

Abstracts of Presentations

(by Abstract Reference Number)

Workshop: Conversations with Professor Robert Jackson

Professor Robert Jackson, University of Warwick Coventry

Bob Jackson will reflect on the development of his own interest in understanding the religions of others, with reference to his ethnographic research with Eleanor Nesbitt, initially on the Hindu community in the English city of Coventry, resulting in the publication of Jackson & Nesbitt, *Hindu Children in Britain* (Stoke on Trent, Trentham 1993). He will relate his ethnographic research to the development of the interpretive approach to religious education introduced in *Religious Education: An Interpretive Approach* (London, Hodder & Stoughton 1997), and contextualised in *Rethinking Religious Education and Plurality* (London, RoutledgeFalmer 2004). Finally, he will consider how these studies led to a consideration of the contribution of religion to broader areas of value in public education, such as citizenship education (*International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity*, London: RoutledgeFalmer 2003), intercultural education (Jackson & McKenna, *Intercultural Education and Religious Plurality*, (Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief 2005) and peace education (Jackson & Fujiwara *Peace Education and Religious Plurality: International Perspectives*, London, Routledge 2007).

RE07001

The International Research Project on Youth Spirituality

Dr. Paul McQuillan, Brisbane Catholic Education

The research project was intended to source articles from members of the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry from around the world to outline the issues surrounding youth spirituality today. The articles presented for publication included two each from Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom and a very valuable contribution from an African perspective.

An integrated analysis of this range of papers is a complex exercise. An overwhelming conclusion that can be reached from the articles is that the Christian message is in some danger of becoming extinct in the U.K. and Australia. Whilst there remains a more overt religious expression among United States youth, contributors also recognise the need to change the way we minister to the young in that country if we are to pass on the message of Christ.

This paper will utilise Inayatullah's causal layered analysis (CLA) framework to examine the way in which the world view of the young people impacts on how we present the reality of the Christian message. It will take the view that the metaphors and myths of Christianity, while essentially unchangeable, need to be reinterpreted and represented in a context appropriate to each of the youth cultures presented by the writers. It will examine briefly and comment upon the challenges this poses for youth ministry in each of the contexts presented.

RE07002

A hermeneutic case study approach to exploring continuing ethos in religious institutions

Dr. Jim Hanley, Catholic Education Office
Dr. John Watts, Avondale College

We propose to qualitative researchers a demonstrated methodology for examining the extent of continuation of foundational ethos within a religious organisation or institution, incorporating a hermeneutical case study approach to the analysis of documents, which originate in a variety of historical and cultural milieux. The methodology provides a conduit by which all those involved in some institutional form of religious education or ministry can more comprehensively determine the extent to which foundational ethos remains in their institutions. We recommend the methodology because it is reasonably economical, rigorous, effective and communicable to administrators, policy makers and staff in religious education and ministry.

RE07003

Values That Matter: Fostering Values in Faith-Based Schools with a Christian Ethos

Dr. Kevin Treston, Consultant

This session will explore various approaches to fostering values in faith-based schools with a Christian ethos. There is an increasing trend for the people involved in such schools to be drawn from a wide diversity of religious beliefs, ethnic origins and lifestyle values. How might the enterprise of fostering core values be enhanced through a process which is faithful to its Christian identity and respectful of people's integrity and cultural diversity? The presenter draws from his considerable experience over many years in Australia and other countries in proposing a plethora of strategies for nurturing core values according to key principles of values education. Themes in the session include, the nature of the values crisis, understanding values, a values audit for school communities, personal values framework, core Christian values, principles of values education and approaches to values education.

RE07004

Who goes to WYD Day and What Impact Does it Have

Dr. Richard Rymarz, ACU National

World Youth Day (WYD) beginning in 1985 and held internationally every two or three years is amongst the largest gatherings of young people in the world. In 2000, for example, the WYD held in Rome attracted well over two million pilgrims. With a high level of participation as well as longevity WYD has become a significant social phenomenon, especially in an era where there is a sustained and widespread disaffiliation of youth from mainstream Churches. Despite this there has been little empirical work on who attends WYD. This paper will report on research conducted on Australian youth and young adults who attended the 2005 WYD in Cologne. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques will be used to try and build up a profile of WYD pilgrims, explore some of their motivation and what impact WYD had on them. In 2008 WYD will be held in Sydney and many Australian Catholic schools have made a significant commitment participating in WYD. The paper will conclude with some discussion of what the research tells us about participation in WYD

RE07005

Teaching about Jesus at the Coalface

Dr. Richard Rymarz, ACU National

One of the most important research fields in religious education (RE) in Australian Catholic schools is work on the actual classroom practice of teachers. Despite some important studies, largely on how scripture is taught, there has been little empirical research on how teachers teach topics within RE. This study seeks to address this by a small scale examination of classroom teaching about Jesus. One of the pivotal themes in religious education, in a number of contexts, is Christology. In many Catholic systems, for example, religious education is described as having a Christological focus. There has been, however, little research on how teachers teach about Jesus with an emphasis on classroom practice. This paper will report on work conducted with junior secondary teachers in Catholic schools on their teaching practice. Key strategies used will be described as well as the teachers sense of what is effective and what they are trying to achieve. Some of the implications of classroom teaching for future learning will be discussed.

RE07006

Religious education: Ministry or mission?

