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Models of Christian Education

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In early 21ˢᵗ century Australia, proponents of Christian faith are in an *Acts* (Acts 17:6,22 NIV) situation: we contend amidst the smorgasbord of multiple faiths and designer spiritualities, where any sense that Christian faith is privileged by culture, history or exclusive truth claims, is rapidly eroding. In this multi-faith, pluralistic and the increasingly secular environment, we are ironically surrounded, like Paul in ancient Athens, with many Gods, mostly of a secular nature. The Christian church needs to discover effective ways to communicate the unchanging truth of the Gospel into a society which is undergoing rapid change in its belief systems, methods of communication and modes of learning, and amidst a cacophony of messages and sounds which trumpet different world views.

The enormity of change within society, and the implications of these changes for sharing Christian faith, have dawned slowly on some segments of the Christian Church. Many have been slow to appreciate the evaporation of a Christian consensus in our land, and indeed reluctant to accept the end of Christendom. Attempts to reach the bulk of our population through church-centred activities are not working, for the very good reason that the majority are at best very intermittent attendees of any church activities. However, the youth of the land, between the ages of 5 and 18, although they rarely attend church, mostly do attend school. The ministry of Christian faith within schools is highly strategic in that it provides access to all Australians in the formative years of life. This opportunity occurs through government schools using whatever opportunity exists for Special Religious Education (variable between states), Christian Chaplains within schools and teachers who are themselves Christians. In Anglican schools the opportunity exists through Chapel Services, Christian Studies classes and the ministry of Christian teachers. All these opportunities, away from the physical domains of churches, are analogous to the Apostle Paul contending for faith in the market place, both because schools exist as constructs within the secular world, but also because schools represent the market place of educational and philosophical ideas.

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How the Christian church in general might best maximise the opportunity of faith nurturing through schools, is an issue that has received too little thought in the Australian context. The lack of analysis is problematic, given that in many respects the access of faith in schools to succeeding generations of young people, represents the Christian churches' best opportunity to minister to broad masses of Australians.

In the Anglican schools of more traditional persuasion, Christian faith has been manifested mostly in liturgies and catechisms. Researchers such as Harkness (2002) have demonstrated that such approaches are unlikely to resonate with today's youth, or lead to deep learning. Indeed, catechised responses do not necessarily indicate actual belief.

Strategising

It is a mistake to think that the presence, even a preponderance, of Christian teachers will of itself lead to purposeful Christian activities in schools. It is also inadequate to leave thinking about Christian education to the Chaplain alone, no matter how excellent that person may be. Schools must plan their Christian goals and the implementation of those goals. They must avoid the Chaplain being isolated and marginalised. To this end the Christian Principal must provide leadership, thereby deploying positional authority, and modelling the importance of faith in the life of the School. To do less is to risk the gradual debasement of the primacy of Christian faith within the ethos of the School. Without strategic thinking, Anglican Schools can easily decline to a position where faith is little more than tokenistic. This is what Macnaught (1995) found in his Churchill Fellowship funded investigation of church based schools in Britain and Europe. Indeed, Macnaught found that while giving formal adherence to a Christian position, the real paradigm through which such schools operated, was the paradigm of the market. In such schools he found:

> the spiritual is reduced to the conventional sentiments of civic religion promoting only values such as self-control and respect for property—the values that might domesticate the feral young and persuade them to submit to the invisible hand of the rational economic order. (p. 9)

Young people these days are subject to far more stimuli than has been the case with any previous generation. They are bombarded by the messages of advertising, the mass media and the entertainment industry. Amidst these many voices, it would be unrealistic, if not naive, to expect that very limited Christian input would be decisive in shaping their thinking. For this reason it is important to maximise the scope of Christian influence within the school. Such influence should therefore extend beyond the very small proportion of the school's contact time with students represented by formal Chapel and Christian studies classes in Anglican or other denomination schools, or the Special Religious Education ('Scripture') offered in government schools in some Australian states.

Ideally, Christian thinking may be advanced by large bodies of the teaching staff whose Christian presuppositions shape the world views which are discussed in their classes. Presumably a Christian teacher of Economics will critique unfettered capitalism, with the environmental degradation and exploitative Third World Labour policies that have been its correlates. A Christian teacher of Economics will want to temper unbridled capitalism with notions of Christian social justice and stewardship of God's creation. Such broad thinking is essential in painting a broad canvas of Christian beliefs to youth largely two or three generations removed from the church, and therefore lacking broad Christian conceptual understanding.

It is also important for Christian faith to exist beyond the level of ideas. It must be 'actioned' in terms of quality pastoral care, exercised by Christian staff to all students. It should be manifested in programs of service to the community, emanating from a Christian ethic. Such visible examples of Christian love can be winsome in commending the Gospel.

Yet, it is necessary to assert that Christian schooling is more than good pastoral care; it has a cognitive domain. Pastoral care as the totality of Christian education is a reductionist position which fails to address the full scope of Christian faith. If Anglican schools, or the work of Christian teachers in classrooms of schools in other sectors, is to be deeply influential, it needs to affect the fundamental thinking of students. In the words of the Apostle Paul, we want our students to "not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of [your] mind" (Romans 12:2).

As they think through the prism of the school's formal curriculum, we want them to think holistically within a Christian truth framework about "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy" (Philippians 4:8).

If students, with the help of teachers, can mediate their understanding of the world through a theology of Creation, Fall, Redemption and the whole counsel of God's dealing with humanity, they will have a sound and comprehensive paradigm within which to categorise and assimilate their learning. This will, in effect, enable them to "demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and…take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Such attempts to extend the range of Christian penetration within the School will help move faith towards what Cooling (1997) sees as the primary culture of the School, that is, faith is mainstreamed rather than seen as an oddity or a cultural misfit within the school's context. It is certainly a great irony where adherence to Christian faith is seen as culturally aberrant in an Anglican School.

