a social threat in the first place, that is, losing the people the child has to depend on. The father is taken by surprise but tries to find answers that the child can understand and accept. In the end, however, the father's suggestion of God sending the child to a new father which is meant to comfort the child, fails to meet the child's actual needs. A new father cannot be a comfort for the child because this father would exactly imply what the child seems to fear most – being with people who are not familiar to him. It is the child himself who, in the end, finds a creative solution: "And after you die, I will go to my grandmother". As opposed to the "new father", the idea of the grandmother is comforting because she is familiar and obviously trustworthy to the child.

This example suggests that children have a need to include the question of death and dying in their conversations with parents or educators. For them, such questions are not only a private matter to be pondered secretly when they are by themselves. They want to know what the adults around them think about it. They are looking for support, affirmation and guidance. Not addressing this need would clearly fail the child in an important respect.

Another example comes from the book *Do Children Need Religion?* written by Martha Fay (1993), a mother and journalist in the United States. Fay relates how her 3-year-old daughter Anna started asking questions about death and dying after her grandmother had died. Anna wants to know why her grandmother died, and no reference to old age or failing health seems to be a sufficient answer to

her repeated questions. Anna wants to know what “dead” really means and where “people go when they die”. It is fascinating to read how the mother slowly but surely comes to understand that Anna’s questions are not about rational explanations but about the *meaning* of death. Yet Anna’s questions remain a challenge for the adults:

Nor, we soon realized, would her father and I long remain her exclusive informants. Within a few months, her friend Ian’s grandmother had also died, but unlike Nanny [Anna’s grandmother; F.S.], this lucky woman, according to her grandson, had gone straight to heaven, which turned out to be right where I had left it as a child, and where Anna – hearing about it, as far as we knew, for the first time – seemed to think it properly belonged: directly overhead, out of sight behind the clouds. (Fay, 1993, pp. 6–7)

This example indicates that we can answer children’s questions about death and dying without reference to religion, for example, by limiting our responses to so-called rational explanations. Such explanations clearly fall short of what many children are interested in. Moreover, we should also wonder what kind of worldview we are conveying to them through our answers.

So-called rational answers tend to emphasize that humans just have to die sooner or later. This is just “how it is”. While this is certainly true in some respects, children may easily draw additional conclusions from this kind of response and, through this, the response may actually turn out not to strengthen rationality but fatalism. If there is no room for hope and wishes in the face of death, if there is no room for anger and disappointment but just for detached (“rational”?) acceptance of what has happened because this is “how it is” – what else in the world is like that? Is everything predetermined and is there no room for feelings and longings because reality just demands compliance?

Space does not allow for a more detailed elaboration on the other questions which, in my view, can be a basis for an educational understanding of the child’s right to religion. So I limit myself to at least mentioning them: Why be moral in a world which is not moral? Who am I and who am I allowed to be? Who (or what) is God? Why do other children call God Allah? – All these questions can be answered in an exclusively rational manner. But for many children, these questions have a different ring, neither mechanic nor rational, neither material nor only pragmatic. Such questions indicate, for the children who pose them or for the adults who see themselves confronted with such questions through the very existence of the children who may not directly raise such questions verbally, that there is a spiritual or religious dimension involved in the process of growing up. And children want this dimension to be addressed openly and directly, no less than other mysteries which they encounter in the world.

Consequences for Religious Education

As has become clear, arguing for children’s right to religion is not only a theoretical matter. It has far-reaching practical implications. These implications refer to the

place of religious nurture and education within the educational ecology of a society, and they also refer to the ways in which religious nurture and education should address the child. As mentioned before, I am not interested in legitimizing whatever adults do with children in the name of religious education. Taking the point of view of children's rights implies a critical reexamination of existing practices of religious nurture and education.

Traditionally, religious education was not perceived as a right of the child (and the legal system is changing only slowly, cf. for Germany: Hildebrandt, 2000). Rather, philosophers as well as politicians considered it a right of the state or of the government which, according to this view, is entitled to the loyalty of the citizens as its obedient subjects. Religious education was often used as a means to secure such loyalties. The most famous example is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's plea for some kind of civil religion which is to furnish the shared values and norms that are necessary for the maintenance of societal order (Rousseau, 1762). In this case, religious education was supposed to function as a basis for such values and norms. No less impressive are the repeated statements of German nineteenth-century kings and Kaisers demanding that school religious education foster the kind of "piety" – an attitude of respect and obedience – which makes the child honour the paternal and God-like authority of the emperor and other father figures (examples, also for the next paragraph, cf. Nipkow & Schweitzer, 1994).

At that time, church and theology also maintained the view that religious education should be seen as a right. Yet they did not think of children's rights but rather of the rights of the church after a child had been baptized. They cast religious education into the terminology of rights or claims of the church in order to demonstrate that parents are not only called upon but are indeed obliged to strictly follow the educational guidelines of the church. Through this, the church attempted to make religious education a formal duty for parents which included that the children participate in the educational programs offered by church or in religious education classes at school.

While none of these traditional views remained unchanged in twentieth century, among others, under the influence of modern democracy, modern education, and the children's rights movement, there still was – and maybe still is – a widespread understanding that religious education should contribute to civic loyalties and should follow the instructions of the church. At the same time, given today's multicultural societies and given the ideas of critical education and of autonomy as the aim of education, this has become a difficult legacy. The more different cultures and religions are present in society, the less the state can rely on any one of them for support. Religion is no longer seen as a unifying bond. Instead it is often considered to be divisive, at least potentially. Consequently, the traditional rationale for religious education becomes more and more tenuous, with critical education questioning its status even further.

Consequently, at least to some degree, the picture has changed drastically in recent years. More and more, families as well as formal educational institutions, for

example, in the field of preschool education seem to be insecure about their tasks in respect to religious education. Current surveys carried out by research teams at the university of Tübingen (Germany) indicate that many German kindergartens (working with children between the age of 3 and 6) tend to exclude the religious dimension altogether. Christian religious education can only be taken for granted in church-sponsored institutions. Muslim religious education as well as inter-religious education appear to be lacking in most institutions, independently of their sponsorship (cf. Schweitzer, Biesinger, & Edelbrock, 2008).

In this situation, basing religious education on the child's own rights becomes an important possibility for at least two reasons. First, religious educators who consider children's rights as the basis for their work, want to do justice to today's view of the child as a person of his or her own rights. Religious education should not fulfil the needs of adults vis-à-vis children – it should acknowledge and affirm what is important for the children themselves. Second, children's rights are the only basis strong enough to function as a rationale for religious education after the respective claims of state and church have lost much of their acceptance and plausibility. At least in the long run and under the conditions of today's views of the child, but also of the church and of the state as well as of education, only a religious education based on children's rights will be convincing for parents, educators and politicians. In many cases, it is only this kind of education based on the needs of the child that they will feel committed to. From this point of view, the multireligious situation of contemporary societies may exclude the traditional ways in which educational institutions tended to educate children into a certain religion. Yet it is easy to see that the experience of plurality – of growing up in the presence of many different religions – creates an even stronger need for religious education. Children exposed to the experience of plurality from early on are in need of support for finding their way in the face of multiple competing options.

If it is true that religious education is a right of the child, it makes sense to argue that no educational ecology can be complete or comprehensive as long as it does not include religious education. There will always be different possibilities of how families, congregations, kindergartens, schools, or other programs for children actually try to do justice to this task. Yet the decisive question to be asked in all cases is if the children will have sufficient access to the support, stimulation, and guidance needed for healthy development. In this sense, the reference to children's right to religion can become a critical question to be raised in relationship to any given educational setting. To repeat the clause from the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief: "Every child shall enjoy the right to have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of his parents".

This statement seems to completely leave open the question what kind of religious education children should be given. Will any access to religious education be equally sufficient and beneficial for the child? Whoever wants to appeal to children's rights in the context of religious education must be prepared to answer this question.

It does not make sense to argue for the interest of the child for something that might turn out to be detrimental to children.

Yet, at the same time, the question about the kind of religious education to be preferred from a children's right perspective remains hard to answer. Quality religious education is seen differently, not only by different religious traditions but often even within one and the same tradition. Liberal Christians and fundamentalist Christians tend to have very different opinions on matters of education and the family. Moreover, the demand for quality religious education may itself come into conflict with human rights issues, especially concerning religious freedom. Clearly, no approach based on democracy and no approach based on children's rights or human rights should ever attempt to determine the contents and directions of religious education. This would be a contradiction in terms. Yet it also does not make sense to argue for children's right to religious education while adhering to a style of authoritarian inculcation or to educational ideals that will hurt the child. Moreover, even the major Christian traditions have allowed for – and sometimes have supported – certain types of religious education which, from today's point of view, are detrimental for children (cf. the overviews in Bunge, 2001).

Non-authoritarian and child-centred approaches to religious education clearly have an affinity to a children's rights approach. In my own work, I have tried to develop such approaches for different age groups, starting with preschool children (Scheilke & Schweitzer, 1999), primary school (Schweitzer & Faust-Siehl, 2000) all the way to adolescence (Schweitzer, 1996), among others in close conversation with developmental psychology and other kinds of research which allow for a better understanding of what children need (Schweitzer, 1987; Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003). Many colleagues in different countries are following the same lead, sometimes in the tradition of developmental psychology, sometimes in the footsteps of educators like Korczak and sometimes creating new visions of spiritual development. This is not the place to review these approaches. In the present context, the most important point with all of them is to demonstrate that a children's rights approach must not turn out to be an empty shell – or, speaking less metaphorically, to avoid the conclusion suggested by critical philosophers of education that there can be no religious education based on children's rights because the very idea of such an education contradicts children's need for autonomy.

Only a type of religious education which does justice to the needs of children as well as to their autonomy can rightfully appeal to children's rights. Any attempt to justify authoritarian types of education or of indoctrination by drawing upon children's rights, must be vain. The attempt of establishing children's right to religion must go hand in hand with the advancement of this right in the theory and praxis of religious education. It should go without saying that any educational approach which claims to be based on children's rights must give special attention to human rights in general. Both must go together: Children's rights are human rights, and religious education should therefore include human rights education. But it should also be clear that no statement of human rights can be complete without special

reference to children's rights, including children's right to religion and to religious education.

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Education for Peace: Exploring the Margins of Human Rights and Religion

Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore

Introduction

Education for peace is an urgent topic in global discourse. As wisdom emerges from diverse regions of the world, this is a good moment to deepen educational efforts by analyzing and extending the present forms. Fresh perspectives are also needed, especially in relation to human rights, which has had a complicated and under-investigated relationship with peace (Forsythe, 1993). Peace educators have attended little to human rights discourse, and even less to the rights of people on social margins. Indeed, women and children only entered human rights discourse in the late twentieth century (Cook, 1994; Peters & Wolper, 1995).

If people can build peace in marginalized areas of human life, we can begin dismantling multiple forms of violence that seep into human lives and cultivate violent life patterns. Domestic violence is one such form. It was omitted from human rights discourse for decades, offering an ironic safe haven for violent action when people were forbidden by law and discouraged by public norms from such action in more public arenas. The purpose of this essay is to contribute to peace building by reviewing the landscape and posing interreligious approaches to peace education with attention to human rights. The intent is to build upon existing approaches, critique obstructive cultural patterns, and reshape peace pedagogies for the future.

In advocating interreligious education for peace, I offer one more stanza to a growing international chorus (Jackson & Fujiwara, 2007, p. 6; Moran, 2006b; Nipkow, 2003; Weisse, 2003). Such education requires a thorough critique of destructive habits of thought and action that pervade many cultures of our globe (Jantzen, 2004). It also requires alertness to signs of peace as they emerge. Educators worldwide are increasingly aware that, to guard human rights and make peace, we need to learn from peacemaking peoples of diverse times and places. We cannot haphazardly repeat patterns from our own contexts or others. Repetitions can lead to

M.E.M. Moore (✉)
Boston University, Boston, MA, USA
e-mail: maryem621@aol.com

missed visions, narrow thinking, or context denial. We need to do sophisticated analysis of the multifarious patterns of destruction and peacemaking that have emerged on the global landscape.

Three aspects of the present landscape are noteworthy. One is complexity, particularly the complexity of human rights, religious communities, interreligious relationships, and the so-called secular movements. Another is the persistence of habituated violence and its challenge to developing habits of peace. A third is the tendency to define human rights ambiguously, or to justify violations of human rights with appeals to other values (such as safety from terror or rebuilding a country). In response, peace education needs to be realistic and visionary, seeking to destabilize the prejudice and fear that nourish violence in dominant worldviews and practices, while generating new possibilities for human relationships and patterns of thought. What is needed is a bold mix of imaginative thinking and innovative action.

Building on research of the past decade, I begin with developments in human rights and the growing attention to rights questions on the social margins. I then explore complexities within religious communities, interreligious relationships, and secular movements as sources and impediments in peace education. I address these complexities briefly here, recognizing that the issues have been extensively engaged by others. In the last section, I turn to the potential of process-relational philosophy to enrich peace education with fresh perspectives and generative practices. This section is a thought experiment, intended to suggest fresh directions in peacemaking and peace education.

Human Rights: A Tangled Web

Human rights itself is a tangled web, intermingled with issues of justice, economics, culture, nationality, gender, age, and sexual orientation. The United Nations, formed in 1945, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. On the recent 60th anniversary, people gathered in religious and human rights settings to celebrate and look to the future. The gatherings encouraged people to remember the Universal Declaration in the hope that we might yet fulfill it. Such a hope requires courage to engage unresolved issues, to reshape visions as new voices raise new questions, and to work persistently in the face of discouragement. How can pedagogy inspire such work? Consider first the tangled web of issues.

Justice

Justice and human rights have been intertwined through recorded history. Historically, human pleas for justice generally predated the rhetoric and social practices of human rights. Justice was already part of public discourse in Greece, for example, before human rights were codified in the laws of Solon (638–559 BCE), which established democracy in Athens with early forms of community rule and rights of appeal.

Justice was also an underlying theme in other early human rights documents. Some scholars claim that the first human rights document was the Cyrus Cylinder, issued in 539 BCE by the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great after he peaceably took over the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The Cylinder promised equality among people who differed in race, language, and religion; provisions for slaves and immigrants to return home; and the restoration of destroyed religious temples (Farrokh, 2007, p. 44). While interpretations of the Cylinder are contested, the Cylinder has been an inspiration in the modern human rights movements (Wikipedia, 2009; Lendering, 2007a; 2007b).

Other documents have also had justice tones, often influenced by religious values. The Edicts of Ashoka in India (270–231 BCE) were shaped by Emperor Ashoka's turn to Buddhism with its concern for right behavior, benevolence, and kind treatment of prisoners (Wikipedia, 2009). A few centuries later, Muhammad issued the Constitution of Medina (622 CE), formalizing an agreement among tribes and families of Yathrib (later Medina), which included Muslims, Jews, and people identified as Pagans (Fishbein, 1997; Watt, 1981). Still later, Christian values influenced the English Magna Carta of 1215 CE, which protected the people (particularly the barons) and the church under King John's rule. This was followed by the British Bill of Rights (1689), the United States Declaration of Independence (1776), and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen approved by the National Assembly of France (1789).

Other declarations have been made through the centuries, but the Universal Declaration of 1948 was the first modern, global statement. The Declaration was created after World War II when peoples of many countries sought to end the crimes of war and human violation. Inhumanity and injustice were the motivating forces: "The modern human rights movement is a 'child' of the twentieth century, and more specifically, a legacy of the horrific crimes committed against humanity in World War II". With the Universal Declaration, nations agreed to allow international monitoring of human treatment within their bounds (119–120). This action superseded nations' earlier resistance to monitoring; however, "the exact relationship between national sovereignty and human rights, or individual sovereignty, remains a matter of intense debate and continued evolution" (Doyle & Gardner, 2003, p. 2). Justice still motivates human rights, but is complicated by diverse ways of defining justice in diverse religious and cultural traditions, as by engrained patterns and justifications of injustice across the world.

Economic Rights

The relationship between economic and human rights has been contested. Both in philosophical discourse and in the United Nations, some argue that economic rights is a basic human right and should be included as part of human rights; others argue that they are both important but distinct and separable (Gavison, 2003, p. 23).

National Diversity

Another complicating factor in human rights is national diversity, which is discussed increasingly in the literature. David Forsythe (1993) made this a central focus of his work, saying: “My basic conclusion about human rights and national peace is that a focus on rights does indeed aid our understanding of the disintegration of, and projected restoration of, national peace, but in different ways in different nations” (ix). Questions of diversity are particularly intense as regards women’s rights (Cook, 1994, pp. 5–9). Further, diverse national histories and cultural values shape diverse approaches to human rights. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights coincided with the formal institution of apartheid in South Africa (Langley, 1999, p. xxvii), which ran exactly counter to the goals of the Universal Declaration.

Gender

Human rights discourse has long been separated from parallel gender discourses. The United Nations established the UN Commission on Human Rights in the same year (1946) that it created the Commission on the Status of Women (Langley, 1999, p. xxvii), but the two efforts were not conceptually or actively interconnected. One movement toward integrating the efforts came in 1979 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which continues to evolve (Cook, 1994, pp. 228–256).