Prof. Neil Ormerod, ACU National

The social and cultural contexts of religious education have shifted significantly over the past fifty years. From a self-understanding of being part of the Church's system of cultural and social reproduction, religious education now occurs in a context of competing expectations between parents, schools and church constituencies. In order to meet the demands of this new context it may be helpful to consider religious education under the umbrella of mission and evangelization rather than that of ministry. To justify this claim the paper will present a theological analysis of the distinction between ministry and mission and consider its significance of the new context of religious education.

RE07007

The use of the Harry Potter series and other hero stories in Religious Education

Mr. Tony Lennard, Catholic Education Office Hobart

This presentation looks at how fictional hero stories, including the *Harry Potter* series, can be used in teaching Religious Education values to students. It comments on the familiarity of modern hero stories with traditional hero stories and makes mention that this type of story has traditionally been used to teach values. Recent research is presented which indicates the continued popularity of this type of story with our young people. Practical examples are presented showing how these hero stories can be used in Religious Education lessons teaching values which are consistent with Gospel values.

RE07008

From biblical dreams to children's dreams: A challenge for Religious Education

Dr. Brendan Hyde, ACU National
Dr. Kate Adams, Bishop Grosseteste University College

In the Judeo-Christian scriptures, dreams were viewed as one medium through which God communicated with humankind. Contemporary research shows that some children in Catholic schools report dreams which bear similarities to those recorded in scripture. Often these children perceive their dreams as having religious connections. This paper argues that when children find meaning in these dreams, they may be drawing on spiritual intelligence to do so. Given that all children dream, the topic of dreams has immediate relevance for students. The religious component of some dreams gives this topic a pertinent and challenging place in religious education, and is therefore worthy of further exploration.

RE07009

Children's Conception of Time, and How This Impacts on Their Spirituality

Mrs. Wyn Moriarty, ACU National

Children's concepts and experiences of time are investigated using interview data from research into the spirituality (worldview) of children in Victorian State Primary Schools. Children's spirituality has been described through such concepts as *lifeworld existentials* (Hyde 2003, van Manen 1990, p. 119), or *modes of being* (Champagne 2003). This research is based on Champagne's *modes of being: Sensitive, Relational, and Existential*. This paper demonstrates that time is a key to children's *existential mode of being*. The analysis of the interviews is guided by the hermeneutics of Ricoeur (1985) and Merleau-Ponty (1967). Ricoeur's categories of time, and his concepts of historical narrative and narrative identity are used to demonstrate that children's experiences of time can shape their sense of identity and their worldview. The hermeneutics of Merleau-Ponty (1967) are used to demonstrate that perceptions of time are grounded in life experiences of the objective world.

This study had relevance for the teaching of Religious Education and for primary education generally.

RE07010

Dominant metaphors in Lutheran education past and present

Ms. Meryl A Jennings, Australian Lutheran College

This paper reports on the direction evolving in my current doctoral work on Lutheran education and its place in the contemporary Australian educational context. An exploration of the literature relating to the historical construction of Lutheran education in Australia highlighted the presence of two dominant metaphoric representations of the nature and purpose of Lutheran schooling—in terms of nurturing of the children of a faith community and Christian outreach to others beyond that community. Changes in the clientele and context of Lutheran schools from the mid 1900s have seen a reworking of those earlier descriptors into broader concepts of care for the community and witness in society. At the same time policy statements by the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) and Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) have indicated the emergence of other metaphors in the discourse of Lutheran education. Similar reconceptualising has occurred in Catholic education, as faith-based

schools find a valid place in an Australian society concerned with issues of values and spirituality.

RE07011

Teaching Christian Meditation to children

Ms. Joan Neal, Catholic Education Office Townsville
Mr. Des Fitz-Gerald, Catholic Education Office Townsville

It may seem a paradox that children and young adults can be still and silent, and not just be quiet, and enjoy it. Like adults, children yearn for the experience of meeting God. A significant development in the world of Christian Meditation is the way this form of prayer can be embraced by children. Children can be taught when they are young to be still, to say the mantra *maranatha* so their hearts may be open to the work of the spirit and the presence of Jesus. In 2004 the idea of teaching Christian Meditation to children was conceived by Ernie Christie, Assistant Director, and became a diocesan wide project in Townsville. With the support of Bishop Michael Putney, Ernie Christie and Joan Neal worked with a trial group of classroom teachers from prep to year 12. These teachers attended in-service and returned to classrooms to put their learning into practice. They wrote about and discussed their classroom experiences and their wisdom became part of the book by Ernie Christie *“Coming Home, a guide to teaching Christian meditation to children”* which will be published this year with accompanying DVD by the World wide Christian Meditation organisation.

RE07012

The Management of Curriculum Change: A Report on the RECs’ Perspectives about some of the Issues Involved in Managing Curriculum Change

Dr. Michael T Buchanan, ACU National

This paper presents a summary of the theory generated from a qualitative study that investigated the perspectives of Religious Education Coordinators’ regarding their management of a particular curriculum change. Some links between the theory generated and existing literature are presented to illustrate the advancement of knowledge about the management of curriculum change in the highly specialised area of religious education. Some recommendations arising from this study are drawn upon to enhance curriculum leadership in the school context.

RE07013

‘Centring’ the Scriptures: Exploring interconnected thinking modes to ‘break open’ the Scriptures?

Dr. Dan White, Catholic Education Office Hobart
Mrs. Helen Healy, Catholic Education Office Hobart

Over the last decade, by embracing constructivist learning philosophies, pedagogical practice in Religious Education classrooms across Australia has undergone a major paradigm shift. As a consequence there has been a greater emphasis on differentiated learning, higher order thinking skills, enhanced student engagement and the discernment of meaning.

Concurrently, those involved in curriculum design have begun to focus more attention upon the nature and approach to the teaching of the Scriptures in Religious Education programs. In particular, there is a need to develop a more coherent and sequential framework for widening the student's experience of a range of Scriptural texts; teaching the skills of biblical interpretation; determining appropriate assessable indicators of learning in the area of biblical studies; and addressing the repetitious use of 'favourite' Scripture passages. Of particular concern is the need to develop pedagogical approaches that will move students beyond superficial engagement with the Scriptures to discerning in 'some depth' the underlying context and meaning of the various passages that are being studied.

In association with partner dioceses, the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office has just completed a major review of the use of Scripture within the Curriculum Framework for the Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Hobart, *'Good News for Living'*. The purpose of the review was to more effectively utilise a greater diversity of scriptural texts and sequence the teaching of scripture so as to build deeper conceptual understandings. In addition, work is currently underway to link the revised Scripture framework to a newly developed pedagogical approach to enhance biblical literacy in our students.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the concept of *'Centring the Scriptures'* by combining insights from a review of the Tasmanian Scripture Framework with a six step process that involves the learner in exploring the scriptures utilising a sequential array of thinking modalities. The workshop will combine the presentation of theological and pedagogical concepts with a range of newly developed high order thinking strategies that may be beneficial to the Religious Education practitioner.

RE07014

Talents, tact and tolerance: On avoiding the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth

Dr. Graham English, ACU National

This paper is a reflection on Hans-Georg Gadamer's idea of *bildung* that is part of his major work *Truth and Method*. *Bildung* according to Gadamer is the concept of self-formation, education, or cultivation. It is the 'properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities'.

It is an inelegant word in English but an elegant idea. For Gadamer it is one of the guiding concepts of being truly human and is an idea first developed by Christian mystics in the middle ages.

RE07015

What does it mean to be a modern day pilgrim?

Jennifer Jeffery, Catholic Education Office Canberra & Goulburn

This presentation will draw on my personal experience of walking along the Camino de Santiago to reflect on the concept of pilgrimage in today's world and its relevance for religious educators.

What does it mean to be a modern day pilgrim? This question will be explored through the imagery, companionship and surprises of this experience.

Set in the context of pilgrimage in the Christian tradition, consideration will be given to the life messages inherent in this physical and spiritual journey and the challenging difference in perspective between 'going on a pilgrimage' and 'being' a modern day pilgrim.

Participants will be invited to relate images from the Camino to the context of their experience of religious education.

RE07016

Biblical literacy in the 21st century

Mrs. Dominique Jaaniste, Lutheran Education Australia

One of the aims of the religious education curriculum for Lutheran schools *The Christian Studies Curriculum Framework*, is to equip students with 'the language, symbols, metaphors and imagery to read and interpret the rich heritage of biblical text' set within the wider context of religious literacy. This is an admirable aim but what does it take to make it a reality for both teachers of religious education and students in their care? The assumption the curriculum document makes is that teachers are biblically literate and have the necessary skills and strategies to do justice to this Christian sacred text.

This paper seeks to share what the literature has to say about what is foundational for both teachers and students if they are to be biblically literate, look at some examples of methodologies for teaching biblical literacy and open discussion on the implications this has for classroom teaching and professional development opportunities for teachers. A further question participants can engage with is *how might a sound approach to biblical literacy facilitate and empower learning in a multicultural and multi-faith context?*

RE07017

Jesus in R. E. – telling it like it is

Dr. John N Collins

Teaching Jesus in the classroom is not the most difficult of R. E. tasks. Students are very interested to be exposed to issues arising from the study of Jesus. Understandably the task is not necessarily within the everyday competence of all teachers. Nonetheless, even teachers who feel inadequate in regard to teaching about Jesus are more than willing to teach under the guidance of a well-resourced leader. They come to find such teaching personally and professionally rewarding.

The presenter's views arise from many years of teaching about Jesus in secondary schools and of collaborating with, resourcing and leading peers in R. E.

The proposal originates in concerns which Richard Rymarz expressed in *JRE* 52(2) 2006 in relation to learning outcomes of teaching about Jesus.

The presentation suggests that later culturally controlled credal formulations about Jesus are less relevant to students than the numerous vibrant expressions of faith in Jesus that gospel narratives provide. The main focus will be on illustrations from selected narratives and teachings in Luke ('Son of the Most High', 'throne of his father David', 'Saviour', 'Christ-Messiah', 'Lord', 'my Chosen', 'Son of Man [who] must suffer ... and be raised'...)

RE07018

The Interface of Theology and Religious Education

Mr. Tom Guinane, ACU National

Religious education as *ministry* is done as part of a Christian community to serve and make real the reign of God. Every Christian has the right to an education in their faith and every Christian is called to spread Christ's message. This is also a core task of Practical Theology

This paper proposes that adequate *formation* in faith requires that that Catholic schools effectively engage in confessional faith formation. It does not suggest that education in Religious knowledge or the knowledge and skills associated with Religion Studies are unimportant, rather that these are insufficient in terms of ministry and proclamation of the reign of God.