For women, human rights issues include domestic violence; discriminatory social structures; reproductive rights; access to land, economic opportunities, and resources; slavery and sex-trafficking; and rape as an instrument of war (Cook, 1994; Peters & Wolper, 1995). These issues involve personal, communal, and structural violence. Redressing them contributes to peace; however, debates still rage about the private–public split, national sovereignty, and diverse cultural values. Further, some gendered issues are more welcomed into international human rights discourse than others. Elissavet Stamatopoulou (1995) points out that “the impressive expansion” of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights since the 1970s did “almost nothing to draw attention to the human rights of women” (41). Discrepancies continue. The Commission has attended “to women victims of disappearance, torture, religious intolerance, and so on, but has not paid attention to issues of particular concern to women, such as rape, forced marriage, transboundary trafficking of women, ‘honor’ crimes against women, genital mutilation, and other abuses” (41).

This neglect of women is partially due to contested religious and cultural values, as in debates on genital cutting (Toubia, 1995, pp. 224–237; Shell-Duncan & Hernlund, 2000). It is also influenced by the public–private split that leaves some rights ignored because of their identification with the “private” realm (Sullivan, 1995, pp. 126–134; Romany, 1994, pp. 85–115; Copelon, 1994, pp. 116–122). The relationship between religion and human rights has further complicated the picture,

leading some to conclude that the best approaches are secular (Cook, 1994, p. 9). To establish rights and make peace in women's lives requires adroit, persistent work within the tangled web.

Marginalized Communities

I have focused on women, but other communities of people have also been marginalized. Children's rights emerged slowly in the international community, but the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) brought children into focus. Some children's issues are bound with those of women, such as genital cutting (Toubia, 1995, p. 223) and the private–public split (Sullivan, 1995, p. 129). In the latter case, the concern to protect children has led to an increase in family interventions.

Another marginalized group has lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer people. In this case, public prejudice has slowed the process of human rights (Dorf & Perez, 1995, pp. 324–334); yet, attention is increasing to human rights in relation to sexual orientation. These include rights to protection, shared health care and economic benefits, and marriage. These several examples point to the tangled history of human rights.

Religion: Another Tangled Web

Religion, like human rights, is a tangled web. Many scholars engaged in peace building argue that religious communities and resources are vital in peacemaking. Marc Gopin (2005; 2000), a Jewish leader in the peace movement, recognizes diverse ways in which religion affects violence and peace, sometimes acting as a contributing factor to both, sometimes applied as a veneer over otherwise non-religious motivations, and sometimes dominating the proceedings. John Paul Lederach (2005), a Mennonite Christian, argues similarly that religion plays diverse roles, but cannot be dismissed; it is one of the most important tools in building peace. He recognizes that realistic appraisal of global violence is critical, but it needs to be accompanied by moral imagination and constructive change (pp. 54–60). The sources for imagination and change, according to Lederach, are often religious.

Many religious educators recognize that religion is a vital resource in peacemaking, however entangled it is in perpetuating violence. Teaching from the resources of diverse traditions can form habits of peace (e.g., Weissman, 2007, pp. 63–76; Werner, 2005; Sacks, 2002; Said & Funk, 2003; Weisse, 2003; Nipkow, 2003; Moore, 2001, 2002; Tyrrell, 1995). Peace education thus involves recovering and building upon religious heritage, whether focused on one or multiple religious communities. All major world religions accent compassion, justice, and peace – values that need to be recovered in a world that often underplays them or replaces them with violent discourses.

Seeking the potential of religion as a source of peace, some religious educators have focused on perspectives and practices of peace in particular religious traditions. Among these are Deborah Weissman (2007, p. 69), who accents Jewish convictions that contribute to peace, especially convictions that all humanity is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), and that God made covenant with all peoples and all the earth before making covenant with Abraham (Genesis 8:21–9:17). Weissman also seeks later Jewish teachings that inspire peace. She quotes a Rabbinic teaching describing “the greatest of heroes” as the person “who turns his enemy into his friend” (70). She discovers similar compassion in certain prayer practices. At the end of most traditional Jewish prayers, people say “‘May He Who makes peace on high, grant peace to us and to all Israel . . . ,” sometimes adding “and to all humankind.” As people utter this prayer, they traditionally take three steps back, a practice that Rabbi Michael Melchior interprets as making room for the Other (75).

In a parallel fashion, Zakiyuddin Baidhaway (2007) identifies basic Muslim values that support peace. These include *tawhid*, or the unity of God and of humankind; *ummah*, or the egalitarian sharing of life with others; *rahmah*, or love; and *al-musawah*, *taqwa*, or egalitarianism (21). These core values are accompanied by practices, or what Baidhaway calls implementations. They include altruism; mutual understanding, respect, and trust; fair competition; positive thinking; tolerance; forgiveness; reconciliation; and conflict resolution. These values have parallels in other traditions. Indeed, Baidhaway identifies the goals of Muslim-influenced, multicultural education as peace, non-/anti-violent culture, and justice (22) – goals that permeate peace literature from all sources.

Other parallels can be found in Christian theology and practice, which I and others have developed elsewhere. Sounding remarkably resonant with Weissman and Baidhaway, I have identified such central Christian beliefs and values as: God’s creation of all peoples in God’s likeness, God’s covenant with all peoples, and the love command. I have also identified central Christian practices that nourish justice and peace: loving God and neighbor, communing with others, repenting and confessing, envisioning God’s future, and engaging in daily practices of justice and reconciliation (Moore, 2001, 2003).

These three examples are non-exhaustive; yet, they reveal how diverse religious traditions embody peace-inspiring values. At the same time, religious traditions carry ambiguities and dangers. Consider examples from the same authors, who explore manifestations of their traditions in particular times and places:

- In Judaism within Israel, Weissman describes how the ideal of messianic peace can be confounded by the “partial, fragmented reality represented in the actual, yet-to-redeemed world in which we live in the present.” By focusing on a distant vision of messianic peace, people are sometimes unable to focus on opportunities to build toward peace in the present age (67). Weissman also recognizes sociological and theological differences that prevent Orthodox Israelis from aligning themselves with the people and perspectives of the “peace camp,” including ideologies related to the Land of Israel and to chosenness. (67–68).

- In Islam within Indonesia, Baidhawiy identifies a specific historical period and political situation in which religion played roles in inspiring violence more than peace. The situation emerged from a combination of authoritarian political policies, myopic religious values, disrespect for religious diversity, and the state's use of religious education to enforce religious and social hegemony (17–19).
- In Christianity within the United States, Moore (2002) describes how Christian words of peacemaking – love, justice, and peace – have been used to justify violence. As in Indonesia, the problem is sometimes reinforced by blending an exclusivist religious orientation and a dominant political ethos. Such blending was exemplified by the enthusiastic display of the U.S. flag in church sanctuaries following September 11, 2001, and the later mixing of Christian language with political arguments for stereotyping “terrorists” and making war (316–325).

These few examples reveal dangers that can emerge from religious belief and practice. They do not assume the complete positive or negative value of any religion in peacemaking. The complexity suggests the need for peace educators to give more thorough attention to interreligious relationships and secular movements.

Interreligious Relationships: Tangled Web

A major movement in religious education for peace has been a turn to interreligious relationships, which promises to strengthen the roots of human relationships from which peace can grow. Interreligious education can enhance mutual understanding, respect for difference, honest discourse about controversial questions, skills in negotiating problems and building community, and collaborative work for the common good. Such education can take many forms. Some people accent contributions from each tradition and some seek a pluralistic approach. The differences represent a range of educational approaches, but not a bifurcated choice. Educators ideally select and shape their educational approaches in relation to their particular contexts.

Many educators combine their attention to particular traditions with attention to diversity, dialogue, and relationship building across traditions. Baidhawiy (2007), for example, offers a “multiculturalist theology” of Islam, focused on the context of Indonesia. He discourages dogmatic, indoctrinating approaches to education and recommends “a dialogical approach with materials that can support pupils’ and teachers’ diverse religious beliefs and practices.” Further, he places the educational accent on “how to live together *with* others in the collective consciousness of religious diversity” (emphasis his, 15). Baidhawiy draws upon Islam as a source for these approaches, showing how depth in one tradition can actually turn people to deeper, more respectful relations with people in other traditions (19–27).

Others build peace education in a thoroughly multi-religious model. Francisco Diez de Velasco of Spain, for example, argues that religious education can be a laboratory for peace education. What is needed is to move beyond the confessional/non-confessional and global/local dichotomies and to offer a genuinely multi-religious

education. This approach is grounded in the equality of all religions, asking people to explore religion “from the perspective of the plural,” both globally and locally (82). The approach thus nourishes sensitivity and critical thinking, equipping teachers and students to assess their own perspectives and their tendencies to religiocentrism (whether centered on one tradition or on a non-religious or anti-religious perspective). Such assessment is critical if people are to open themselves respectfully to others. According to Diez de Velasco, this approach goes beyond tolerance to a more egalitarian perspective (82–83). Further, it extends beyond schools into other public settings where educational processes of reflection and consensus building can help people address disputed issues (such as clitorrectomy) and build toward global ethics (83–85).

The plural, or multi-religious, approach is growing in religious education (Jackson, 2004; Ziebertz, 2003; Leganger-Krogstad, 2003; Skeie, 1995). It includes multi-religious content, but also active participation with others in dialogue and other forms of common action (Leganger-Krogstad, 2003; Ipgrave, 2003; Weisse, 2003). Further, the content and issues are interdisciplinary, drawing upon studies of human rights, interreligious relations, and peace in particular (van Doorn-Harder, 2007).

Like education in one religion, multi-religious education raises issues. One is the sheer difficulty of such educational practice, sometimes due to accents on individualism or the persistence of deep religious structures and antipathies within a society (Schweitzer, 2007, pp. 89–92) and sometimes due to persisting commitments to confessional education or the lack of models, structures, and resources for multi-religious approaches (Kim, 2007, pp. 37–42). Other difficulties arise from political conflicts or from general suspicion of religion (Fujiwara, 2007, pp. 45–48). Any of these problems can cause resistance or sluggishness in interreligious education. Indeed, even when it is done with care over time, interreligious prejudices may endure. Friedrich Schweitzer, for example, has discovered lingering prejudice against Muslims among German young people (93). These problems point to future challenges. If interreligious education is to fulfill its potential for peace building, educators will need increasing sophistication to: design education with equality among diverse peoples and traditions; nurture sensitivity and critical capacities toward self and others; reduce prejudice; and create educational form(s) that fit local contexts.

“Secular” Culture: Tangled Web

Given the complexities and dangers that arise from religious communities and interreligious tensions, some educators have turned to secularizing movements as a source of peace. Others have rejected all manifestations of secularity. In truth, secularity is neither a panacea nor an enemy. Further, secular movements are complex. In popular understanding, people often define secularity loosely as a shift away from religious perspectives and practices. Secularity is defined by what it is *not*: it is *not* an allegiance to a particular religious community, worldview, and pattern of life.

The danger of such limited thinking is that the so-called secular alternative to religion may be a thinly disguised upgrading of consumerist, capitalist, individualist, or other ideological values to religious significance. A further danger is overgeneralization. Indeed, secularity has diverse meanings and textures in different parts of the world; generalizations are inevitably misleading. The challenge is to discern the complexity of the so-called secular movements in diverse contexts, then to seek the wisdom that they carry, while being alert to dangers and critical of distortions.

Issues of language and worldview are complex in the educational institutions of modern and postmodern societies. Even in this brief essay, we can see contradictions and complementarities among religious traditions, and similar contradictions and complementarities within so-called secular, non-religious, and anti-religious language worlds. If peace education is to be genuinely plural, respectful, and active, educators need to negotiate these complexities. Thus, I offer a brief mapping of so-called secular movements and issues, followed by the promised thought experiment on process-relational resources for peace education.

First, many varieties of secularity and non-religious movements exist. In much of Africa today, the separation of secularity and religion does not make sense; all aspects of life are permeated with a religious spirit. According to Chongsuh Kim (2007), a similar merging characterized Korean education prior to the late nineteenth century. Secular and religious education (Buddhist and Confucian) were undifferentiated (35). The educational landscape has been different in Japan, where a large percentage of the population considers itself to be non-religious, expressing disinterest or antipathy to religion. Satoko Fujiwara (2007) says, however, that the Japanese pattern differs from that of western countries, especially as regards atheism: “[T]hese non-religious Japanese differ from atheists in the western sense, in that many of them do not deny the existence of gods and are at times engaged in religious practices, such as visiting temples” (46). The Japanese people are more likely to resist religious organization than religious practice; however, religious education is absent from state school curricula. Further, divisions that impede peace in Japan are more likely to be political than religious; prejudices are more common between the non-religious majority and the religious minorities than between different religious groups (45–47). The situation is still different in Israel, where the more secular population tends to draw from western sources (as regards peace for example) and are therefore held suspect by some Orthodox Jews, who see this western borrowing as cultural assimilation (Weissman, 2007, p. 67).

Second, secular movements have a global sweep, even amid the diversity of secular forms. In peace education, increasing secularity has given rise to educational movements focused on global citizenship and tolerance (Jackson & Fujiwara, 2007, pp. 3–4; Jackson, 2003). Education for global citizenship has accented education’s role in preparing people to build and participate in democratic structures – to engage respectfully, dialogically, and collaboratively with people of diverse religious and cultural traditions (Bäckman & Trafford, 2006; Gearon, 2004; Leganger-Krogstad, 2003; Duerr, Spajic-Vrskas, & Martins, 2000). Education for tolerance has accented education’s role in fostering mutual acceptance among diverse peoples, both in classrooms and local communities and in large, complex societies (Afdal, 2006;

Franzmann & Tidswell, 2006; Moran, 2006a; Gearon, 2006; Larsen & Plesner, 2002). Both foci – citizenship and tolerance – have fostered peace, implicitly and explicitly, as well as human rights and shared global values. Both have been interdisciplinary in content and global in sweep, though they have been formed in particular contexts. For example, the distinct geographical, social, and historical contexts of Europe have made this continent a rich seedbed for such global movements.

As with religious and interreligious education, we can see both possibilities and problems with secular movements in peace education. Robert Jackson and Satoko Fujiwara (2007), in introducing a peace-focused issue of the *British Journal of Religious Education*, have identified the value of discourse across religious and secular traditions, recognizing their resonance with Jurgen Habermas on matters of dialogue, particularly the importance of mutual learning between religious and “secular” people (10; Habermas, 2006). Further, they see schools and colleges as important sites for such discourse, underscoring the idea of Diez de Velasco (2007, p. 84) that educational institutions can be “a laboratory” for peace education (Jackson & Satoko, p. 10). Diez de Velasco expands this idea, describing the laboratory potential of *religious* education, given its opportunity to feature human diversity in one of its most prominent forms (religious diversity) and its ability to engage people in educational processes that promote understanding (78–79).

Alongside these possibilities are dangers. One danger in secular movements is the tendency to bifurcate religion and secularity, often making artificial distinctions that result in excluding religion from public engagement. This tendency has been strong in the western world, especially in the widely held assumption that religions are hopelessly marked by intolerance, which can be replaced by a civil religion of tolerance. One finds such rejection of religion in Jean-Jacques Rousseau and other Enlightenment figures (Rousseau, 1968, p. 186; Moran, 2006a, p. 24). The tendency is also present in other parts of the world. In Korea, for example, the distinction between religion and scientific knowledge becomes the rationale for excluding religion from public education (Kim, 2007, p. 41). A second danger is the effort of many secular movements to seek universally shared values and to dismiss or underplay cultural and religious particularity (Gearon, 2006). Another danger in secular movements is the perpetuation of bifurcations, such as religion and spirituality, religious institutions and religious sensibilities, religious affiliation, and religious beliefs and practices (Ubani & Tirri, 2006; Rymarz & Graham, 2006; Ho, 2005; Erricker & Erricker, 2000).

None of these secularity issues, nor those related to religious particularity and interreligious relations, are the final word for peace education. All need further exploration and experimentation if we are to reshape peace education to be more visionary, effective, and context-relevant. Because of the shared yearning among educators to enhance education for peace, we continually seek fresh perspectives. With that in mind, we turn to the potential of process-relational philosophy to extend the present discourse on peace education. Recent educational research has prepared the soil for the dialogue-extending, boundary-stretching work to which we now turn.

Peace Education in a Tangled World

This discussion illumines a picture of peace building in which religions and religious resources play a major role. Philosophical resources are also valuable in addressing the tangled web of human rights, religions, and secularity. In this closing section, I explore one such source – the process-relational philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead – seeking fresh ways to think about peace (Moore, 2006, pp. 201–216). Though this philosophy has already influenced process-relational theologies (largely Christian and Jewish) over the past 50 years, I focus here on Whitehead’s metaphysics and its contributions to peacemaking.

In a process-relational worldview, everything in the world is understood as dynamic and related to everything else. This view echoes Marc Gopin’s (2007) recent argument that peacemaking requires a worldview that “everything is fundamentally dynamic.” Gopin adds that peacemakers need to understand change: “When one thing changes, it affects everything else.” Such a view gives reason for hope, suggesting that positive change is always possible, and small changes can lead to larger ones. The view also reminds us that change can divert peace movements and create destruction. Gopin’s own efforts are to detect “early warnings of peace” in order to build upon them in the long and sometimes invisible journey toward peace.

The most stubborn situations of violence and war are perpetuated by historical memory, habitual practices, beliefs about the world, and assumptions about what is and is not possible. If one believes that reality continues to emerge, even the most stubborn war heritage or egregious violation of human rights contain possibilities for positive change. Further, the human heritage bears more than violence; it bears instances of peaceful coexistence, successful cooperation, and human rights movements. These seeds of hope provide resources to recreate human relationships. Whitehead’s cosmology calls attention to these seeds (Moore, 2006). With hope, then, I sketch how this worldview might contribute to education for human rights and peace.