What responsibility catholic schools have for the faith formation of students is debatable as significant and increasing proportions of their students are non-Catholic. However if we are to accept that confessional faith formation is a fitting operation for Catholic schools in Australia then Lonergan has a significant contribution to make in terms of his insights into the process of coming to know.

This paper looks at *conversion* as understood by Lonergan and concludes that the essence of quality religious education is the cooperation of theology and religious education as academic pursuits.

RE07019

The Crisis of Representation and the Recovery of Authenticity in Religious Education in Postmodernity

Mrs. Patricia Abbott, ACU National

Religious education within Australia as it currently legitimated; as a normal educational construct and discourse, is experiencing a crisis of meaning. This crisis of meaning is religious education's embodiment of modernity's *crisis of representation*. Religious education constructed as a normal discourse of education constitutes a collapsing narrative of modernity, a discourse emptied of authenticity and social and personal meaning.

To recover authenticity, religious education needs to embrace postmodernity's project of *ressourcement* and return to its multiple origins in theology, practice, scripture, social theory and love.

Both Catholic and Protestant tradition embrace in varying degrees, the position of religious education as normal educational discourse. Within Protestant tradition the position emerged following the work of Ronald Goldman and within Australia the recent influence of UK academic Peter Vardy, claiming to represent Anglicanism's 'fearless love of truth', has been particularly significant.

Within Catholic tradition this position foundationally derives from interpretations of the teaching documents produced by the Second Vatican Council and it is Catholic tradition with its fearless love of centralised organisation and commitment to systematic documentation that forms the major focus of this paper.

RE07020

Religion by Post. Religious Education as Ministry: Pastoral Initiative in Provision of Religious Education for Catholic Children outside Catholic Schools

Mrs. Ann Maree Whenman, Parish Support Unit, Diocese of Broken Bay

Religious Education as Ministry: Pastoral Initiative in Provision of Religious Education for Catholic Children outside Catholic Schools

Religion by Post was a practical and successful scheme developed by Rev J. T. McMahon to provide religious education to isolated Catholic children in remote areas of outback Western Australia.

Working in the role of Diocesan Inspector of Catholic Schools in Western Australia in the 1920s, McMahon discovered that many Catholic children lived in places isolated country regions with no access to a school of any form – Catholic or State. These children were experiencing the positive results from the practical response of the State Education Department of Western Australia in 1918 to provide secular instruction through correspondence lessons. Their parents requested from their Church a similar program for Religious Instruction.

The organisation of 'Catholic Bush Mission' was established in 1924. Developed in the Archdiocese of Perth, religious education was provided by means of correspondence programs. Commencing in NSW in 1934, 14000 children were enrolled in the *Religion by Post* scheme by the end of 1935.

The paper describes the development of this uniquely Australian pastoral response in the provision of religious education for Catholic children in isolated rural areas. It explores its innovative applications and extensions across Australia drawing extensively on primary source material, particularly the publications of Rev J.T. McMahon, and supported by the personal recollections of some educators who participated in the scheme.

RE07021

The Motor Mission. Religious Education as Ministry: Pastoral Initiative in Provision of Religious Education for Catholic Children outside Catholic Schools

Mrs. Ann Maree Whenman, Parish Support Unit, Diocese of Broken Bay

Religious Education as Ministry: Pastoral Initiative in Provision of Religious Education for Catholic Children outside Catholic Schools

The Catholic Apostolate known as the *Motor Mission* is a uniquely Australian response to the need to provide Religious Education to Catholic Children beyond Catholic schools. The particular circumstances of the Catholic Church in the Australian cultural and physical environment called for such a response. Originating from the pastoral response of the clergy and religious ministering to the families in the isolated areas of the Australian rural environment, the name, *Motor Mission*, was derived from the need in this apostolate for a motor vehicle, as the distances to travel from school to school for weekly lessons, visiting homes and conducting sacramental program were significant. The activity of the *Motor Mission* is part of the history of many of the metropolitan and rural dioceses of Australia. Drawing extensively on primary source material and supported by the personal recollections of some of those who participated in the scheme, this paper will outline the history of the *Motor Mission* in Australia with particular reference to the rural and metropolitan *Motor Mission* in NSW. The significance of the contribution of the *Motor Mission* to the ministry of Religious Education of Catholic Children beyond Catholic Schools over the past fifty years will be explored.

RE07022

Jesus, Church and formation in faith: A workshop for young adults

Dr. Sandra Carroll, ACU National

This paper outlines the content and processes of a workshop and presentation on Church given to group young Catholic adults as part of a weekend focussed on leadership and faith formation. The session involved a presentation titled Why Church? Two central questions: “why do we need a church and did Jesus found the church?” were the focus for the opening discussion. A major event like World Youth Day and the publication of the research report from the Pastoral Projects Office of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference *Catholics Who Have Stopped Going to Mass* highlights the importance of opportunities for reflections and conversations about Church. The perception of the church as a hierarchical institution that people belong to for certain spiritual benefits was explored. Questions included should I stay in the church and be involved in its life and activities? Or if I don't attend church, what am I missing out on? Why does the church exist at all? The session offers a model that could be adapted for use in school and parish contexts for education/formation in ministry and professional development for teachers and catechists.

RE07023

Does Religious Education include ‘reading the signs of the times?’