Vision of Peace

Peace in process philosophy is a vision of harmony in which all beings live in synergistic, life-enhancing relationships. Peace can be described as “a broadening of feeling” and “a wider sweep of conscious interest” that transcends the particular, acquisitive desires of an individual (Whitehead, 1967a, pp. 285–286). Peace invokes a cosmic vision, enabling people to transcend themselves and their acquisitiveness, and to value the world’s well-being, including those people and places relegated to the margins. It enables people to release inhibitory fears and open themselves to others. More than the absence of war, it is an active way of knowing and being in the world.

Whitehead's view of peace accents tragedy and the ideals toward which it points: "[Peace] keeps vivid the sensitiveness to the tragedy. . . Each tragedy is the disclosure of an ideal: – What might have been, and was not: What can be" (ibid). The truth in this view is seen when human rights agreements emerge in the wake of tragedy. They reveal how destructive situations challenge people to transformation. While destruction is *not* necessary, its occurrence can awaken people to cry "never again." Such determination can overturn deadly cycles of retribution in response to injury and injustice.

In such situations, education for peace is critical, and this work needs to be grounded in hope. In a process view, as in most religious traditions, peace cannot be built solely by human effort and reason. Whitehead declares, "Peace is largely beyond the control of purpose"; thus, peace "comes as a gift" (ibid.). Religious educators are particularly well poised to cultivate the expectation of gifts. The educational challenge is to *explore diverse religious traditions for the spirit of hope and for the rituals, symbols, and art that encourage people to open themselves to the gift of peace.*

Education for peace is at its best when it explores multiple religious traditions of human rights and peace, exploring how hope emerges from each tradition and from engagement across traditions. As advocated by educators reviewed in this chapter, we need to teach traditions of compassion, justice, and peace to discover the central passions and resources that each tradition provides. Some religious resources can actually be adopted by people in other traditions, such as Buddhist compassion meditation. When adoption is not fitting, however, interreligious study fosters respect for diverse traditions and stirs the wonder and promise that pervades all religions.

Creativity and Creative Advance

In addition to vision, a process-relational philosophy emphasizes the creative nature of the universe. Whitehead (1978) believed that the entire universe is imbued with creativity. In a creative process that occurs in every moment and every part of the universe, elements of past experience come together to form something new, and the new occasion becomes an element of experience for later occasions (21). The process takes place in human beings and animals, and in every flake of snow and drop of water; thus the entire universe is continually becoming, opening possibilities for creative advance. In such a world, no form of violence or destruction need be on the margins, for all violence can potentially be transmuted into something new – into an occasion of justice and peace.

If the world is inherently creative, people can participate in the creative process. Educators in particular can subvert what Whitehead called "minds in a groove" (1967b, p. 197) and encourage students to consider people and places that have been relegated to the margins and to question the inevitability of injustice and violence. Religious educators have opportunities to *address multiple realities of violence and encourage students to name and participate creatively in peace-building action in*

their intimate and local contexts, as well as in the larger world. Such participation does not have guaranteed results, but it bears promise.

Propositions as Lures for Feeling

Another accent of process metaphysics is the function of propositions. Whitehead (1978) understood propositions as lures for feeling – ideas that invite fresh perspectives and draw people to new possibilities. He argued that it is more important that a proposition be interesting than true (263, 259) because interest intensifies feeling and value. In this view, a peacemaking proposition needs *space* to arouse people’s feelings and to evoke a lively consideration of values before being evaluated for its truth claims. Truth claims can be deceptive, locking people into unquestioned assumptions and untested “facts.”

The intimate relation between thinking and feeling is important to explore for the sake of more honest and comprehensive knowing. For Whitehead (1958), the very function of reason is “to promote the art of life” (4). This applies even to traditional logic, which enables people to investigate situations and conceptualize new visions – to stretch their thinking rather than shackle it (Whitehead, 1929, p. 118). Since Whitehead’s time, educators have expanded on the diverse forms of reason, considering musical, aesthetic, bodily, and other forms of knowing. Through these many pathways, people comprehend the world and develop fresh perspectives.

The challenge for educators is to *cultivate many forms of reason and stir thinking with evocative propositions, encouraging people to question dominant ideas about war and peace and to probe new possibilities.* The human rights debates about economics, women, children, and people with diverse sexual orientations exemplify how understandings of human rights are extended as people raise new issues. The study of religious traditions also poses issues, for most religions offer narratives and propositions that challenge dominant ways of thinking and inspire ethical risk-taking. Fresh ideas are important even if finally rejected; they open space for new ideas and relationships to emerge. Marc Gopin (2007) proposes, for example to insert “doubt about what people think definitively about their enemies.” Such approaches can eventually create a paradigm shift.

Overcoming Dualisms

Process-relational thought resists the dualistic patterns that characterize much human rights discourse, as when people make sharp distinctions between universal rights and cultural relativity and between individual and communal rights. To overcome dualisms is to recognize that true universals are non-existent; however, people do walk on common ground with shared values that need to be sought, constructed, critiqued, and reconstructed. Further, a stark distinction between individual and communal rights is impossible. Individual human rights can only be fostered if

communal rights are enhanced, and vice versa. Dualistic thinking reinforces frozen patterns of thinking, tempting people to impose their own absolutes on others or to abandon human rights altogether. Such approaches distract from global connectivity, which makes human rights relevant to all peoples amid blessed diversity.

Whitehead replaced dualistic thought patterns with integrative impulses, peppered with imagination (1978, pp. 16–17, 274–275). He encouraged people to explore phenomena from different directions and to integrate their knowledge into larger pictures, to be retested and reshaped as new knowledge is found. The meta-physical process is converting opposition into contrast – transforming realities assumed to be opposites into wholes that preserve the uniqueness of each part (ibid., pp. 109, 111, 338–341). For example, people might hold diverse perspectives on just war, while agreeing on a particular decision, or they may develop increasingly complex views of genital cutting to account for diverse cultural values. Such approaches are not compromises, which draw a little from each point of view but lose distinctions. To convert opposition into contrast is to negotiate, to form unity while preserving diversity.

Either/or thinking is antithetical to human rights and peace; both human rights and peace theorists bemoan this problem (Sullivan, 1995; Diez de Velasco, 2007). When people draw sharp lines between the oppressor and the oppressed, comedy and tragedy, right and wrong, public and private, they obscure the whole. The challenge is to listen deeply to all parties in a conflict, each with distinctive histories, hurts, and values, and all in relationship with one another. On a local scale, this approach is reflected in many traditions of counseling and mediation. On a global political scale, it is embodied more by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission than by the Nuremberg Trials following World War II. The former dealt with the complexities, evils, and tragedies of diverse peoples and political communities; the latter targeted one particular group as war criminals and left others untouched.

This discussion has strong implications for interreligious education. To convert opposition into contrast is to move away from thinking that one religion or one side of a conflict is fully right and the other fully wrong, or that one has been persecuted in a more horrific history than the other. It encourages educators to *teach the skills of listening, holistic analysis, and mediation, drawing upon resources in human rights movements, religions traditions, dialogues between religious communities, grass-root practices, and philosophical discourse*. To convert opposition into contrast is to move beyond scapegoating and simple answers. It is a way of imagination and negotiation, hard work and bountiful possibility.

Inheritance and Novelty

Dynamism also emerges in the relation between inheritance and novelty. Peaceful breakthroughs of the past (inheritance) are evidence that change is possible in conflict-ridden situations of the present. Indeed, every effort at peace in the history of humankind can potentially contribute to a decision for peace in the present

moment. Any regret for violence, or tragic awareness of the devastations of war, can also contribute to decisions for peace. Novelty enters into each emerging moment, whether a new integration of the past or a nudge from the Holy, and novelty stirs *new* acts of peace. The combination of inheritance and novelty thus opens endless possibilities for building peace.

Process-relational theorists explain inheritance and novelty metaphysically. Each occasion of experience receives the whole of the past, plus the novelty that emerges from God's initial aim and its own self-creation. The past, with its high moments of respect for human rights and peace and its low moments of wanton destruction, enters into the present moment. Once the new occasion creates itself, it becomes part of the past and is available to future moments as a resource. Thus, we can learn from the highs and lows of the past, seeking hope from the highs, warnings from the lows, and guidance from both.

The interplay of inheritance and novelty encourages religious educators to *draw richly from the past in peace education, while exploring religious practices and interreligious questions of the present and seeking new perspectives and possibilities*. Peacemaking is radically different when we recognize that the past – with its tragedy, ambiguous successes, and complex moments of peace – is an invaluable resource and that novelty continues to emerge.

Open Future

This discussion leads to a final accent on the future, which is radically open. This does not mean that an increase of goodness is inevitable, but it is always possible. This view is shared by most world religions, which are permeated with hope. In peace education, trust in an open future is important. People cannot make peace until they can imagine it as a real possibility. The formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was based on such a view – that the protection of human rights was possible, however daunting the challenge.

Religious traditions sometimes undercut such hope by projecting a closed outcome for the world. Mark Juergensmeyer (2000) describes how religious imagination has sometimes contributed to violence by its “propensity to absolutize and to project images of cosmic war” (242). This reality is seen in the conflict between Arabs and Jews, which Juergensmeyer characterizes as “a cosmic struggle of Manichaean proportions” (253). His analysis suggests that imagination about the future needs to be subjected to critical analysis, as does *any* form of thinking. Its power can be used for good or ill.

Religious educators have opportunities to *cultivate a sense of open future by engaging visions from diverse religious traditions, wrestling with contradictions, and exploring newly emerging visions*. In tracing the history of human rights discourse and the role of religion, teachers and students will discover the growing concern for human rights in the human community and the striking potential for religious communities to contribute to an even stronger future. Exploring these realities can inspire and equip people to participate actively in the ongoing process.

Human rights movements, together with religious traditions and philosophical resources, can potentially expand global understanding; deepen religious experience and convictions; enhance intellectual, aesthetic, and practical wisdom; and stir new vision. Education can help bring this promise to fruition. In particular, education can equip people with lifelong habits of vision, analysis, critique, renewal, and reform, thus furthering peace in ways that we have not yet envisioned.

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The Right to Inquire into the Religious

R. Scott Webster

Introduction

While corporate interests, political states, lobbyists and some religious groups seek to influence the mass consciousness of populations through schooling practices, John Dewey sought to emancipate all individuals from such manipulative influences through a democratic approach to education. He understood human persons to be thinking beings, not imitators or information processors. Consequently he preferred to replace the notion of ‘knowledge’ with ‘warranted assertions’ in order to accentuate the importance for learners to be engaged with the *justification* of all views being asserted in the curriculum. His valuable contributions to democracy, human rights and education are partly recognised through his invitation to be involved in UNESCO’s second symposium which specifically addressed the issue of democracy.

While clearly recognised as a champion for democracy and human rights mainly through his pursuit of a common good for the common person, Dewey is not so favourably recognised as a contributor to the field of religion. His book *Democracy and Education* is listed as number five in the list of the ‘ten most harmful books’ formulated by the American conservative group Human Events (2007) mainly because they claim Dewey ‘rejected traditional religion and moral absolutes’. Consequently he is often dismissed from those who espouse religious world views which assume absolutes (Hussain, 2007). In addition to being attacked in this area he has also been the target of many criticisms dealing with progressive education in both the United States and in the United Kingdom (Pring, 2007). However, I contend that many of these criticisms are based upon only superficial readings of his work and therefore it is my intent to offer an alternative account of Dewey’s relevance for religious education.

R.S. Webster (✉)

Faculty of Education, Monash University, Melbourne, VIC 3800, Australia

e-mail: scott.webster@education.monash.edu.au

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a Deweyan perspective on inter-religious education which actively promotes human rights by adopting a democratic approach characterised by inquiry. In order to offer such a perspective this chapter is structured into four sections. The first will attempt to offer a brief background to the issues that Dewey was responding to in his writings. The purpose of this is to provide a context for his arguments regarding religious education. The second section will examine the ‘scientific’ approach to inquiry that Dewey argued should be adopted in *all* aspects of education, including religious education. The third section will specifically address his concerns with traditional religion and religious education in schools. The fourth and final section will endeavour to provide an account of the sort of inter-religious education that Dewey considered most appropriate for honouring individual agency and thus further promoting human rights and democracy. This particular educative approach of Dewey’s promotes an active engagement by learners to intelligently inquire into, think about and examine unifying principles which might give their lives sense and meaning. Because I am endeavouring to portray a Deweyan perspective I shall quote some of his key points at length in order to enable readers a more direct access to his writings without relying solely upon my own interpretations.

Background: Dewey’s Understanding of Persons, Society and Living Well

Throughout his long and productive life Dewey responded to many and various issues as demonstrated in the 37 volumes of his writings which have been compiled and edited by Jo Ann Boydston through Southern Illinois University Press. One of his major projects was the reconstruction of society, that is he wanted to make society, on a global scale, better and more equitable for all – hence his focus upon democracy. He situated our times as being beyond the birth of ‘the individual’ which occurred in the West through mediaeval philosophy. Dewey was against turning the clock backwards to the time when individuals were subordinate to institutional authorities as this promoted the interests of elites over the good for the common people. He claimed that the integrity of civilisation could only now be pursued through the agency of the individual and this, he argued, is only possible through everyone having the right to participate democratically.

He identified many obstacles to this project and not least was the direction that the United States was taking during his lifetime which was demonstrating a propensity for becoming highly materialistic and developing a culture that was solely pecuniary in nature. The key problem which he saw in this trend was that his society was becoming nihilistic. It did not have an overall aim or purpose which was able to give perspective to its various activities including the pursuit of economic gain. Dewey (1929a, pp. 55 and 67) claimed that ‘our materialism, our devotion to money making and to having a good time are not things by themselves . . . There lies the serious and fundamental defect of our civilization . . .’ and ‘. . . until there is some

consensus of belief as to the meaning of finance and industry in civilisation as a whole, they cannot be captains of their own souls – their beliefs and aims.’ For him the way to address this problem, affecting not just the United States but civilisations across the globe, was for them to become more religious. This is because Dewey considered that ‘religion . . . was the symbol of the existence of conditions and forces that gave unity and a centre to men’s views of life’ (p. 71). However, he did not want a return to traditional religious customs as embedded in dogma to be imposed upon persons. Rather he understood that any reconstruction of society which can provide all individual members access to a good and worthwhile life is only possible through the combined efforts of many *individuals* working together.

As a philosopher Dewey (1922, p. 223) was highly concerned about the status of morals and values as these have a direct relation to humankind’s pursuit of living well with each other and he claimed that as persons we are social beings and consequently have an inescapable moral aspect to our nature. Values are not to be reified into nouns, as objects to obtain or collect, nor can they be reduced to a form of knowledge that can simply be taught by teachers and acquired by learners. Much like Plato’s Socrates who confronted the Sophists’ trickery of claiming to be able to teach virtues by reducing them to a form of *technē* rather than *arētē*, Dewey too recognised the importance of the holistic nature of the virtues enabling one *to* value as a way-of-being. He was very much against reducing human nature into component parts as per a faculty psychology to separate out our cognitive intelligence, cultural beliefs, emotions and bodies and instead referred to our ‘existential matrix’ (Dewey, 1938) as basically consisting of a blend of our ecological embodiment and the cultural meanings in which we find ourselves.

This holistic understanding of persons is based upon Dewey’s notion of habits, which are inclusive of both the ideals and the practical actions of persons. These are developed both through past actions and projected purposes and goals for the future. As such his notion of habit is thoroughly embodied and is preferable to the more intellectual and latent notions of attitude and disposition, which Dewey (1922, p. 31) described as requiring a ‘stimulus outside themselves to become active’. He was also against purely internal cognitive or intellectual drivers being responsible for moving us. He claimed ‘it is false that a man requires a motive to make him do something’ (p. 84). If persons have an idea in their heads, they must actively choose whether to enact upon it or not. This whole process is not simply – first head then bodily action – but rather habitually the person holistically makes sense of her ideas in light of being active in the context in which she exists and already has her being. Consequently her very character is constituted by the entirety of her habits and how these are in relation with each other and with all entities she is in relation with.

Dewey did not consider that the character of persons simply consists in the sum total of each of our habits as if these somehow existed and operated in isolation from each other. The dynamic integration of our habits is an activity which determines our very character and as such takes a great deal of effort. Dewey considered that those with weak characters can be identified through their alternation between various competing habits in an inconsistent and unpredictable manner while those who have strong characters are the ones who, with ‘strain of thought and effort’

have embodied one's various habits with their 'competing tendencies into a unity' (Dewey, 1922, p. 30). It was this sense of unity amidst diversity that Dewey understood that there is so much potential value to be realised through being religious. However, this cannot ever be justified by authorities imposing a particular version of the good life upon persons such that they must accept it through passive obedience in order to be considered as morally good. Whether through 'weak' or 'strong' characters Dewey identified that habits become bad when they become enslaved to 'old ruts'.

He argued that 'the common notion that enslavement to good ends converts mechanical routine into good is a negation of the principle of moral goodness' (Dewey, 1922, p. 48). This is because he understood that in order for moral goodness to be actualised the individual has to become master of her activities in each encounter as she thoughtfully weighs up the consequences of her actions with her environment and especially how others are to be affected. Such ability requires individual *thought* rather than the habitual repetition of conforming to behavioural patterns, standards and norms. This promotion of individual *thinking* obviously promotes the notion of human rights for all learners, but of course can be considered to be a threat to ruling elites whose interests are invested in the maintenance of the status quo and who prefer not to have this challenged. Dewey refers to those who attempt to dominate others through requiring them to be passively compliant to standards, laws and traditions as 'practical men' and claimed that

there are certain 'practical' men . . . their thought is about their own advantage . . . They dominate the actual situation. They encourage routine in others . . . This they call sustaining the standard of the ideal. Subjection they praise as team-spirit, loyalty, devotion, obedience, industry, law-and-order. But they temper respect for law – by which they mean the order of the existing status – on the part of others with most skilful and thoughtful manipulation of it in behalf of their own ends. While they denounce as subversive anarchy signs of independent thought, of thinking for themselves, on the part of others lest such thought disturb the conditions by which they profit, they think quite literally *for* themselves, that is, *of* themselves. This is the eternal game of the practical men. (Dewey, 1922, pp. 49–50)

We can identify certain conservative interests often present in schools and in religious education in particular which promote these very ideals of loyalty, devotion, obedience and the respect for law-and-order. Such demands often militate against the freedom of individual thought which is a requirement to be met if human rights are to be respected.

A major strategy employed through this approach enforced by the manipulative powers of these 'practical men' is to separate habitual behaviours from critical thought because such a 'dualism enables them to do the thinking and planning, while others remain the docile, even if awkward, instruments of execution' (Dewey, 1922, p. 52). Dewey's response to challenge this hold over people and to enhance their rights was to promote thought back into action and to make such thought as open and democratic as possible in order to enable the interests of each individual and the good of the public on a global scale to *grow* and to overcome differences, tensions and conflict.

‘Scientific’ Inquiry Into the *One* Realm of Existence

Dewey observed that great progress was being made in his society’s ability to control the physical environment and to grow in material wealth. However, he was concerned that similar progress was not also occurring in the fields of morality, values and religion. He concluded that the progress evident in the physical realm was due to the emergence of scientific experimentation as a means of inquiry. Through this particular approach people were free to question, challenge, test and experiment with all suppositions regarding the material universe. Such an approach has enabled humankind to ‘progress’ with regards to material wealth and he argued that this general approach to inquiry should also be employed to re-evaluate and improve the ultimate meanings – the end purposes we understand our lives to have. He argued that ‘it must be admitted that to a considerable extent the progress thus procured [through science and its applications] has been only technical: it has provided more efficient means for satisfying pre-existent desires, rather than modified the quality of human purposes’ (Dewey, 1916, p. 232). He recognised that such free intellectual inquiry, while highly valuable for operating with physical matter, has not been so easily tolerated when it is exercised in art, morality, values and religion. Indeed this very volume of readings has been written and collected to enable those ‘others’ to us who differ in religious and world views, to inquire and understand us better and also for us to understand them better. This requires extending more than just toleration to individuals who wish to question and challenge traditional norms.

What Dewey recognised was that there is an inconsistency in what it means to be an educated human person. On the one hand, such persons are free to critically inquire into and test the physical environment. On the other hand, they are often forbidden to conduct themselves in like manner in the face of certain religious doctrines, traditions, customs and truths which are ‘off limits’ to public scrutiny as if these belonged to another realm beyond nature in a supernatural realm. This led to the creation of an unnecessary dualism. Dewey argued that

The ‘conflict of science and religion’ . . . resulted in a kind of tacit division of fields. The regulation of all *spiritual* – of moral and ideal concerns – was assigned to the *old* institutions and beliefs. Control of affairs regarded as *material* was assigned – or at least permitted – to the *new* science. In philosophy, the net result was the creation of dualisms . . . (Dewey, 1949, p. 371)

Dewey reminded us that such a two-realm division takes us back to Plato’s Idealism. Through this Idealism it is assumed that there is a ‘real’ world of physical existence in which we find ourselves and an other ideal, spiritual realm in which perfection resides as essences. This divide obviously produces a number of challenges regarding how these ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ realms interact and how persons can transcend their divide. For Plato’s Athens there was a limit to how the realm of the ideal was to be understood, but in today’s globalised world there are many multiple ideal worlds as represented through various religions. Therefore, rather than challenging the divide between one ideal spiritual realm and the physical one in which we find our existence, we in today’s world have the added obstacle of multiple ideal worlds

with their own specific doctrines which conflict and compete with one another and we find ourselves without a reliable means of discriminating amongst them. Quite possibly Dewey's pragmatism with its emphasis upon inquiry could offer a way forward.

Through his pragmatism Dewey was opposed to the dualistic notion that there are other realms beyond the one we find ourselves. For him there is, but one realm – existence. This is the world in which we all happen to share together – we are all floating on the same 'raft' as he described it. This pragmatic collapse of the assumed divide between a realm of physical existence and another of the spiritual and the good meant that people must come to terms for making meaning for their own lives which gives a sense of value and purpose in a personally significant manner. This is experienced somewhat as existential angst and yet is identified by Dewey as being one of the most significant problems of our times. He claimed that

a breach between what man is concerned with here and now and the faith concerning ultimate reality which, in determining his ultimate and eternal destiny, had previously given regulation to his present life. The problem of restoring integration and cooperation between man's beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about the values and purposes that should direct his conduct is the deepest problem of modern life. (Dewey, 1929b, p. 255)

It should be recognised then that in transcending the dualism between the physical and spiritual realm Dewey did not just simply dismiss the spiritual through reducing reality to what we can see and touch in our physical existence. His pragmatism was very like that of William James who explained that this dualism is overcome by considering that our one realm of existence includes physical nature *and* any spiritual understandings that makes sense of this. He argued that 'a man's religious faith . . . means for me essentially his faith in the existence of an unseen order of some kind in which the riddles of the natural order may be found explained' (James, 1956, p. 51). Otherwise if existence is reduced to a purely scientific understanding of physical matter without any 'harmonious spiritual intent' then James agreed that existence is 'mere *weather*', that is 'doing and undoing without end' (p. 52).

James usefully summarised the pragmatic approach as follows:

The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. Is the world one or many? – fated or free – material or spiritual? – here are notions either of which may or may not hold good of the world; and disputes over such notions are unending. The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to intercept each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to anyone if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side of the other's being right. (James, 1978, p. 28)

With this so-called method James (1978, p. 30) concluded that 'It is astonishing to see how many philosophical disputes collapse into insignificance the moment you subject them to this simple test of tracing a concrete consequence.' It was this emphasis upon living, concrete existence for each individual that provides the main

characteristic of pragmatism. Consequences within concrete existence are mostly experienced at an existential level and so James (1982, p. 29) in his well-known book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* consolidated his attention ‘to personal religion’ where personally significant meanings and interpretations are experienced with their impact directly upon how each person deeply understands the meaning and purpose of her life.

According to Dewey the deepest problems confronting humankind are related to the reconstruction of society on a global scale. He sought to address this monumental challenge by enabling individual persons to actively participate in determining a good life. Rather than passively wait for authorities to deliver ultimate truths in the form of supernaturally revealed knowledge from another realm, individual persons are to actively explore, inquire and test what might count as ‘the good’ for them in an existentially authentic manner. By pursuing a dynamic notion of ‘the good’ Dewey did not commit himself to an idealistic notion of ultimate and absolute good, but rather he was committed to empowering individuals on a personal and existential level, which is experienced in relationships with others.

‘The spiritual welfare’ of our lives was recognised by Dewey (1897, p. 12) as being intricately involved with the history of epistemology and its appeal to absolute and universal notions of truth. He offered a chronological development of this relation in his book *The Quest for Certainty* in which he recognised that we have ‘inherited the framework of Greek ideas about the nature of knowledge . . . through the medium of Hebraic and Christian religion . . . [which] made the ethical more fundamental than the rational’ (Dewey, 1929b, p. 52). As a consequence of this emphasis the issue of concern fell upon our will rather than our intellect. Dewey (1936, p. 457) therefore sought to transcend this divide by *including* the intellect and the means he argued for achieving this was through the scientific ‘temper’. Unfortunately, this has often been interpreted as being equivalent to the scientific ‘method’ or technique. However, he was clear that he did not mean its technique, but rather its *temper*. He was in full agreement with Bertrand Russell’s description of this temper as being ‘cautions, tentative, and piecemeal; it does not imagine that it knows the whole truth, or that even its best knowledge is wholly true. It knows that every doctrine needs emendation sooner or later, and that the necessary emendation requires freedom of investigation and freedom of discussion’ (Russell, as cited in Dewey, p. 457).

Before this temper of science became established in modern scientific communities at least, the pursuit of knowledge as certainty caused humankind’s approach to both the physical and spiritual realms to appeal to a sense of knowledge as doctrine, dogma and truth, for which individuals must become compliant. Dewey argued that

Just as belief that a magical ceremony will regulate the growth of seeds to full harvest stifles the tendency to investigate natural causes and their workings, so acceptance of dogmatic rules as bases of conduct in education, morals and social matters, lessens the impetus to find out about the conditions which are involved in forming intelligent plans. (Dewey, 1929b, p. 40)

Whether knowledge was of an ultimate and religious sort or whether it was of a more physical sort, the problem for both is that persons are usually required to be accepting of its assumed certainty. Dewey promoted the notion that persons should have the right to test and experiment with the legitimacy of *all* knowledge claims – physical and spiritual. Unfortunately to date, the freedom and the right of individuals to exercise their intellect and inquire has generally been limited to physical matters only and has been restricted in the spiritual and religious domains. It is with this situation just sketched out, albeit briefly, that we might better understand Dewey's opposition to traditional religion and traditional religious education. This shall now be reviewed in the following section before exploring how he sought to replace these with his own approach of democratic education which is able to promote equal rights to all individuals.

Problems with Traditional Religion and Religious Education

In spite of his support for humanism Dewey was not opposed to religion and indeed appeared very religious himself as demonstrated through some of his earliest publications. He argued that religion ought to be able to unify – not through the imposition of institutional authorities upon captive audiences – but rather through individual agency. Kallen (1950, p. 176) described this view of Dewey's as a 'religion of religions' for which he claimed it is in fact 'the unification that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights embodies'.

The major problem that Dewey saw in religion was its appeal to a Platonic dualistic divide between the natural and the supernatural, that is between the physical and the spiritual, where, since Plato we 'have only changed the labels on the bottles, not the contents in them' (Dewey, 1909, p. 16). As a consequence accessing the ultimate truths in the higher realm in order to gain insight as to how one should live a good and purposeful life could only be gained via special knowledge usually through religious doctrines. This knowledge requires persons to accept it passively and without critical questioning in order to demonstrate their loyalty and deference to the authorities who preach it to them. As a result of this, religious knowledge is unlike the other knowledge in the school curriculum which pertains to physical nature as this latter sort can be brought into the public arena for debate, scrutiny and testing where all individuals have freedom and the right to inquire into its legitimacy. Due to the relation of such curricular knowledge to the world of our existence, it is 'objective' in the sense that it can be handed over to experimentation and inquiry in a public sense. Knowledge however is never so 'objective' to be able to be proven. This is why Dewey (1938, p. 16) preferred to replace the term 'knowledge' with 'warranted assertion' to indicate the dynamic and participatory role that individuals should always have to what they assert, believe or 'know'. Knowledge of traditions, values, morals and customs belonging to religions, however, tend to be jealously guarded from public debate and scrutiny. The right to freely and critically inquire into the warrants of religious knowledge is often not extended to individuals by

religious authorities nor welcomed because the nature of such religious knowledge does not tend to bear up under public experimentation. This ‘failure’ only is made evident when there are attempts to make ‘real’ the objects of religious knowledge.

Dewey’s position against the privatisation of religious knowledge must not be misconstrued as being positivistic where only understandings which can be demonstrably verified have a right to be taken seriously as claims to knowledge. Like James, Dewey recognised that faith is an intrinsic aspect of human nature, pertaining to an anticipatory vision which provides unity and sense to all of one’s activities. However, he claimed that faith becomes undone when there is a claim made that the object of faith has an objective reality. In doing so Dewey (1934, p. 21) identified that those who assert such a claim ‘have failed to see that in converting moral realities into matters of intellectual assent’ means that they therefore are no longer dealing with faith. The attempt to objectify objects of faith is clearly the problem as Dewey explained that ‘when physical existence does not bear out the assertion, the physical is subtly changed into the metaphysical. In this way, moral faith has been inextricably tied up with intellectual beliefs about the supernatural.’ (p. 22).

In an effort to maintain the importance of faith for enabling each person to have the freedom and right to exercise individual intelligence in her actions Dewey differentiated faith as a religious attitude from the notion of religion which is more ‘objective’ in nature. In his book *A Common Faith* Dewey (1934) makes the distinction between one group of people who understand that access to the supernatural, including a Supernatural Being, can only be made through either dogmas, sacraments or pure consciousness, and a second group who claim that science has discredited any belief in the supernatural and, therefore, all things religious must go. What he identified was common with both groups was that they identified ‘the religious with the supernatural’, i.e. another idealistic realm above and beyond the realm of existence and that this has come about due to the objectifying tendencies of religion inherited through Plato. He then sets out an alternative understanding, one which recognises the religious phase of experience as not necessarily being identified with a ‘real’ supernatural realm *beyond* existence.

As his focus was upon experience he differentiated the adjectival term ‘religious’ from the noun substantive term ‘religion’. He explained that

A religion . . . always signifies a special body of beliefs and practices having some kind of institutional organization, loose or tight. In contrast, the adjective “religious” denotes nothing in the way of a specifiable entity, either institutional or as a system of beliefs. It does not denote anything to which one can specifically point as one can point to this and that historic religion or existing church . . . It denotes attitudes that may be taken toward every object and every proposed end or ideal. (Dewey, 1934, pp. 9–10)

As a noun, religion can refer to an object, doctrine, tradition, custom or practice that can be readily observed and described. This includes statements of knowledge and behaviours which lend themselves to assessment driven concerns which dominate most of our systems of schooling. However, the term ‘religious’ as an adjective has no clear demarcations available to observers or assessors because it refers to the attitudes of persons and *how* they relate to specific entities and relations. This second notion of ‘religious’ is considered far more valuable than the first one of ‘religion’

because it does not necessitate a problematic dualism between objects and practices which are religious and those which are not. Dewey explained that

Here, it seems to me, is the issue to be faced . . . between a religion and the religious function It is the nature of a religion based on the supernatural to draw a line between the religious and the secular and profane, The conception that “religious” signifies a certain attitude and outlook, independent of the supernatural, necessitates no such division. It does not shut religious values up within a particular compartment (Dewey, 1934, p. 66)

As an attitude, the religious for Dewey represents an active, personal, responsible way-of-being that enables persons to exercise their faith in a critical manner for which they *give* sense and purpose to life and are also willing to show the warrants for their beliefs to others for constructive criticisms and evaluation. He contrasted this liberating way-of-being for individuals with the passive, compliant and docile approach required of those who submit themselves to fixed doctrine. He claimed that

Faith in the continued disclosing of truth through directed cooperative human endeavor is more religious in quality than is any faith in a completed revelation. . . . Some fixed doctrinal apparatus is necessary for *a* religion. But faith in the possibilities of continued and rigorous inquiry does not limit access to truth to any channel or scheme of things. (Dewey, 1934, p. 26)

This view of his appears to be based upon his earlier claim (Dewey, 1893) that because Christianity involves revelation then as God works *in* people revelation will be experienced by them in their various inquiries. Through his pragmatism and understanding of Christianity (which he did not consider to be ‘a religion’ as such) Dewey did not consider that truth is an end point correspondence between one’s beliefs and the essence as found in another higher reality or realm. Rather truth for Dewey represents the activity of disclosing, of believing well as one gives sense to one’s life experiences and having one’s understandings and warranted assertions ‘tested’ through such experiences. He summarised that ‘the ultimate issue as to the difference between *a* religion and the religious as a function of experience’ (Dewey, 1934, p. 43). Being a ‘function of experience’ the religious attitude, in exercising faith, is able to give sense, aims and purposes for the lives of individuals. As end purposes, Dewey understood these to determine our conduct because they do not simply exist as knowledge statements in our mind but are an active part of our character.

Dewey (1934, p. 13) identified that one’s understanding, one’s meaning which is gained through interpretation is ‘not inherent in the experience itself. It is derived from the culture with which a particular person has been imbued.’ He clearly acknowledged the possibility that a particular culture might indeed enable genuine and important meanings to be provided. His concern, however, was the limitation of the meanings of religious experiences being ‘already set aside as something *sui generis*’ (pp. 13–14), that is, of being owned by some framework in such a way that other possible meanings are not possible. He regarded such a restriction as a potential preventative to *growth* which thereby worked against this most important criterion he had for education. This is because of the effect that such a restriction produces in a person when she becomes passively compliant to a particular set of

understandings which are believed to be true even *before* experiences occur. It is not difficult to appreciate that Dewey was very much against any form of indoctrination – not because only a narrow interpretation of experiences are offered, but because the actual frameworks of beliefs themselves are regarded by authorities to be beyond any critical and public examination.