Implementing the United Nations Millennium Development Goals

Dr. Leonie Crotty, Catholic Education Office Sydney

In September 2006 I attended a two-week program at the United Nations in New York, sponsored by *Mercy Global Concern*, a focus within the mission of the Sisters of Mercy worldwide. The topic of the program was ‘*UN-Finished Business: Bridging the Gap from Policy to Practice* in regard to international implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.’

From this experience, in this ACU workshop I will address the background to and content of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. By understanding the commitment made, in 2000 by all 191 member nations, to these goals I will explore with conference participants the Millennium goals in relation to the Religious Education Curriculum K-12 in the contemporary Catholic school.

I will suggest that the Catholic school, in its religious education program including both the curriculum and the catholic life in the school, needs to sharpen more critically its focus on education about God as well as education for God. In the reality of students' lives and their living in the world that our tradition calls God's creation, there is a need to ask to what extent does Religious Education assist students to know their religion ‘with truth and certainty’ and also to live with a realisation that ‘everyone is my neighbour.’

The Scriptures and the Church's tradition abound with ‘pedagogies’ suggesting there is a most compelling need for education in religion to be continually ‘reading the signs of the times.’

RE07024

Critical Discourse Analysis and Religious Education: Possibilities for investigating the emergence of new discourses on Religious Education

Peter Ivers, St Columban's College

This paper draws upon critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995, 2005) to investigate the emergence of new discourses on religious education during the late 20th century. It does this

by exploring the growth of the Queensland Studies Authority subject, *Study of Religion*, in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The paper reviews relevant literature on *Study of Religion* in Catholic schools and contends that there is a gap in scholarship with regard to understanding the factors that contributed to the growth of *Study of Religion*. Fairclough's (2005) concept of policy discourse as "imaginary space" that envisages "frameworks for action" (p. 59) is applied to an analysis of the religious education policy arena. By doing so, the paper identifies three policy cycles that trace the ebb and flow of various approaches to religious education and their associated discourses over the last thirty years.

Note: This study has been confirmed as a doctoral thesis by Queensland University of Technology.

RE07025

Religious Education and Visual Literacy – Discovering and communicating the message in ways suited to the emerging culture

Mr. Stuart Baker, Catholic Education Office Adelaide

Evangelisation loses much of its force and effectiveness, if it does not take into consideration the actual, people it addresses, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not have an impact on their lives. Pope Paul VI, (EN 63).

This presentation explores the ways teachers and students can make religious connections with the 'everyday' texts, 'media texts' and the popular culture. Teachers are supported to develop learning experiences for students that draw out the religious meaning through the delivery of a course called Religious Education and Visual Literacy jointly run by the Religious Education and Literacy Teams of the Catholic Education Office, Adelaide.

As a global community we are experiencing rapid development in the use of ICT and multi-modal texts. As a result, society is becoming increasingly more reliant on visuals to bring meaning to the world in which we live.

The Church must always communicate its message in a manner suited to each age and culture... so today it must communicate in and to the emerging media culture Aetatis Novae (Dawning of a New Era) Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

We are called and challenged to incorporate the emerging media into our teaching and learning. Through this session participants will engage with some of the ways the RE & Visual Literacy course supports teachers to examine a range of visual texts and explore the implications for Religious Education.

RE07026

A Gospel way of life for today?

Dr. Stuart Sellar, Good Shepherd Theological College

Ancient Greek philosophers originally wanted to teach their followers a way of life; how to think was only a part of it. People today still seek a way of life, particularly one that incorporates spiritual values. In the pre-Vatican II church we did teach such a way of life, yet for many in today's world it means little, perhaps because it is enshrined in unfamiliar language. Perhaps the way we express it appears irrelevant to the issues they struggle with in their daily lives. So, if we are to offer a way of life to today's seeker, how would we go about it? An older Catholic way of life had its unique customs, language, prayers, fasts, feasts, abstinence, moral demands, ceremonies, vocabulary, and music – all things that made us unique, while at the same time it nourished our relationship with God. Could we formulate a Gospel way of life for today, with attitudes, values and a way of living that nourishes the parched soul of contemporary seekers? What issues would we need to address, what language would we use and what shape would such a way of life take?

RE07027

Religious Education, Personhood and Practical Theology

Dr. Patrick McArdle, ACU National

Religious Education has a central and indispensable role in Catholic Education. As such, it is a particular aspect of the ministry of the Church. This paper develops a foundation for understanding of Religious Education as Ministry through the lens of a practical theology of relational personhood.

Practical theology is that branch of theology where belief, tradition and practice engage with contemporary questions and experiences through a dialogue that is critical and transformative. It is based on an anthropology which is likewise dialogical in nature. In order to be an authentic aspect of ecclesial ministry Religious Education must have a rigorous theological basis and anthropological foundation.

This paper argues that contemporary Religious Education needs to appreciate itself as practical theology in order to be genuine ministry. This, in turn, requires relational personhood at its heart in order for that ministry to be transformative.

RE07028

Teaching Scripture in a tertiary setting: Addressing audience background

Mrs. Clare Hay, University of South Australia

In the course of teaching scripture at tertiary level, the introduction of critical biblical scholarship inevitably challenges students to engage with and understand the text in new ways. For many students this is often their first encounter with the proposition that the biblical text is a theological narrative rather than necessarily a historical document. Student response to this method of approaching the text is invariably affected by their faith background and prior experience with Bible education. Using participant observation I have noted that the response differentiates students into three disparate groups which I have called Open, Hesitant and Closed.