Traditional religious education in schools, according to Dewey, tends to work against an individual's right to employ her own intelligence in activities and to interpret and determine the meanings of her experiences. This is because religious education tends to require students to engage primarily with receiving denominational doctrines in the form of 'true knowledge' or 'knowledge of the truth' which are true and objectively real. This approach does not require learners to inquire or think about the legitimacy for such knowledge claims in light of making sense of their own unique lives. According to Dewey (1908, p. 174, 1916, p. 165) the crux of the issue is that religion is 'a thing so specialized, so technical, so "informational"' it tends to 'swamp thinking' like all bodies of formalised knowledge or doctrine. The nature of this knowledge is quite different to the other sorts of knowledge claims made in other subjects in school. Dewey considered that

religion . . . is – intellectually – secret, not public; peculiarly revealed, not generally known; authoritatively declared, not communicated and tested in ordinary ways. What is to be done about this increasing antinomy between the standard for coming to know in other subjects of the school, and coming to know in religious matters? (Dewey, 1908, p. 173)

Consequently he concluded that 'there is something self-contradictory in speaking of education in religion in the same sense in which we speak of education in topics where the method of free inquiry has made its way' (p. 173).

He was opposed to separating out students into denominational classes taught by teachers specialised in the doctrines of their particular tradition. Such segregation is destructive to the cohesiveness that is associated with the concept of 'the public' and divides persons according to rival and competitive bodies of knowledge about their ultimate purpose in life. It also disempowers individuals to be able to transcend such barriers by not being enabled to exercise a critical intelligence in their interactions with other persons who differ markedly to their own beliefs. His solution to this divisive and disempowering approach was to foster a greater sense of public consciousness in young people by getting them to be embedded in school experiences which strive to seek a unity amongst diverse people. Individuals should not be encouraged to seek identities which depend upon establishing superficial differences to 'the Other' usually through traditional identities, cultures, religions and ethnicities but rather persons should be encouraged to identify themselves first and foremost as part of humanity as humanity. Such an emphasis would enable students to see themselves as a common member of the human species *before* differentiating themselves through religious knowledge as being Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, atheist and the like. What we have in common with one another should be experienced before engaging in the differences which divide us into warring fractions.

Such a change in perspective requires us to focus upon the one world of existence and not depend upon making appeals to a 'special' realm of the supernatural

to provide us with revealed knowledge which, while being off limits for others to critique, serves as the basis for us to see ourselves as separate and often special compared with others. However, through such a perspective Dewey was not against trying to sustain our most precious values which have tended to give serious critique and testing in a public way. He argued that

In view of the fact that religions in the degree in which they have depended upon the supernatural have been, as history demonstrates, the source of violent conflict, and destructive of basic human values, and in view of the fact that even now differences of religion divide the peoples of the earth, one summary answer to this question is that values will be sustained – effectively supported by a religion that is free from dependence upon the supernatural. (Dewey, 1950, p. 394)

Dewey's emphasis which aimed on unifying humankind rather than segregating us in competing groups with our own specialised doctrine or dogma was regarded by him to be 'significant religious work'. He argued that

Our schools, in bringing together those of different nationalities, languages, traditions, and creeds, in assimilating them together upon the basis of what is common and public in endeavour and achievement, are performing an infinitely significant religious work. They are promoting the social unity out of which in the end genuine religious unity must grow. (Dewey, 1908, p. 175)

Dewey clearly had his eye upon global peace and cooperation between people and argued that to make these possible we need to focus upon our commonality with each other as human beings rather than uncritically allow bodies of knowledge in the form of doctrine to divide us. To see common ground between differing peoples, Dewey argued that we ought to pursue a democratic way of life. He identified that UNESCO's entire activity 'is centred in promotion of inquiry, discussion, and coherence' and soberly concluded that 'the way and degree in which we use or fail to use freedom of inquiry and public communication may well be the criterion by which in the end the genuineness of our democracy will be decided in all issues' (Dewey, 1951, pp. 403–404). We shall now consider what such a democratic approach for inter-religious education might involve in the following section.

Dewey's Democratic Approach to Inter-religious Education

From the foregoing material it is clear that Dewey promoted the notion of a stronger character for individual persons in order to enable a greater emancipation for people by their being able to exercise their own intelligence in their activities. However, this requires a 'strain of thought and effort' because he recognised that our nature tends to be 'intellectually lazy'. This laziness extends into a disinclination to thoroughly examine the coherence we assume our lives to have. Consequently, he argued that if an experience is to be educative then it must involve *thinking* because he understood that 'genuine freedom' is essentially 'intellectual' (Dewey, 1916, p. 170, 1933, p. 186). While Dewey made thinking a topic of importance in a number of his writings, he considered that the most 'untaught' sort of thinking was the profound sort

which ‘goes to the roots of the matter’ (Dewey, 1933, pp. 147–148). Such profound thinking enables persons to be able to discriminate between many values and not just to simply recite or apply doctrine which has been accumulated.

In dealing with spiritual and religious matters it is important to recognise that Dewey was not against religious faith as somehow being in opposition to thinking well. Thinking according to Dewey, is not of a hyper-rational type of operation that is opposed to faith. He argued that the two should be able to be integrated together (Boisvert, 1998, p. 147). Faith is recognised through our personal devotion to a particular aim or purpose which gives unity to all of our activities. Thinking offers a means by which our faith – indeed all of our beliefs – might become more valuable by being intellectually investigated. Dewey acknowledged that as persons we are primarily beings who believe and hence the role of education is simply to enable us to ‘believe well’. He stated that ‘The case of belief is crucial’ and that ‘All knowing and effort starts from some belief, some received and asserted meaning which is a deposit of prior experience, personal and communal’ (Dewey, 1958, pp. 422 and 428).

According to Dewey the type of experiences which have greater educative value are those which offer *first-hand* thinking and he likened this to the scientific or more precisely the experimental approach as attributed to Francis Bacon. This approach involves active experimentation, discovery, an invasion of the unknown and inquiry where one’s conclusions are always suspended and never final. As Dewey (1916, p. 232) was primarily interested in building a better society he argued that the sort of inquiry needed was one which explored our very purposes for how we live our lives. Such an approach is considered essential if one is to be able to participate in democratic dialogue with others where one needs to be willing to negotiate and debate regarding what one ought to value, how one ought to live and especially how one can get along peacefully with those who differ quite markedly in their beliefs. Dewey contrasted this approach with *second-hand* thinking as represented through Aristotlism which involves being taught the known through demonstration, persuasion, argumentation, tradition and proof – basically it is the transmission of the conclusions (in the form of ‘knowledge’) from the thinking that had been done by others – hence the expression *second-hand*.

In claiming that persons tend to be intellectually lazy, Dewey (1930, p. 133, Vol. 5) described learners as being all too ready to allow ‘purposes and desires to be foisted upon us from without’. Consequently, we are too disposed to taking up nationalistic, religious and ethnic identities which serve to oppress individuals and reinforce boundaries between humankind rather than empower us as per UNESCO’s call to transcend these superficial differences. The means by which Dewey recommended that we formulate and evaluate our purposes and aims for how we live is through a democratic education. It is through experiencing such democratic experiences in a school environment which enable our societies to also become more democratic. He argued that

Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education. But there is a deeper explanation. A democracy is more than a form of government; it is

primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. (Dewey, 1916, p. 93)

The imposition of class, race, nationalistic and religious identification upon individuals is generally met with little resistance due to these traditions and customs being culturally embedded as 'normal' or 'right' in the face of an intellectual laziness which orients us to having these imposed upon us. It is very difficult to overcome this inertia to challenge the warrants of these traditions which bolster the status quo.

We must not conclude from this, however, that Dewey had a disposition against *all* forms of traditional customs and values be they religious or secular, simply because they were formulated in the past. He clearly recognised that being culturally embedded we have come to inherit certain beliefs, some of which are religious and moral in outlook. He stated that

Man has beliefs which scientific inquiry vouchsafes, beliefs about the actual structure and processes of things; and he also has beliefs about the values which should regulate his conduct. The question of how these two ways of believing may most effectively and fruitfully interact with one another is the most general and significant of all the problems which life presents to us. (Dewey, 1929b, pp. 18–19)

In order to have more 'significant conscious desires' upon which to base our lives Dewey argued that we need to become educated. An educated person should be a free, critical and active experimental thinker able to seriously listen to and collaborate with others regarding the meaning and purpose of life and how we should live peacefully together. Such a way-of-being can occur in a democratic manner through education.

In order to enhance the rights of the individual, a democratic education which encourages persons to exercise their own intelligence in their activities, must provide inquiries into what might be good rather than simply transmit customary values for mass consumption. This would mean challenging the self-evidence of wholesale adherence to motherhood cultural values such as 'liberty, humanity, justice and civilization' in order to promote a greater sense of how individuals are responsible for creating and participating in joint notions of the good, which, in addition to empowering persons would also contribute to 'the elimination of war' (Dewey, 1929a, p. 120). This is because the manipulation of persons' emotions and purposes by authorities can be challenged as to their intellectual basis upon which they make the claim that they are 'good', 'right' or 'true'.

This is actually a very familiar strategy practiced by Plato's Socrates who invariably challenged the manipulation and persuasive speeches of the sophists by asking them to make public how their propositions can be justified with reference to promoting the public good. According to Gadamer (1986) this inevitably was their undoing. While Socrates adopted a line of inquiry which challenged and tested the contradictions in the views of those with whom he dialogued, Dewey developed

this approach further through incorporating experimentation which he regarded was missing from Plato's arguments and, yet, which offers so much promise for promoting rights and enabling us all to live well with each other. Inquiry and experimentation represent the intellectual freedom evident in a scientific attitude – its temper – and if adopted in our dealings with *all* aspects of life would, according to Dewey (1929a, p. 115), 'mean nothing less than a revolutionary change in morals, religion, politics and industry'.

This revolution would be partly characterised by the educative growth of a religious attitude as described earlier. Such an attitude enables people to critically engage with making sense of and promoting good in the one realm of our existence which all of humankind share with each other and with all other life forms. We cannot claim to be able to retreat in order to just 'tend to our own gardens' because as Dewey (1922, p. 180) argued, 'the boundaries of our garden plot join it to the world of our neighbors and our neighbors' neighbor'. Empowering individuals by encouraging them to exercise their right to inquire, judge and discriminate between values held by others and to have them inquire into ours, requires great intellectual effort. Nevertheless, such an approach is able to emancipate us from being dependent upon authoritative appeals to frameworks of religious knowledge which are claimed to be absolutely true, but are unable to demonstrate the basis of their claim in public forums. All forms of doctrine which endeavour to determine good from evil are simplistic and inadequate substitutes for personal judgement because our lives involve so many micro-decisions which require us to discriminate between multiple goods and values. Dewey argued that educators are to encourage the development of such judgment-making amongst learners because this allows them to exercise their intellectual freedom and gives them the right to inquire into the warrants that are behind various claims. He argued that

It is judgement engaged in discriminating among values. It is taking thought as to what is better and worse in any field at any time, with some consciousness of *why* the better is better and why the worse is worse. (Dewey, 1930, pp. 133–134)

While religious beliefs are primarily founded upon faith, the challenge for educators is to enable the faith of learners to also be intellectually thorough. Dewey identified this intellectual thoroughness as an ability to inquire into the warrants for any claim based upon the consequences actually experienced in concrete existence. Therefore, inter-religious education ought to respect the personhood of *all* learners and grant them the right to be able to critically inquire into the religious.

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Religious Diversity and Education for Democratic Citizenship: The Contribution of the Council of Europe

Robert Jackson

The International Context

Issues about the study of religion in public education are being discussed internationally as never before. The discussions include not only specialists in religion but also many outside the professional field of religious education – politicians, civil servants, NGOs and other groups within civil society as well as educators concerned with fields such as citizenship and intercultural education. This is partly due to the global attention given to religion as a result of the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States, their causes, on-going consequences and associated incidents that have affected people in many parts of the world. In Europe, it also relates to the challenge of transcultural diversities (Robins, 2006) and the growing climate of racism in some states (MacEwen, 1995), much of it directed against Muslims, exacerbated by 9/11 and its consequences (Modood et al., 2006).

Of course, positive events involving religion also have an impact on public consciousness in relation to issues within civil society, whether through the constructive activities of inter-faith networks or the example of outstanding personalities such as the Dalai Lama in relation to peace and environmental issues¹ or Archbishop Desmond Tutu as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (Tutu, 2000). It is also interesting that several research projects are being conducted at the moment on the theme of religion as social capital (Putnam, 1995), aiming, for example, to explore the extent to which faith organisations and members contribute to, or appear as obstacles to, ‘the bridging and linking of social capital required to achieve well-connected communities’.²

R. Jackson (✉)

Warwick Institute of Education, Warwick University, Coventry, England
e-mail: r.jackson@warwick.ac.uk

An earlier version of this chapter appeared as ‘European institutions and the contribution of studies of religious diversity to education for democratic citizenship’, in Jackson, Miedema, Weisse, & Willaime (2007, pp. 27–55)

¹<http://www.dalailama.com/> (accessed 15 January 2009).

²For example, ‘Faith as Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing?’ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/9781861348388.pdf> (accessed 19 January 2009).

In the present discussion, there is no intention to imply that the study of religion in schools should be solely justified through attention to social and political events and issues. I agree with the Delors Report in considering that education should include learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be (UNESCO, 1996). It is arguable that religious education should be concerned with all of these, especially the fourth. The present discussion focuses on the third, but does not ignore the others. The discussion responds to recent and widespread international interest in the study of religions in schools, with particular attention to European institutions, prompted by various political events and social issues. This is why close attention is given to citizenship education.

Religious Education and Citizenship Education: Diversity in Europe

Having placed the debate in a global context, I will now concentrate on issues concerning religion and public education in Europe. These will be considered in parallel with developments in citizenship education, a field which also responds to social issues.

First, I will illustrate some different approaches to religious education and citizenship education in individual states. The differences between them reflect particular factors in each state, including historical tradition (especially the history of Church/State relations in the case of religious education), the nature and degree of 'multiculturalism' in society and other cultural factors, socio-political structure, economic system and international/global influences, all of which interplay with factors such as educational values, aims and funding arrangements. I will then go on to consider broader European approaches, developed through European networks of researchers and educators, and especially through projects associated with European institutions. There will be some reference to EU/EC-funded research, but most space will be devoted to developments within the Council of Europe. Both institutions are concerned with European integration, understood in terms of fostering a society in which citizens feel that they belong to Europe while they also feel rooted in regional and national traditions and cultures. European integration thus includes identifying and establishing a minimum of common values, as legislated in the European Convention of Human Rights, but respects the preservation and development of regional and national cultural elements, including the integration of various kinds of cultural diversity within and across individual states. European collaborative work in education can thus provide models for policy-makers and curriculum developers that present a broad European vision, but which may not be fully applicable in all countries.

Religious Education in Europe

Of course, the role of religion in education has been seen rather differently in the various European states. Friedrich Schweitzer has pointed out the need for careful

comparative study of religious education (or its equivalents) as a research tool for informing developments in policy and practice (Schweitzer, 2006). He has also, rightly, pointed out the pitfalls of such studies if done superficially, especially in relation to linguistic issues such as the different meanings given to 'religious education' and diverse usages of particular terms such as 'confessional' (and its equivalent in other European languages) across different systems.

Despite the field of comparative study being in its infancy, there have been a number of publications aiming to give a picture of educational provision in relation to religion across European states (e.g. Kodelja & Bassler, 2004; Kuyk, Jensen, Lanskear, Löh Manna, & Schreiner, 2007; Schreiner, 2002; Willaime & Mathieu, 2005). On the basis of these sources one might make some points about the diversity of policy and practice in Europe from different angles. One might, for example, distinguish between the different ways in which states accommodate religion within their educational systems and develop policy accordingly. There are 'confessional' systems in which religious bodies are given responsibility for religious education. For example, in Germany, the churches have a supervisory responsibility for religious education, but within a constitutional framework of equal rights and non-discrimination. The 'confessional' system is different in the Netherlands, where schools have the right to teach the religion of the sponsor, and different again from, say, Slovakia, where schools teach what is recognised as the religion of the state – in this case Roman Catholicism. In some instances, as in Poland, religious education is an optional subject, taught by insiders, according to the tenets of particular denominations (mainly Roman Catholicism). Teachers' qualifications are defined by the church in question, in agreement with the Ministry of National Education and Sport (Eurydice, 2006). Then, there are non-confessional systems where religious bodies have no role in public education. For example, in public education in France, there is no subject devoted specifically to the study of religion, and any teaching covering religion in subjects such as history or philosophy must be purely informational (Estivalèzes, 2005, 2006). Sweden presents another example of non-confessional religious education. As with France, there is no direct involvement in education from religious bodies, but in contrast to the French situation, religious education is seen very much in relation to the personal development of children and young people (Larsson, 2000). There are also 'mixed' systems, as in England and Wales, where fully publicly funded schools have a form of religious education which aims at impartiality in its treatment of religion, while mainly state-funded voluntary aided schools may teach and promote the religion of the sponsoring body (Jackson, 2000).

A familiar way of making distinctions is from the point of view of the aims of the subject. The distinction is sometimes made between educating into, about and from religion (cf Hull, 2002). Educating into religion deals with a single religious tradition, is taught by 'insiders' and often has the objective of enabling pupils to come to believe in the religion or to strengthen their commitment to it. Educating about religion confines itself to using descriptive and historical methods, and aims neither to foster nor to erode religious belief. Educating from religion involves pupils in considering different responses to religious and moral issues, so that they may develop their own views in a reflective way. Here the main objective might be seen

as enabling pupils to develop their own point of view on matters relating to religion and values. On this taxonomy, the Italian system would be an example of educating into religion (Gandolfo-Censi, 2000), the Estonian system would exemplify educating about religion (Valk, 2000), while the English community school system would combine educating about and educating from religion (QCA, 2004).

Another way of distinguishing between varieties of religious education is in relation to broad geographical regions – such as the northern countries influenced mainly, in terms of religious history, by Protestantism, the southern mainly Catholic-influenced countries, and the former communist states recovering and reshaping earlier traditions (Orthodox and Catholic for example) following the demise of communism. There is a real danger of over-simplification here, of course. It is in the north, however, that most research and development has been done so far in the field of religious education (Larsson & Gustavsson, 2004). Times are changing rapidly, as we know from the wide variety of new work represented in the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV), the European Network for Research on Religious Education through Contextual Approaches (ENRECA) and other networks. Some Russian scholars aim to produce a non-confessional cultural approach to recovering Orthodox tradition (Kozyrev & ter Avest, 2007), while French social scientists re-examine the concept of *laïcité* in relation to the accommodation of religion within public education (Debray, 2002; Estivalezes, 2005, 2006; Willaime 2008). Turkey which, like the Russian Federation, spans the continents of Europe and Asia, has a lively debate over the development of models of religious education appropriate for public education (Kaymakcan, 2006).

Clearly, these simple taxonomies do not provide a completely reliable basis for comparative study. The more detail that is uncovered in each system or approach, the more one realises the dangers of easy comparison. It is also evident that there would be difficulties in finding a common European approach to religious education.

Citizenship Education in Europe

Citizenship education is high on the agenda of European governments although, as with religious education, understandings of its nature and purposes are diverse across the continent. Whether influenced primarily by fears of the young's disengagement with political processes, by concerns about social cohesion in culturally diverse societies, or by political change in former communist countries, citizenship education has emerged, either as a discrete curriculum subject or as a dimension of the wider school curriculum (Paludan & Prinds, 1999). On a major Council of Europe project in Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) (which we will return to below), citizenship education is inclusive of human rights education, civic education, peace education, global education and intercultural education as well as activities in which participation in society can be learned, exercised and encouraged.³ There is an increasing number of sources of information about citizenship

³http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/E.D.C/ (accessed 15 May 2006).

education in different European states. For example, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has conducted an international *Civic Education Study*.⁴ More than 140,000 pupils, teachers and school principals from 28 countries took part in the study, and two major reports were issued by the IEA in 2001 and 2002.⁵ Of the 28 countries researched, 23 were European.

The study found some general trends. For example, students in most countries showed some understanding of democratic values and institutions but often with little depth of understanding. Students with the most civic knowledge were most likely to be open to participate in civic activities as adults, while schools modelling democratic practice were the most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement. Patterns of trust in government-related institutions varied widely across countries (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). The study showed a gap between policy and practice in many cases, especially in relation to participation and active learning. Only about 25% of pupils across all countries reported that they were often encouraged to state their own views during lessons, with an equal proportion stating that such discussion occurs rarely or never (Kerr, 2003, p. 21).

A second important source is a Eurydice project on citizenship, sponsored by the European Commission. The EC Directorate-General for Education and Culture, in 2003, established a working group focusing on an 'Open Learning Environment, Active Citizenship and Social Inclusion' (European Commission, 2003). In 2004, this group requested information on citizenship education via the Information Network on Education in Europe (Eurydice).⁶ A wealth of relevant data were provided from 30 European countries, in the form of a final report analysing how citizenship education is taught in schools (Eurydice, 2005), plus numerous accounts of the treatment of citizenship education in individual countries.⁷

The final report, *Citizenship Education at School in Europe*, recommends that the term citizenship education should be detached as far as possible from its legal connotation, 'embracing all members of a given society, regardless of their nationality, sex, or racial, social or educational background'. The report also notes that in different states citizenship education may be offered as a separate subject, integrated into conventional subjects (including religious and moral education) or be seen as a cross-curricular theme. There is also a growing view that the idea of

⁴Formed 31 years ago, IEA is a non-profit, private association which carries out international comparative studies on schools. Policy-makers and educators use data from IEA studies to assess the impact of alternative curricular offerings; monitor the quality of schooling worldwide; identify effective schools and learn how to improve their own educational systems, and better understand the instructional learning process.

⁵For further information see: <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~iea/> (accessed 19 January 2009).

⁶Eurydice is a network of institutions collecting, monitoring, processing and circulating comparable information on education systems and policies across Europe. Eurydice was established in 1980 by the European Commission and member states as a strategic mechanism to foster co-operation, through improving understanding of educational systems and policies.

⁷Downloadable from <http://www.eurydice.org> (accessed 19 January 2009).

citizenship should be pursued through whole school policies and increasing support for the ‘democratic school’ in which teachers, parents and pupils are involved in school management and decision-making. There is also widespread support for citizenship education’s role in developing political literacy through dealing with issues such as democracy and human rights and for increasing active participation by pupils (Eurydice, 2005, pp. 59–62). A trawl through individual reports shows that approaches linking citizenship education and religious education reflect the range of conceptions of both fields found across Europe.⁸

The Council of Europe project on Education for Democratic Citizenship has also conducted a survey of current policy and practice in citizenship education among member states. The findings draw attention to the ‘implementation gap’ between national policies and syllabuses and what is actually experienced by students (Council of Europe, 2004b).

The findings of the studies mentioned above bear out Terence McLaughlin’s distinction between ‘maximal’ and ‘minimal’ interpretations of citizenship education (McLaughlin, 1992). In this, a ‘minimal’ approach presents the subject as knowledge-based, with a particular civics-related content to be transmitted in a formal and didactic manner. A ‘maximal’ approach, in contrast, emphasises active learning and inclusion, is interactive, values-based and process-led, allowing students to develop and articulate their own opinions and to engage in debate. The IEA, Eurydice and Council of Europe studies show a spectrum of practice between the two extremes. McLaughlin observes that the ‘minimal’ interpretation is open to various objections; the most notable being ‘...that it may involve merely an unreflective socialisation into the political and social *status quo*, and is therefore inadequate on educational, as well as other, grounds’ (McLaughlin, 1992, p. 238).⁹

Research on Effective Citizenship Education

There is considerable support in the European Union and the Council of Europe for a more ‘maximal’ interpretation of citizenship education. When we consider pedagogy, there is strong research evidence, from Europe and the United States in particular, endorsing the effectiveness of ‘maximal’ approaches. A key source is two close analyses of published research in citizenship education by Ruth Deakin Crick and her collaborators (Deakin Crick, Coates, Taylor, & Ritchie, 2004, Deakin Crick, Tew, Taylor, Durant, & Samuel, 2005; Deakin Crick, 2005).¹⁰

⁸For example, religion is mentioned in relation to social exclusion or discrimination (Belgium [Flemish]); diversity (Italy); understanding religious values (Denmark); strengthening values (Slovakia); understanding religions (Slovenia) and respecting each other’s religions (Bulgaria). Links between religious and citizenship education are seen through visits to neighbourhood or community groups including religious bodies. Some countries make no reference to religious education in their official documentation on citizenship education (e.g. Poland, Estonia, the Netherlands and Malta).

⁹See also Kerr, 1999, 12f on distinguishing between education about, through and for citizenship.

¹⁰The research was conducted under the auspices of the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre), set up in 1993 to address the need for a

In the 2004 study, Deakin Crick and her colleagues provide a review of evidence giving information of how citizenship education is implemented in schools.¹¹ This review included different types of empirical studies published by early 2003. The overall question addressed was ‘What is the impact of citizenship on the provision of schooling?’ This was taken to mean learning and teaching; school context and ethos; leadership and management; curriculum construction and development and external relations and community. Fourteen studies were selected for detailed analysis.

With regard to learning and teaching specifically, seven studies were considered especially relevant. These indicated that dialogue and discourse relating to shared values, human rights and issues of justice and equality were effective methods, and that the quality of discourse is a key factor in learning. In such dialogue the teacher acts as a facilitator, rather than a purveyor of information; the students are encouraged to express their views, often drawing on their own life experiences. The studies reveal that such participative, conversational activity sustains achievement and that students become engaged when the experience is challenging, attainable and relevant to their own lives. A necessary condition is that there need to be ground rules for dialogue and discussion, ensuring inclusion and respect for others. The studies suggest the need for opportunities for students to engage with values issues across all curriculum subjects and experiences. Deakin Crick notes that this approach may challenge existing conventions and power structures within the school, and that teachers and leaders are likely to need additional training and support in order to acquire the necessary professional skills, preferably through a whole-school strategy, including an agreed framework of values (Deakin Crick, 2005, p. 72).

The 2005 study reviewed the impact of citizenship education specifically on student learning and achievement. The review focused on a detailed analysis of 13 research studies, two UK-based, with a broader context provided by 35 research studies. Most of these were from the United States (22), five from the United Kingdom, two from Australia and one each from New Zealand, Portugal, Canada, Thailand, Ireland and Romania. Findings are consistent with those of the earlier review. The evidence indicates that approaches using dialogue and discussion are especially effective in enhancing learning and in increasing students’ motivation and engagement. A co-operative learning environment that empowers students is shown to lead to increased self-confidence, greater self-reliance and more positive

systematic approach to the organisation and review of evidence-based work on social interventions. Both reports are published on EPPI-Centre’s website as part of The Research Evidence in Education Library (REEL) (<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/EPPIWeb/home.aspx?page=/reel/intro.htm> accessed July 2006).

¹¹ Following Gearon (2003), she points out that there was little or no UK research on citizenship education before the 1990s, but some research and writing in fields such as values education, character education and PSHE, and in fields operative since the 1970s, called collectively by Gearon ‘implicit citizenship education’ – peace education, global/world studies, human rights education and political education. In particular, there was very little research on practice at the school level and little attempt to integrate citizenship education into broader educational philosophies and practices.

behaviour. Moreover, students' participation increases when lesson content relates to their own personal experiences. In gaining awareness of the situations of others, students are enabled to analyse and reflect on their own personal stories and experiences. On the question of teaching, as with the 2004 report, the review acknowledges a need for support for teachers in developing their expertise in facilitation and dialogue.

What is remarkable in this research is the consistent finding that there is a close connection between pedagogies that affirm the autonomy of young people and give them voice and responsibility (cf. Hallett & Prout, 2003; Prout, 2001) and an increase in student motivation and engagement. This is also a finding of an ESRC research project on teaching and learning (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004).

Religion, Citizenship and Public Education in European Institutions

Having given a sketch of the diversity of both religious education and citizenship education in Europe, I will now concentrate on these fields as dealt with at the European level, focusing on work undertaken under the auspices of the Council of Europe.¹²

With regard to the European Union, the preamble to the EU's first ever Constitution (agreed at a summit on 18 June 2004, but rejected by referenda in France and the Netherlands), says the EU draws its 'inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, democracy, equality, freedom and the rule of law'.¹³ The Vatican and several Roman Catholic countries led by Poland pressed, without success, for the Constitution's preamble to refer to Europe's Christian heritage. Since the statement about religious heritage was not a factor in the French and Dutch rejection of the Constitution, it seems unlikely that the text will change in relation to religion in any future draft. In Article 10 of the Constitution, there is a guarantee of freedom of thought, religion and conscience: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.' One would expect EU policies with regard to religion and education to reflect these principles (Willaime, 2005).

In developing a more integrated approach to the place of religion in public education, the importance of informal and semi-formal European networks of

¹²Since this chapter was first published, highly important work in this field has been completed by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. I have written about the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools (OSCE, 2007) in Jackson (2008a).

¹³http://europa.eu/constitution/en/ptoc1_en.htm#a1 (accessed 19 January 2009).

scholars and professional associations should be mentioned. With regard to religious education, for example, the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV),¹⁴ the European Association for Religious Education through Contextual Approaches (ENRECA)¹⁵ and the International Network for Inter-religious and Intercultural Education¹⁶ have been important. These networks have furnished opportunities for the discussion of new research ideas and research in progress at the European level and have provided the basis for bids for European funding for research. These include a successful bid to the EU Framework 6 programme for a collaborative European research project on ‘Religion in Education: A Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in Transforming Societies of European Countries’ (REDCo), which will be completed in 2009. The REDCo (Religion, Education, Dialogue, Conflict project <http://www.redco.uni-hamburg.de/web/3480/3481/index.html>) is funded by the European Commission Framework 6 initiative. REDCo is a 3-year project (2006–2009) involving universities from eight European countries (Universities of Hamburg and Münster, Germany; University of Warwick, England; VU University, the Netherlands; University of Stavanger, Norway; Russian Christian Academy for Humanities, St. Petersburg, Russia; Tartu University, Estonia; The Sorbonne, Paris, France and University of Granada, Spain). The project aims to establish whether studies of religions in schools can help promote dialogue and reduce conflict in school and society. The main research is focused on young people in the 14–16 age group, but there are also some studies of teachers, of primary pupils and of the place of religion in different educational systems. Cross-national studies include a mapping exercise of religion and education in Europe (Jackson et al., 2007); a qualitative study of teenagers’ views on religion in schools (Knauth et al., 2008); a quantitative survey of young people’s views in the eight project countries (Valk,

¹⁴The International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV) was founded in 1978 and has met biennially since that time. Originally, it included western Europeans and north Americans. The membership is now much more international. See <http://www.isrev.org/> (accessed 19 January 2009).

¹⁵The driving figure behind the establishment of ENRECA was Prof. Hans-Günther Heimbrock. Heimbrock, Scheilke, and Schreiner (2001) is ENRECA’s first book; Miedema, Schreiner, Skeie, and Jackson (2004) explain the ENRECA’s goals; see also <http://enreca.isert-network.com/docs/index.htm> (accessed 1 June 2006). ENRECA now has its own European Book Series on ‘Religious Diversity and Education in Europe’, published from Germany by Waxmann. The first titles published were Zonne (2006) and Afdal (2006).

¹⁶The International Network for Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Education was set up in 1994, soon after the election of a democratic government in South Africa, and had its first meeting at the University of Hamburg. The aim was to promote links between Southern African and Northern European research groups working in fields connecting religion and education in culturally diverse democratic societies. The seminar brought together Northern European and Southern African members of research and development groups working in the fields of religion, education and cultural diversity. Publications include Andree, Bakker, and Schreiner (1997); Chidester, Stonier, and Tobler (1999); Jackson (2003a); Weisse (1996) and contributions to a special issue of *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in South Africa*, 89(2), 2005.

Bertram-Troost, Friederici, & Beraud, 2009); plus studies of classroom interaction; a study of teachers of religious education and a study of aspects of Islam and education (all to appear in 2009 or 2010). National studies include Schihalejev (2010), specifically on Estonia, McKenna, Ipgrave, and Jackson (2008), evaluating a project on children's dialogue by email, and the report of the work of a 'community of practice' whose members conducted action research studies using the interpretive approach's key concepts (Ipgrave, Jackson, & O'Grady, 2009). All the books are in Waxmann's series 'Religious Diversity and Education in Europe' (<http://www.waxmann.de/index-e.html>).

In relation to professional organisations, The Co-ordinating Group for Religious Education in Europe (CoGREE) brings together a range of European professional associations in the field.¹⁷ With regard to citizenship education and its constituent fields, bodies such as the International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE) have had a similar synthetic function.¹⁸

The Council of Europe

A major influence on educational developments in Europe is the Council of Europe. Since the Council is currently taking a strong interest in both the study of religious diversity in schools and education for democratic citizenship, it is worth explaining how it operates since, unlike the EU/EC, it integrates project development with political decision making and support. The Council is an inter-governmental organisation founded in 1949 and based in Strasbourg, France. It comprises 47 member states currently and its aims include protecting human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law and seeking solutions to problems such as discrimination against minorities, xenophobia and intolerance (Council of Europe, 2004c). The Council's work leads to European conventions and agreements in the light of which member states may amend their own legislation. The key political bodies of the Council are the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers and various specialist conferences of Ministers.

The Parliamentary Assembly is made up of Members of Parliament (not Members of the European Parliament) from the member states, appointed or elected within their own countries, with cross-party representation and with the number of MPs per country determined by its relative population size. The Assembly meets for a week four times a year. Its many functions include the consideration of proposals from specialist groups and projects, and making recommendations to the Committee of Ministers. Unlike the European Parliament, its powers extend only to investigation, recommendation and advice.

The Committee of Ministers, comprising the Foreign Affairs Ministers of member states or their permanent diplomatic representatives (based in Strasbourg), is the Council's decision-making body. Its functions include determining action to be

¹⁷<http://www.cogree.com/> (accessed 19 January 2009).

¹⁸See <http://www.iaie.org/> (accessed 19 January 2009).

taken following recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly and conferences of specialist ministers (such as the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, which meets every 3 years). The Committee of Ministers meets twice a year, but their permanent diplomatic representatives meet weekly. The Committee's decisions are relayed as recommendations to member governments or are incorporated into European conventions and agreements which are legally binding on governments ratifying them.

At the administrative level, the Council is organised under four directorates, including the Directorate of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DGIV).¹⁹ Ideas for projects or results of projects are channelled by the Directorates and their various committees, as appropriate, for consideration by the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers or one of the conferences of specialist ministers, such as the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education (the Ministers of Education from the parliaments of the member states). There is also a Commissioner for Human Rights, who operates (in organisational terms) independently from the Directorates.