Using participant observation, I intend to describe the three groups as they present in a cohort who are completing a sequence of Catholic Studies courses in a BEd program. Their responses to critical biblical scholarship will be explored through the lens of the teaching of the infancy narrative in the Gospel according to Matthew. I will discuss ways in which to sensitively deal with difference of audience response and make suggestions about best practice in facilitating an introductory biblical studies course.

RE07029

Implementing systemic reform in a challenging context: Developing effective RE curriculum for 21st century learners

Ms. Beth Nolen, Catholic Education Office Darwin

In a context of geographic, cultural and theological diversity, religious education curriculum in the Northern Territory is undergoing a metamorphosis. This change has been driven by questions about effective pedagogy and professional development in a diocese with a large turnover of teachers each year, and a high percentage of teachers with limited qualifications in religious education or theology. This paper seeks to explore some of the decisions and factors that have influenced this systemic reform, and the challenges in trying to develop an effective curriculum for students that is enjoyable and meaningful. While the responses from teachers and leaders in the diocese indicate that the change from using *Guidelines* to an actual diocesan program is making a significant positive difference, there are also other questions and challenges emerging. It is evident that an effective religious education program relies upon many other factors apart from an appropriate curriculum, and these

issues will need to be explored in the coming years if religious education is really going to be the priority learning area in the curriculum of any Catholic school.

RE07030

Lest we forget – Catholic schools and the movement from religious education to religious faith

Dr. G.P. Fleming, REVISE

Over the past 30 years there has been a wealth of research material that has explored the connections, differences and nuisances of religious education and faith education. Without wanting to re-visit all of those important arguments from the past this presentation wants to reclaim the legitimacy of the role that Catholic schools (both primary and secondary) have in arguing for and working towards a faith response from staff and students. This is not a return to the arguments about the religious socialization aspect of schools but rather an argument based upon identity. As the document the Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium states:

“The ecclesial nature of the Catholic school, therefore, is written in the very heart of its identity as a teaching institution. It is a true and proper ecclesial entity by reason of its educational activity ‘in which faith, culture and life and brought into harmony’ #11

The presentation will explore the challenges for leaders, teachers and the broader school community in bringing about a harmony of faith, culture and life.

RE07031

Archdiocesan Schools of the Future

Ms. Andrea Dean, Catholic Education Office Canberra & Goulburn
Ms. Amanda Mackenzie, Catholic Education Office Canberra & Goulburn

Study the past if you would divine the future ([Confucius](#)) ... study the future to illuminate the present (Cocks)

In term 1, 2007 staff from the CEO Canberra-Goulburn designed a day-long workshop for Priests, Principals, Religious Education Coordinators and Board Chairs. Titled, *Archdiocesan Schools of the Future*, it aimed to provide a forum for the Archdiocesan community to:

1. consider a range of possible futures within Australian society, for the Church and for Catholic schooling;
2. identify a set of preferred futures for our Archdiocesan schools;
3. make some initial local level plans towards those preferred futures.

The workshop used elements of forecasting which assists in times of major uncertainties or discontinuities; encourages broad and creative thinking about future and forces participants to consider the assumptions upon which they currently operate (*adapted from Viljoen & Dann*)

The presentation at the conference will explore the processes used to engage participants in futures thinking, identifying and sorting priorities and action planning. It will outline workshop outcomes and possible implications for Church, system and school decision making.

RE07032

Trinity and religious education: A sideline or central doctrine in teaching and learning?

Mr. Michael Vial, Catholic Education Office Adelaide

In recent years there has been a renewed theological interest in what meaning the doctrine of trinity holds for Christians today. This paper firstly draws upon some of the major contributors to briefly explore key contemporary theological understandings of Trinity. Drawing upon these, it presents a trinitarian image of 'God who is Personal': God who has been personal with creation in salvation history in a trinitarian way reveals a triune God. The 'God who is Personal' reveals the essence of being as being-in-relationship, and so being a person is ontologically relational. The paper argues that Trinity cannot be a sideline or inconsequential doctrine; it is communicating what is at the heart of the Tradition concerning God's revelation of God's very being and thus our being and destiny. It will argue as others do that perceptions of Trinity affect our ethical praxis in our contemporary life. This has important implications for how we are to be Church, how we catechise and how we educate students in our schools. The paper then explores the question of how teachers can be supported to educate and catechise students in a trinitarian theology that is faithful to a contemporary unfolding of the Tradition.

RE07033

Teaching Religious Education as if Creation Matters

Dr. Sally A. Liddy, ACU National

This paper will begin by exploring the way Catholic ecotheology is revising the Catholic Tradition and reclaiming the Tradition's ancient attentiveness to creation. It will overview the response of the other major World Religions to the plight of creation. Finally, participants will have an opportunity to become more familiar with learning materials on ecotheology that have been prepared for Australian classrooms.

RE07034

Formation for religious Life: An educational framework

Sr. Patricia Malone, Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart

The changing context of 21st century in Australia has impacted on all institutions including religious congregations. This paper explores some of the changing paradigms of religious life and how these are reflected in one Australian congregation, the Sisters of St Joseph. A recent thesis of Barnett(2005) describes this period for religious as being 'between two towns' where the nature and identity of the new destination is not clear. This paper explores some issues of transition and the challenge to articulate the group's identity in a way that is comprehensible within a multicultural diverse society.

This paper considers the changing paradigms of learning and their application to religious formation. It comments on the contribution to adult religious education of the 'four pillars of education for the 21st century', as set out in the UNESCO Report(Delors 1996). It analyses the way the formation documents of the Sisters of St Joseph have used these concepts to provide the framework for an adult education process for its new and continuing members. It concludes with some general points of application for ongoing spiritual formation for teachers and other significant groups in the contemporary Australian context.

RE07035

Inquiry Approaches: Towards a deeper understanding of Religion

Dr. Peta Goldberg rsm, ACU National

Inquiry approaches are used in many curriculum areas in Australian schools and universities. Inquiry based learning is strongly student-centred and organises curricula around situations and problems rather than topics. It requires students to adopt the role of independent, critical inquirers and at the tertiary level makes the links between research and learning more explicit. Traditionally independent inquiry has tended to be seen as something that students will be ready to engage in only when they have already acquired a body of subject knowledge through other means. Learning through inquiry is increasingly recognized as an approach which can be used to develop students' understanding of subject knowledge that is new to them. Successful inquiry approaches to learning emerge out of enthusiastic and creative engagement with well-designed inquiry tasks effectively supported and facilitated within an appropriate learning environment.

This paper will explore inquiry based learning as one way of extending senior secondary students in Studies of Religion courses.

RE07036

Perspectives on educating young people in meaning, identity and spirituality

Prof. Graham Rossiter, ACU National

Increasingly, a number of personal development constructs are figuring prominently in educational discourse. These include: -- values, character, attitudes, well-being, resilience, meaning, identity, spirituality, virtues, social learning, emotional learning, -- as well as more traditional religious constructs like beliefs and faith development. While all of the constructs make useful contributions to the understanding of young people's spiritual and moral development, and while all have implications for education, 'meaning', 'identity' and 'spirituality' are three that are particularly helpful in today's society because of their importance for young people's thinking and because of the scope they offer for implications for both religious education and across-the-curriculum studies. In a generic way, this paper explores what it means to educate young people with respect to meaning, identity and spirituality. It proposes some basic assumptions that might enhance this approach and it spells out an agenda for education in each of the three areas. This perspective on education can be helpful not only for understanding the life world of contemporary youth, but it can provide a useful conceptualisation of the spiritual and moral dimension to the school curriculum; as well as informing curriculum planning and content selection for religious education and values education.

RE07037

A Contemporary Approach to SRE in Public Schools

Mr. Anthony Cleary, Catholic Education Office Sydney

In 2006 CCD Sydney released the *Christ Our Light and Life* curriculum series which is designed for use as the main resource of Special Religious Education (SRE) for Catholic children attending public schools. The series is for parents, priests, catechists and others

involved in the ministry of special religious education. This series will be most effective in teaching contexts committed to the Gospel of Christ, to Sacred Tradition, and to the magisterium of Christ's Church. The publication of this series followed a three year planning and development period which involved extensive trialling and consultation.

The *Christ Our Light and Life* is informed by the following practical principles:

- Formation in faith is a life-long journey. Life itself is the context of any religious education program;
- The needs of students change over time. Therefore, a variety of teaching methods are required over time;
- The students' lives influence their expressions of faith. Thus catechists' teaching strategies will respond to and respect the cultural diversity of students and their families;
- The family is the basic community of the Church. Links between the home, parish and school are discovered and encouraged.

A key aim of the new curriculum series *Christ Our Light and Life* is to promote the central place of parents and to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities for the faith formation and education of their children (cf CCC, 2225-2226)

Families are the basic community of the Church. The parents of students in our schools and parishes are part of the whole Catholic community that has as an essential element of its mission the education in faith of its children. While it is not always possible for parents alone to educate their children in faith, they can, and should be an important part of the community that educates them.

The *Christ Our Light and Life* series has included in each lesson a section entitled 'Home Activity' which offers activities with which families might supplement and continue the lessons learned at school. It is an acknowledgement of the role of parents as first educators of their children and the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine encourages and supports them in this role.

The *Christ Our Light and Life* series:

- strives to affirm and strengthen family life;
- acknowledges the many different situations of families today;
- encourages and models a commitment to faith.

Although the series *Christ Our Light and Life* has been developed for use as the main resource of Special Religious Education (SRE) for Catholic children attending public schools, it is also appropriate within the context of *home schooling*.

Since its release in 2006 the *Christ Our Light and Life* curriculum series has sold in every state and territory of Australia as well as in the New Zealand and the United States.

RE07039

Preparing for World Youth Day

Mr. Paul Durkin, Catholic Education Office Sydney

Participants in this workshop will become more familiar with WYD resource materials and consider the place of WYD in the evangelisation and catechesis of the youth of the world, particularly in light of issues raised at the symposium.

The WYD08 Resource materials have been developed for classroom use for Years 5-12 in Catholic systemic and congregational schools as well state schools. Additionally, the materials are for use in parish and home settings.

These materials are biblically, theologically and spiritually rich, and in keeping with the themes for the WYD 2006, 2007 and especially 2008: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses" (*Acts 1:8*).

They draw heavily from Sacred Scripture, talks and homilies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, contemporary research on the effects of WYD, as well as the testimony of young WYD pilgrims. They are written to help prepare the minds and hearts of young people as potential WYD pilgrims and seek to draw them to follow Christ more deeply.