From the point of view of official projects, the Council of Europe offers a structure which fully integrates development and political processes. Project proposals are approved by the Council's political institutions and project findings and recommendations are considered and approved by them or sent back for further development. There is an expectation that, in turn, member states will implement policies set out in declarations or be influenced by them in policy development. The Council is thus a powerful instrument for European integration within its fields of operation.

The Council's projects on Intercultural Education and the Challenge of Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe and on Education for Democratic Citizenship will now be considered, as will a discussion of the establishment of a European Centre for citizenship and human rights education which includes the dimension of religion.²⁰

Intercultural Education and the Challenge of Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe

Within the Council of Europe, a view of intercultural education has gradually emerged, concerned with developing competences and attitudes enabling individuals to respect the rights of others, developing skills of critical empathy and fostering dialogue with others from different backgrounds (Council of Europe, 2002). This approach was developed in projects in history, education for democratic citizenship, modern foreign languages and the Roma, but did not include attention to religion. Religion was avoided because of the different relationships between religion and

¹⁹The others are: the Directorate of Legal Affairs (DGI), the Directorate of Human Rights (DGII) and the Directorate of Social Cohesion (DGIII).

²⁰A general discussion of education policies within the Council of Europe is provided in Bîrzéa (2005).

state across Europe, because of the diversity of current arrangements in member states on the place of religion in schools – reflecting histories involving religious conflict – and especially because, as a public body, the Council has to maintain neutrality with regard to the expression of views on the truth or falsity of religious claims.

However, at the political level, the atrocities of September 11, 2001 triggered a shift in policy. Through the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe formulated its response to include safeguarding fundamental values and investing in democracy. In relation to the latter, the then Secretary General, Walter Schwimmer, affirmed that intercultural and inter-faith dialogue would become a key theme for the Council, proposing:

... action to promote a better understanding between cultural and/or religious communities through school education, on the basis of shared principles of ethics and democratic citizenship. (Council of Europe, 2002)

The event of 9/11 thus can be regarded as a symbol for the entry of the study of religion as a new priority for European public policy on education. However, the paper proposing the Council's first project involving religion as part of intercultural education saw reflection on the events of 9/11 as offering a very limited amount in educational terms: 'The study of religions here could show that all the main world religions categorically reject terrorism as a legitimate political tactic, but could do little more.' Rather the Council's Working Party took the view that:

It is better to see the connection between extremist religion and political conflict and social disruption as a wake-up-call to tackle the quite different and less acute, but still widespread and serious, problem of poor community relations within Europe: where mutual mistrust, intolerance, racist incidents, and discrimination mainly take an ethnic form, but sometimes a religious one. (Council of Europe, 2002)

The new priority was, therefore, an extension of previous efforts to combat racism and promote democratic citizenship within the Council agreed at the Vienna Summit in 1993.²¹ However, the Council of Europe had '...no overall intercultural concept, strategy or recent normative text capable of easy extension specifically to cover religious diversity as well', recognising that 'existing activities do not deal with issues of religion in education', and concluding that 'a new activity is required; and the importance and complexity of the subject indicate making it a full-scale project' (Council of Europe, 2002).

In early 2002, the Council set up a working party to examine the issues, prior to the establishment of a project suggesting methods and approaches for integrating the study of religion into intercultural education in the public domain. The Working Party's action plan reflects the view that all countries face common challenges expressed in different environments, that they have much to learn from each other and that they should be prepared to review their policies in dialogue with the relevant stakeholders.

²¹ http://www.coe.int/T/e/human_rights/ecri/5-Archives/2-Other_texts/2-Vienna_Summit/Declaration/Declaration_Vienna_Summit.asp (accessed 19 January 2009).

The key condition for including religion as a pan-European topic in education was that, despite different views on religion at the personal and societal levels, all could agree that religion is a 'cultural fact' and that knowledge and understanding of religion at this level is highly relevant to good community and personal relations and is therefore a legitimate concern of public policy. This was not a form of intellectual reductionism, but a pragmatic recognition that the fact of the presence of religions in society was the lowest common denominator with which all European states could work in an educational context. Had this strategy not been adopted, the project would not have gone forward.

The Working Party's proposals were discussed at a forum on 'Intercultural education and the challenge of religious diversity and dialogue' in Strasbourg in September 2002 and subsequently, in modified form, adopted by the Committee of Ministers. Experts in religious and intercultural education from different parts of Europe met in Paris in June 2003 in order to identify the key issues in relation to religious diversity and the religious dimension of intercultural education, to tease out the implications of these issues for pedagogy and to make policy recommendations for the Education Ministers' conference on intercultural education to be held in Athens in November 2003. One conspicuous feature of this workshop was the initial suspicion by some of the intercultural educators of the aims and motives of specialists in religious education. It soon became clear that, as a result of their academic specialisation and national focus, many in each field were ignorant of the work of the others; there was especially an ignorance of work done on open and impartial approaches to the study of religions in schools. Once intercultural educators became aware of the range of pedagogical and theoretical work that had been done in seeking to present religious material impartially, a genuine dialogue was established, and the complementary skills of the different constituencies were appreciated mutually.

In terms of policy, the working group that included members from Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Greece, the United Kingdom, Latvia and Denmark recommended that, whatever the system of religious education in any particular state, children should have education in religious and secular diversity as part of their intercultural education, regardless of where specifically this was included in the curriculum. This element of the curriculum should include, for example, encouraging tolerance for different religious and secular points of view, education in human rights, citizenship and conflict management, and strategies to counter racism and discrimination in a religiously diverse world. The 2003 Athens Conference of the European Ministers of Education endorsed the project and also recognised its significance in promoting dialogue beyond Europe.

Issues related to the project were discussed at a high-profile conference on 'The religious dimension of intercultural education', held in Oslo in June 2004. Participants included educational decision-makers from most member states and from observer states, education professionals and representatives of civil society involved in intercultural education. Speakers included the Prime Minister of Norway and the Council of Europe's Director General for Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport. The conference proceedings were published by the Council (Council of Europe, [2004a](#)).

Following the conference, the Council appointed a group of specialists in religious and intercultural education to work together to produce a guide for teachers, teacher trainers, administrators and policy-makers to deal with the issue of religious diversity in Europe's schools (Keast, 2007). The first section deals with theoretical perspectives that teachers and others need to be aware of in considering the dimension of religious diversity in intercultural education. The second begins to relate the conceptual elements of intercultural education to various approaches to teaching and learning. The third section considers wider questions of religious diversity in schools, including school governance and management, dealing with how to apply intercultural education principles (participation, inclusion and respect for human rights) in different educational settings. The final section includes some examples of current practice in some member states of the Council of Europe.

A policy recommendation on the management of religious diversity (and non-religious convictions) in schools, based on the project's approach, was approved by the Committee of Ministers in December 2008. This important Ministerial recommendation provides a set of principles that can be used by all member states. As with other work within the Council of Europe, the process of interdisciplinary and international collaboration was almost as important as the product. There are now established procedures for including studies of religious diversity as a dimension of intercultural education at the European level. Now the policy recommendation (Council of Europe, 2008a) has been sent to the governments of all member states, it is important for educators to lobby their own governments, together with professional associations and NGOs, in order to encourage public discussion.

The Council of Europe and Education for Democratic Citizenship

The Council of Europe has considered education for democratic citizenship (EDC) to be a priority in relation to its mission to strengthen pluralistic democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe. The EDC project was officially launched by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member countries in Strasbourg in October 1997. At the time of writing, (2009), the project is now towards the end of its third phase. The first phase, covering 1997–2000, set out to identify values and skills needed to become responsible citizens and to examine how they could be acquired and transmitted to others. By September 2000 publications had been produced clarifying concepts, practices and methods, identifying and promoting citizenship sites (including schools), presenting various studies and teaching materials, and establishing a network including decision makers, experts, practitioners and NGOs. The first phase resulted in the production of a range of publications including Audigier (2000), discussing basic concepts and competences for citizenship education, Carey and Forrester (2000), considering 'sites of citizenship' and Dür, Spajic-Vrkaš, and Martins (2000), exploring different contexts for learning for democratic citizenship, and considering methods and practices, including core concepts, values and skills. Here, Education for Democratic Citizenship is

seen as inclusive of many aspects of Human Rights Education, Civic Education, Peace Education, Global Education and Intercultural Education as well as activities in which participation in society can be learned, exercised and encouraged. The results of the first phase were endorsed by the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in Cracow in October 2000.

The second phase covered the period 2000–2004, concentrating on the development of EDC policies, establishing networks, producing and disseminating materials and preparing for the European Year of Citizenship in 2005. In 2002, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted the proposal that member states should make EDC a priority of educational policy and reform (Council of Europe, 2004b, p. 13). The EDC group produced a systematic review of policy on EDC in six regions of Europe,²² a ‘toolkit’ for policy-makers and practitioners (including Huddleston & Garabagiu, 2005) and a key text on learning about and practising democratic participation in the school (Dürr, 2005).

The European Year of Citizenship through Education (2005) marked the culmination of the first two phases of the EDC project and set out to encourage the implementation of agreements by politicians who undertook to adapt the 2002 Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation on EDC to their own states’ education systems. The year included a range of activities, some in collaboration with international organisations such as the EU and UNESCO.

The third phase of the project (2006–2009) aims to promote sustainable policies, support good practice and encourage co-operation between and within the member states. The programme includes the further development of guidelines, tools and policy recommendations and is especially concentrating on developing ideas for democratic governance in educational institutions (Bäckman & Trafford, 2006).

The EDC project has not dealt directly with religion as an aspect of citizenship education. This is partly because the project is primarily concerned with generic issues, and may also be because of the view that religion was the centre-piece of the project on Intercultural Education and the Challenge of Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe – intercultural education being considered to be a subset of EDC. However, the absence of religion from direct consideration in the EDC project is a pity, since there are various reasons for addressing issues of religion within citizenship education – issues concerning values, human rights, peace and the global environment, as well as existential questions – that are not specific to the intercultural dimension (Blaylock, 2003; Gearon, 2006; Igrave, 2003; Jackson, 2003a; Jackson & Fujiwara, 2008).

Highly relevant both to citizenship education and to education about religions and beliefs is the 2008 White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which includes ideas derived from the various projects described above (Council of Europe, 2008b).

²²The policy review was piloted in South Eastern European countries and then applied in the Northern, Western, Southern, Central and Eastern regions. The results of these studies are published in Council of Europe (2004b), as is a synthesis of them.

A European Centre Including Education About Religious Diversity

A very important innovation is the development of a European Centre covering citizenship education, human rights education and the dimension of religion. In tracing the history of this, mention should be made of discussions prompted by the then Commissioner for human rights, Mr. Alvaro Gil-Robles, who set up a series of annual meetings to discuss the role of religious bodies in promoting human rights and addressing social issues in Council of Europe member states. The meetings brought together representatives of the main religions traditionally present in Europe, representatives of the authorities of the Council of Europe's member states, academics and politicians (including some members of the Committee of Ministers). These annual seminars began in 2000, turning their attention to religious education at the meetings in Malta (2004) and Kazan in the Russian Federation (2006).

The Maltese consultation discussed the possibility of establishing a foundational programme for religious education in all member states of the Council, and considered the establishment of a European Centre for Religious Education focusing on human rights (McGrady, 2006). The recommendations of the Maltese seminar were considered by the Parliamentary Assembly in 2005 (<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/EREC1720.htm>), which made specific recommendations to the Committee of Ministers, including that it should:

- examine the possible approaches to teaching about religions at primary and secondary levels, for example, through basic modules which would subsequently be adapted to different educational systems (13.1.)
- promote initial and in-service teacher training in religious studies. . .(13.2.)
- envisage setting up a European teacher training institute for the comparative study of religions (13.3.)
- encourage the governments of member states to ensure that religious studies are taught at the primary and secondary levels of state education (14.)

Such an education should include ensuring that pupils are informed impartially about religious diversity in Europe and aware of the human right of freedom of religion or belief (including the right to have no religion) (14.1, 2). The objective of this form of teaching should be to promote understanding, not to instil faith, even in countries having a state religion (14.4). Teachers providing this kind of education, from whatever discipline, would need specific training (14.5). Teacher training (for an impartial education in European religious diversity) should be provided within each state, and generic syllabuses (produced under the auspices of the Council of Europe) should be adapted to each country's particular needs and to the different ages of children (14.6).²³

²³Parliamentary Assembly, 4 October 2005 Recommendation 1720 (2005) <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/EREC1720.htm> (accessed 19 January 2009).

The 2006 seminar, on ‘dialogue, tolerance and education: the concerted action of the Council of Europe and the religious communities’, at Kazan in the Russian Federation (22–23 February), took the discussion further.²⁴

The 2005 recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly were discussed by the Committee of Ministers on 24 May 2006. The Ministers welcomed the recommendations in principle, but set them in the context of various policy statements on developing intercultural dialogue (within and beyond Europe), including the religious dimension, relating them to the Council’s wider activities in fields such as pedagogy and teacher education in intercultural education and history, which incorporate the dimension of religious diversity. Attention was drawn to the Council’s project on the intercultural education and religious diversity (see above), especially to its output on *Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education: A Reference Book for Schools* (Council of Europe, 2007), which encourages impartiality, open-mindedness and a critical approach.

Although not stated explicitly, it is clear that the Committee of Ministers considered that the recommendations from the Parliamentary Assembly, relating only to teaching about religions, were too narrow in relation to the establishment of a European Centre. The Chair of the Education Steering Committee, whose observations were appended to the Committee of Ministers’ response, reiterated the Steering Committee’s interest in setting up a network, centre or ‘pôle’ of excellence for the training of education staff in the Council of Europe’s fields of competence, such as education for democratic citizenship and human rights, history teaching and intercultural education. The Chair noted that training for teachers on education about religion could be featured more prominently in the centre’s programme.²⁵ Subsequently, a feasibility study was commissioned (conducted by the present author) in order to consider the viability of an interdisciplinary Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education, including the dimension of religion. The proposal for a Centre was endorsed by a major international conference on ‘Dialogue of Cultures and Inter-Faith Co-operation’ (the Volga Forum) which

²⁴The conclusion to the seminar report states that: ‘In the majority of Council of Europe member states the new generations do not even receive an education in their own religious heritage, much less that of others. For this reason, it had previously been suggested to establish an Institute capable of contributing to the development of teaching programmes, methods and materials in the member states. At the same time this Institute would serve as a research centre on these matters. It should also be a training centre for instructors, a meeting place and a forum for dialogue and exchange. Course content should be defined in close collaboration with representatives of the different religions traditionally present in Europe’ (Anon, 2006).

Participants discussed the nature of such a centre (it should be independent, but organised within the structures of the Council of Europe), the kind of curriculum that might be taught there, the place that religious communities might have in a consultative role (the group envisaged an advisory body from the religious communities who could work with the Council of Europe), and the Centre’s organisation, management and staffing. For example, the group envisaged an advisory body from the religious communities who could work with the Council of Europe.

²⁵<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc06/EDOC10944.htm> (accessed 19 January 2009).

included in its final declaration the statement that ‘the participants expressed their support for the project aiming at setting up, in the framework of the Council of Europe, a pôle of excellence on human rights and democratic citizenship education, taking into account the religious dimension’.²⁶

The decision was then taken to establish such a Centre, with support and funding from the Norwegian authorities. The permanent base for the Centre is planned to be the Centre for the Study of Holocaust and World View Minorities at Bygdøy/Oslo, but the Centre is based initially at Oslo University College and is called the European Wergeland Centre, named after Henrik Wergeland (1808–1845), one of Norway’s most famous poets, an upholder of rights for Jews and an advocate of social justice. The Centre officially opened in May 2009, with a remit to deal with research, information sharing and with the training of educators (<http://www.theewc.org/>).

Summary

I have outlined issues of policy and practice regarding the place of religion in public education internationally and in Europe, concentrating on the work of the Council of Europe and noting the view expressed within the Council that 9/11 was a ‘wake-up-call’ with regard to the study of religions in relation to social and cultural issues, precipitating a move towards the inclusion of studies of religions in public education across Europe. This shift in policy especially prompts the question of the relationship between studies of religion in education and citizenship education and related areas such as intercultural education.

At the level of European policy and pedagogy, I have, in particular, traced developments in the fields of education about religious diversity and citizenship education within the Council of Europe. On the positive side, the benefits of interdisciplinary work were noted, involving specialists in religious and intercultural education who have worked together fruitfully on a project bringing the dimension of religious diversity to intercultural education. The joint work did much to dispel stereotypes of research and development in religious education, facilitated the dissemination of pedagogical ideas derived from the RE field to wider constituencies and raised awareness among religious education specialists of the academic isolation of their field.

Also of particular benefit is the Council of Europe’s role in European integration. This does not aim for homogeneity across European education systems. Rather it

²⁶The conference was held in Nizhny Novgorod in the Russian Federation, September 7–9, 2006, under the auspices of the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation, the Inter-Faith Council of Russia and the Council of Europe. The quotation is from the ‘Volga Forum Declaration’, Final Document of the International Conference ‘Dialogue of Cultures and Inter-Faith Cooperation’, paragraph 4. http://www.strasbourg-reor.org/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=42&file=article&sid=352 http://www.coe.int/T/DC/Press/news/20060908_declaration_volga_en.asp (both accessed 19 January 2009).

requires the application of human rights principles to educational issues in order to develop models for policy and practice that are adaptable for use in particular national settings. The Council's arrangements for integrating recommendations from projects into the European political process are a key element in this, especially in terms of influencing policy development in member states. Examples illustrating the roles of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers and the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in consolidating and applying ideas from projects have been given.