RE07040

To what extent do primary R.E. classroom programs nurture children's spirituality? A study in progress

Leanne Lampard, ACU National

The aim of this research project is to examine Religious Education (R.E) in Victorian Catholic primary schools and the extent to which they address and nurture spirituality. It aims to determine the extent to which RE guidelines, programs and textual materials used in Catholic primary schools in Victoria support and nurture the spirituality of children in the classroom.

The theoretical perspective of interpretive interactionism (Denzin, 2001) will inform and conceptualize this research study. This is drawn from hermeneutics and phenomenology and draws the researcher into the hermeneutical circle so that she will become a part of what is being studied. The process includes writing thick descriptions to illustrate the phenomenon so as to reveal the historical, relational, processual and interactional features of the experiences under investigation.

Four Catholic primary schools from different regions in metropolitan and country Victoria will be invited to participate in this study. These are: small metropolitan – large metropolitan – large regional – and small rural school – The researcher has selected four Catholic primary schools; two from the Melbourne archdiocese and two from the Ballarat archdiocese. All four contain different characteristics in terms of student background and culture and will provide diversity of results for data analysis.

The participants to be used in this case study are:

- junior primary school students (Year 1/2 : 7 – 8years).
- the teachers of these children especially in R.E.
- the Religious Education Coordinators.

This study is significant because it will seek to identify particular features of the RE program which may have nurturing elements in relation to children's spirituality and will seek to determine the elements and influences in the contexts within which young children derive meaning in their lives.

It is anticipated that the research will inform educational leaders in religious education curriculum development and it will specifically provide practical guidelines for the classroom teachers in the nurturing of spirituality in young children.

RE07041

Religious education that reflects a changing consciousness: A way forward for the contemporary world

Dr. Marian De Souza, ACU National

The latter part of the twentieth century saw huge movements of people, across many areas of the globe, through government organized migration programs; through extended career pathways; and through the growing numbers of refugees and displaced persons as a result of war, famine, drought and other devastating scenarios. This has led to the rise of societies with multicultural, multi-faith and multi-linguistic features where once they were mono-cultural and mono-religious and, for the most part, mono-linguistic. Alongside this is the significant impact of the extended knowledge and technological boundaries which have created new ethical questions to which there are no easy answers, partly because they have introduced concepts, problems and situations completely outside familiar and previously established experiences in cultural and moral wisdom, beliefs and practices.

The emergence of these pluralist societies have, in some ways, 'grown' more inclusive and interactive communities with increased tolerance levels. Nonetheless, recent global events in the political, cultural and religious spheres have caused division, discrimination and distrust to surface, thereby unsettling the tenuous mantle of peace and harmony within these communities. This paper, then, argues that religious education may lead the way to developing a change in consciousness which is more appropriate to the context of the contemporary world, one that is grounded in the totality of human experience which lies beyond the positivistic, reductionistic, scientific worldview of twentieth century education.

RE07042

From the Vatican to the classroom: Examining intertextuality and alignment among Church, local diocesan and school religious education documents

Dr. Jan Grajczonek, ACU National

"Contemporary educational practice is saturated with texts..." (Freebody, 2003, p. 204) They inform, guide and shape policy, procedures and practices within schools both systemically and locally. Religious education is filled with such texts: Church and diocesan policy documents, curriculum documents and classroom religion programs. But to what extent are these documents aligned with each other? Does the classroom religion program reflect diocesan curriculum documents and policy and in turn, do diocesan policies and curriculum documents authentically translate official Church policy? This presentation demonstrates how an analysis of the crafted language in educational texts can reveal how that text both reflects and constructs a particular reality. What messages are conveyed? Do the documents in fact say what the authors intend? Do they relate to, and support, other relevant documents? Systemic Functional Linguistics and Membership Categorisation are rigorous analytic tools that afford clear insights into the crafted language of educational texts. As one way of portraying the usefulness of such tools in gaining insights into how language constructs particular messages, this presentation will exemplify what they reveal about the conveyed experiences and realities among Church, diocesan and school religious education documents.

RE07043

Including the Arts in Religious Education - a focus for Contemplation and Renewal of the Sabbath

Peter Mudge, Catholic Education Office Parramatta

This paper examines the essential role of the arts (e.g. visual arts, music, dance, poetry) in religious education as an authentic focus for the cultivation of contemplation, and of a 'sabbath spirituality' among teachers and students. 'Contemplation' is understood here as a simple, prayerful gazing upon the presence of God. Sabbath spirituality is viewed as an approach to life that allows one to stop, rest or pause (Hebrew shabbat) - it is symbolically associated with creation, the covenant, and growth towards holiness.

This paper also argues, principally from the perspective of painting, that the cultivation of these two stances helps to create a slower, more meditative approach to religion, spirituality, and life. In addition, both stances assist those involved to 'see' self, others, society, and God more clearly, and to respond to them all more effectively.

RE07044

Educating young people for inter-religious understanding

Assoc. Prof. Kath Engebretson, ACU National

What do exclusivism and inclusivism look like in the meeting of faiths, and what is the role of personal religious commitment in inter-faith dialogue? Against the background of current Catholic teaching in this area, this paper will argue that the first step in inter-faith education is careful, critical analysis of these two questions, and the establishment of a clear position on each of them. Only then will education for inter-faith understanding lead to more than mere tolerance.