Negatively, it was noted that, while much good work is being done in the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship, there had so far been no specific collaborative work focusing on EDC involving both religious education and EDC specialists. This is partly because the EDC project concentrated on generic issues, and partly because the EDC project regarded intercultural education to be a subset of EDC – and, of course, the Council already had a project on intercultural education and religious diversity. The European Wergeland Centre will now provide a forum where specialists in the two fields (and other related areas) can share research findings and pedagogical studies, debate issues and develop ideas for policy and practice. Religious education has much to offer such discussions, since there has been a significant amount of theoretical and empirical research on the relationship between the two fields initiated by specialists in religion (e.g. Gearon, 2003; Jackson, 2003a; Jackson & Fujiwara, 2008; McGrady, 2006; Ouellet, 2006. See also the articles in the special issue of the *British Journal of Religious Education*, 30(2), 2008).

I outlined the proposals for a European Centre for Religious Education, developed by a group convened by the Council's Commissioner for Human Rights and approved by the Parliamentary Assembly. General approval to the principles underlying this proposal was given by the Committee of Ministers, but it was also clear that the Ministers saw the proposal as too separated from other related concerns of the Council. Following a feasibility study, the result has been the development of a European interdisciplinary Centre bringing together expertise in a range of fields, including citizenship education, intercultural education, human rights education and the study of religions. The establishment of the European Wergeland Centre provides rich opportunities for more international and interdisciplinary work, including the study of religions.

Discussion

Several issues are raised by the developments described above, of which here I will mention four. The first concerns the representation of religion as a 'cultural fact', the second is concerned with teaching about religions in a social climate of growing racism, the third relates to the use of pedagogies giving agency to children and young people and the fourth deals specifically with the issue of whether children and young people, in the context of public education, should share their own beliefs and commitments in exploring issues related to identity. Each of these issues is relevant to the debate about religion in the public sphere, and especially

to the discussion of the study of religions in public education in Europe and the relationship between an open, critical religious education and a broad citizenship education which incorporates intercultural and human rights education and related fields.

Religion as a Cultural Fact

The generic Council of Europe perspective for the intercultural project, as reflected in the ground rules developed by politicians and civil servants, takes a cultural view of religion. That is, religion is represented as a ‘cultural fact’. The maintenance of strict impartiality in the face of contested religious and secular beliefs is a position that one would expect to find adopted by a formal political institution manifesting the values of constitutional democracy in the institutional public sphere (Habermas, 2006).

For the Council of Europe, religion is seen as a topic to be dealt with at the level of culture – within intercultural education, itself perceived as a subset of Education for Democratic Citizenship. The documentary evidence from the Council of Europe confirms that the ‘religion as a cultural fact’ position is neither an epistemological stance nor a secular assumption, but a *procedural* strategy for dealing publicly with an intractable problem that had previously kept religion out of the general European discussion and out of policy development and curricula in much European public education (Council of Europe, 2002).²⁷

There are developments in the Council of Europe’s relationship with religions, in that there is an increasing openness to consultation with religious organisations. The Volga Forum Declaration notes that the participants:

welcomed the newly established policy of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of inviting religious leaders and consulting with religious organisations on relevant topics. They felt that the time had indeed come for the Council of Europe to develop appropriate mechanisms for an open, transparent and regular dialogue with religious organisations. (Volga Forum Declaration, Final Document, paragraph 6, September 2006)²⁸

This is a positive move in the sense that dialogue between those of different religious and secular outlooks, using both religious and secular language, is fully appropriate at the level of public debate (Habermas, 2006). Indeed, in April 2008, the Council of Europe held the first of a series of ‘exchanges’, in which representatives from religious and humanistic organisations, plus various non-governmental

²⁷The issue of faith-based religious education is a separate issue. One view expressed within the Council of Europe, based on human rights arguments, recognises the complementary nature of faith-based education (mainly in the private sphere) and a generic public education ‘about’ religion (McGrady, 2006).

²⁸http://www.strasbourg-reor.org/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=42&file=article&sid=352http://www.coe.int/T/DC/Press/news/20060908_declaration_volga_en.asp (both accessed 19 January 2009).

organisations, meet to discuss the role and coverage of religions and beliefs within public education.²⁹

The important point is that the Council of Europe should continue to maintain its impartiality and independence and should not be over-influenced either by secularists or by those promoting religious stances and worldviews. On the one hand, there is a need for scrutiny of policies and materials produced in the Council's name in order to monitor any tendency towards reductionism – that is to check that there is no assumption that religion can *only* be interpreted in cultural terms.³⁰ On the other hand, there is equally a need to ensure that religious or secular bodies do not propagate their own beliefs via the Council of Europe or in any other way compromise its impartiality and commitment to fair deliberation on the part of *all* citizens.

Religion and Racism

There has already been some work done on religious education in relation to racism, including what Tariq Modood (1997) has called 'cultural racism' (e.g. Council of Europe, 2007; Jackson, 1997, 2004; Milot, 2001; see also Runnymede Trust, 1997 and Richardson, 2004 on 'Islamophobia'). However, post-9/11, European countries have seen a revival of far-right political parties, some of them getting quite close to the political mainstream – in Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and France, for example (MacEwen, 1995; Mason, 2002). Muslims and Islam are the main target for such groups (Modood et al., 2006). Moreover, the perpetration of atrocities by radical Muslims in European locations, and the threat of further attacks, has led to a hardening of policy towards 'multiculturalism' by some European governments, which has played into the hands of the extreme right. Reports in popular newspapers, interpreting the remarks of politicians, can reinforce stereotypes of Islam and foster an atmosphere of deep intolerance,³¹ What sets out to be a reasonable debate, according to the politicians concerned, can precipitate a change in climate permitting segments of the media to cultivate a fear of 'difference', and allowing the perpetuation of stereotypes and generalisations that are characteristic of 'cultural racism' and 'Islamophobia'

Such forms of racism can only be addressed fundamentally through the leadership and policies of governments. However, schools and other educational institutions offer one area of public space where racist assumptions can be studied and challenged in a rational manner. There is still much work to be done here. There are, of course, key issues relating to whole school policies and values which need further consideration, but religious education (at least in some education systems), citizenship education, human rights education (Gearon, 2006),

²⁹<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1247647&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75> (accessed 19 January 2009).

³⁰Moreover, the appreciation of religion as a 'cultural fact' should not inhibit the observation in classroom practice that many religious people believe their convictions to be true.

³¹Eg Ban it! Daily Express, 21 October, 2006.

peace education (Jackson & Fujiwara, 2008) and associated fields, are curriculum areas which have the potential to address forms of racism that focus on religion and culture. For example, the Spanish scholar Francisco Diez de Velasco has suggested that religious education has the potential to become ‘a laboratory for peace education’ (Diez de Velasco, 2008). Fulfilling that potential would require interdisciplinary study and close attention to pedagogy, especially in developing approaches which include self-reflection as well as learning to listen to the voices of others and to be critical of stereotypical and insensitive representations of religions. Thus we turn now to issues related to pedagogy that require further consideration.

Agency of Pupils and Pedagogical Styles

Issues of pedagogy need to be considered in relation to views of the child or young person. There is a general issue of whether participative methods which give independence and agency to students are universally acceptable, and a specific issue as to whether methods drawing on personal views of children and young people on *religious matters in particular* are appropriate in all countries.

What is striking about the Council of Europe’s work on Education for Democratic Citizenship is its emphasis on a ‘maximal’ approach that gives agency to students, and which has implications for the organisation and procedures of the whole school and for governance, as well as for classroom methods and styles of teaching and learning. We have seen that strong support for a student-centred pedagogy also comes from independent reviews of European research on approaches to citizenship education. Deakin Crick’s analysis of research relating to teaching and learning, in the context of citizenship education, links the exploration of personal issues with broader social issues and provides evidence that the participation and motivation of students increases when lesson content relates to their own personal experiences and that students are enabled to analyse and reflect on their own personal stories and experiences through gaining awareness of the situations of others.³²

The general approach of the Council of Europe EDC project and the findings from the research projects reported by Deakin Crick reverberate with much research and development in religious education which takes a hermeneutical turn. Theoretical work influenced by hermeneutics,³³ ethnographic research on young people’s identity in the context of religious diversity,³⁴ and pedagogical research on the practice of religious education³⁵ are all highly relevant to an analysis of

³²Research on the values of European youth also shows that most young people rate the value of personal autonomy highly (Kay & Ziebertz, 2006).

³³For example, Jackson 1997, 2004; Meijer, 1995, 2006; Ouellet, 2006; Skeie, 1995, 2006; Wright, 2006.

³⁴For example Jackson and Nesbitt 1993; Nesbitt, 2004, 2006; Østberg, 2003, 2006.

³⁵For example Igrave, 2003, 2005; Jackson, 1997, 2004, 2006; 2008b, 2008c; Leganger-Krogstad, 2000, 2001, 2003; O’Grady, 2003, 2005; Weisse, 2003.

the relationship between a critical religious education and the kind of ‘maximal’ citizenship education advocated in the research reported by Deakin Crick and in the Council of Europe EDC project.³⁶ The body of theoretical work affirms the exploration of individual identity issues as a key feature of religious education, and links issues important to young people with broader questions of value. Evidence from ethnographic studies of children and young people confirms the importance of attention to individual identity issues in representing accurately individual young people’s stances on religion and ethnicity. Data from such focused qualitative studies are a powerful counter to stereotypical portrayals of religions and provide an important source for religious, intercultural and citizenship education. The research studies on pedagogy in religious education referred to above also show the efficacy of approaches that include the exploration of identity issues, even with younger children. Ipgrave’s work in England, on dialogue in the primary school, draws heavily on children’s own perspectives and experiences (Ipgrave, 2003, 2005; McKenna et al., 2008). As with Leganger-Krogstad’s research in Norway (2000, 2001, 2003) and Weisse’s work in Germany (2003), Ipgrave makes connections between children’s explorations of identity at the individual level and broader social issues. Referring to Iris Young’s writing (Young, 1990), I also argue that, in integrating religious and citizenship education, pedagogies that give voice to children, thus promoting ‘differentiated citizenship’, should be favoured (Jackson, 2003b, 2004). Moreover, O’Grady’s action research studies with adolescents, conducted in schools in the north of England, demonstrate that a pedagogy relating students’ ethical concerns and personal pre-occupations to material from the study of religions and to wider social issues can be highly motivating to students (O’Grady, 2003, 2005).³⁷

Despite this impressive body of theory and research related to hermeneutical and pupil-centred approaches to religious and citizenship education, it is currently not possible to apply or develop it in all parts of Europe. The diversity of national systems reflects various pedagogical traditions related to each country’s historical experience, and student-centred approaches are at odds with traditional practice in some European states. Research findings from the EC REDCo Project from France and Spain show that, currently, the kind of student-centred approaches advocated by the Council of Europe EDC project, reflected in the research reported by Deakin Crick, would be difficult to apply in public school classrooms in their countries, although this would depend to some extent on particular circumstances, such as

³⁶See the view that exploration of fundamental questions also contributes to citizenship education (e.g. Ipgrave, 2003) and the view that religious education has much to offer considerations of global citizenship (Jackson, 2003b). Note also that some research conducted in the broad religious education field is highly relevant to the exploration of the relationship between religious and citizenship education at the conceptual level. Geir Afdal’s monumental study of ‘tolerance’ comes to mind (Afdal, 2006).

³⁷A ‘community of practice’ based at the University of Warwick (teachers and teacher training providers) has conducted action research studies in schools and teacher training institutes, developing interpretive and dialogical approaches using action research. This was done as part of the EC REDCo Project (Ipgrave, Jackson, & O’Grady, 2009).

the age of children and the subject under study. Comparative education specialists would need to analyse whether this tendency is a matter of ‘cultural assumption’ or whether there are other reasons for it. For example, in explaining why the IEA study on citizenship education showed that only around 25% of pupils surveyed were encouraged or allowed to share their personal views, it would be instructive to investigate how far the various national traditions on pedagogy reflect different perspectives (including theological perspectives of various kinds) on the nature of authority and the nature of childhood. It would be valuable to know how much support there is for the idea of the child as an autonomous agent, a view which has gained support through theoretical and empirical studies in the sociology of childhood (e.g. Christensen, 2004; Hallett & Prout, 2003; Prout, 2001).

There are some important points to pursue and develop here about the nature of learning: a hermeneutical view *requires* movement between the learner’s views and those to be found in material that is studied, such as material from the religions, or movement between personal issues and wider social issues or broad issues of tradition. It does not separate activities of understanding and reflection (representation, interpretation and reflexivity [Jackson, 1997, 2004, 2006, 2008b, 2008c]) but presents these as complementary and integrated processes.

Children’s Personal Views on Religion

When we turn to the specific issue of the study of religions in education, we find additional objections to approaches which give children agency and voice, even within a ‘democratic’ classroom where the teacher acts as an impartial facilitator. These are that the exploration of issues related to identity issues of children and young people encroach on the field of private space and potentially undermine parental wishes. For example, the French discussion sees the study of religion in schools as ‘teaching about religion’, as imparting a body of knowledge that is regarded procedurally as independent of the students in the classroom (Estivalezes, 2006). The principle of *laïcité*, which is linked to the separation of public and private domains, demands the impartiality and neutrality of teachers (Debray, 2002). Students have more freedom to express their own religious convictions than teachers, although it is arguable that the 2004 law against the wearing of religious symbols has restricted it. Moreover, the way in which *laïcité* is represented often makes it difficult in practice for young people to discuss their own personal views in class. As one French colleague put it, ‘There is a fear of assigning religious identities to pupils: we don’t want to force them to reveal whether they are Jewish, Muslim or Christian and, sometimes, most of them are just indifferent; I think this might be one of the reasons why we don’t want too much of a pupil-centred approach’. Nevertheless, discussion of the interpretation of the concept of *laïcité* is currently part of the French debate, including the issue of whether religious expression should be confined to private space (such as the family or religious community) or should be integral to public life within civil society; thus there is potentially some room for movement (Debray, 2002; Willaime, 2008). For reasons close to those stated

above, it would also be difficult currently to take a fully hermeneutical approach in countries such as Spain, Turkey and Estonia, just as it would in some non-European states, such as the Republic of Korea or the United States.

We have already noted that the ideal of European integration, as expressed within the EU and the Council of Europe, does not demand or expect total uniformity in educational matters. What is important is that a dialogue is maintained, especially through collaborative work on European research projects (such as the EC REDCo Project) and through the Council of Europe. In discussing pedagogical issues in the European context, it would be worth considering dialogue in the context of wider international debates related to the study of religions and citizenship education. We might, for example, gain some insight from another country struggling to find pedagogies for the study of religion in public education, namely the United States.³⁸ Over the last 30 years or so, there has been some movement in the United States towards inclusion of religion in the curriculum of publicly funded schools. Arising from the religious liberty principles of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the view has been developed 'that age-appropriate study about religion should be a part of all public and private elementary, secondary and university education' (American Assembly, 2000, p. 14). Teaching models so far developed are of the 'teaching about' variety, aiming to increase pupils' understanding of different religions in history and society as well as to increase tolerance and sensitivity towards people of different faiths and philosophies. Advocates of this approach would be wary of methods which relate material studied to students' own beliefs and assumptions and with the development of their religious or spiritual identities. This would be regarded as a deviation from the requirement that public schools should be entirely neutral in areas of religion. Bruce Grelle, a leading authority in the debate about religion in public education, in considering the American situation in relation to my own interpretive approach (Jackson, 1997, 2004, 2006, 2008b, 2008c), suggests an alternative way of making the connection between knowledge and understanding and pupils' personal lives. He does this precisely through linking religious education to citizenship education, with an emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic democracy, rather than on the sharing of personal views. 'Teaching about diverse religious and secular worldviews and ways of life', argues Grelle, 'becomes a venue for helping students understand their rights to religious liberty or freedom of conscience as well as their responsibility to protect those same rights for their fellow citizens' (Grelle, 2006).

Grelle's ideas provide an example of an adaptation to a strictly 'teaching about' approach, tailored to the American context, resulting from an international dialogue about pedagogy. It is hoped that the Council of Europe will continue its important work by promoting dialogical thinking of this type across the European states and between the Council of Europe and other countries, in the Arab world, for example,

³⁸There are also interesting developments in the Canadian province of Quebec that are very relevant to the European debate (see Milot, 2001; Ouellet, 2000, 2001, 2006).

in an interdisciplinary context. The achievement of this will be facilitated through the establishment of the European Wergeland Centre, bringing together educators and researchers dealing with religion in public education and scholars from other fields, such as education for democratic citizenship.

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Erratum to: International Handbook of Inter-religious Education

Kath Engebretson, Marian de Souza, Gloria Durka and Liam Gearon

K. Engebretson et al. (eds.), *International Handbook of Inter-religious Education*, International Handbooks of Religion and Education 4, DOI 10.1007/978-1-4020-9260-2, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2010

DOI 10.1007/978-1-4020-9260-2_67

Kath Engebretson, the principal editor of the handbook, has edited Part III of the handbook. Regrettably, her name has been replaced by the name of her co-editor Marian de Souza both in the Contents and on the first page of her introduction of Part III.

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