Curriculum

Where schools have the opportunity to do so (and this opportunity certainly exists in Anglican Schools) they need to think carefully about the components of Christian curriculum choosing to pause and ask, "What will be taught in Junior School Devotions and Chapel, and in and through high school Christian Studies classes?" It will not be adequate to be piecemeal, lest individual teachers, albeit with the best of intentions, repeat an endless cycle of the most sparkling adventures from the Old Testament: Daniel in the lion's den, David and Goliath, Samson pulling down the temple, etc. Such cherry-picking of Bible stories runs the risk of building no theological scaffold and no development over time. Hence schools need to sequence their curriculum and attempt to integrate the message of Chapel with other in-class Christian teaching. Mindful of the fact that so many students will come from homes where there is no familiarity with Christian ideas, schools will need to give some attention to what Cooling (1994a) describes as 'Concept Cracking'. By this he means literally breaking open new conceptual ideas by building a bridge from the known to the unknown. This will be very important if the Christian message is to take root, as evangelistic preaching will resonate best with students if it is firmly grounded in a prior context of solid evangelical teaching.

Pedagogy

The question of what modes of teaching practice will be the best vehicle for Christian teaching is one that needs considerable exploration. However,

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prior questions concern the nature of the context of schools and of the teaching relationship between staff and students. In the past zealous Christian staff within schools, have sometimes regarded the school's setting as little more than a platform for administration of a strong Christian message. Schools however are not churches, with the liberty of teaching from a single vantage point. They are increasingly being required to acknowledge the contestability of ideas. In short, a school's instructional processes must not smack of indoctrination but must be entirely educative, that is they must allow students space to think, and indeed encourage critical thinking. The dichotomy between indoctrination and education has been well explored by Thiessen (1993). In this society, any attempt to indoctrinate will elicit strong opposition. Moreover, indoctrination is unfaithful to the educational charter of schools, that is, recognition of the rights of young people as persons, who are able and entitled to think for themselves. Attempts to indoctrinate pose ethical dilemmas in terms of the possible abuse of the power gap between teacher and student. Staff who are inclined to badger students into adherence to Christian faith need to be advised that such attempts are counter-productive. By building up a bank of hostility, all they may succeed in doing is, in effect, inoculate students against faith adoption (Collier & Dowson, 2007). What teaching and learning processes then, are more effective and desirable?

Historically, Christian education has tended to operate through a transmission model, that is, where the teacher as authority figure has transmitted in narrative style the doctrines and ethics of Christian faith to students. Research (Collier & Dowson, 2008) suggests that such pedagogy is ineffective with current generations of young people. Seminal research in the Australian context by Astill (1998) has shown graphically that Christian staff in government and Anglican schools, are remarkably unsuccessful in transmitting a Christian values framework to young people, unless that framework first emanates from the home. Something more than transmission will be needed to resonate with student thinking. Interactive pedagogy where students discuss and explore issues will need to be added to a transitional mode. Modelling of faith by respected young adults will also be highly influential.

Another perennial debate within Christian Schools needs to be acknowledged. This debate is best termed the 'nurture Vs exposure' argument. That is, to what extent should the content and methodology within Anglican Schools expose students to the world as it actually is, with all its fragility and indeed horror, and to what extent

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should it protect students from these realities in order to nurture them? This argument has been well canvassed by Andersen (1983) whose analysis depicts a metaphorical seesaw, where the balance between nurture and exposure tips more toward the latter as a student matures. Even in this case, the exposure is within a nurturing structure, which critiques reality from the stand point of a Christian world view. There are some within the Christian schooling movement, although not commonly found in Anglican Schools, who tend to argue for only very limited exposure to the harsh realities of the world. The question that such proponents of protectionism need to answer is, how they will equip school graduates for entry to the world, post schooling, in order to have coping and critiquing skills.

Anglican School pedagogy ought to grapple with a concept which originated with the English philosopher of education Hull, that has been extrapolated by Cooling (1994b), who argues that teenagers almost invariably go through a stage of 'bafflement'. In this stage they have trouble relating what they know about faith to their growing understanding of the world itself, particularly as it is compromised by the problems of pain and evil. A pedagogy which closes down discussion by glib and formulaic answers, may very well lead to a faith cessation or to a retreat into fundamentalism, where the real world is kept at bay by an ideological enclosure. Cooling argues that good pedagogy will give students space to wrestle with such problems within a nurturing structure (1994b, p. 11).

Staff development

One of the impediments to generating comprehensive Christian education in schools is that teachers are the products of secular universities and in general are not familiar with attempting to relate faith considerations to their teaching. A staff development program therefore needs to consider the ongoing support of staff as they grapple with what it means to be a Christian educator. Few Christian teachers, whether in government or Anglican schools, have read within the corpus of quality literature in the domain of Christian education. Many are dualistic. They form a false distinction between what is sacred, that is 'church', reading the Bible, praying and other forms of church and para-church Christian ministry, and the rest of functioning in God's world, which they see as a secular domain. Staff need assistance to integrate their thinking such that they live all of life in the presence of God and in active service of Him.

For some, where opportunity offers, this will necessitate the school, or at least those who

can be deployed by the school because they are theologically apt, assisting staff in the formation of their biblical understanding.

Articulation

There is a natural end to the ministry of schools with their students, the end point of graduation. In their care for their spiritual journey of young people, schools ought to attempt to enfold them into other sustaining Christian contexts, including local churches, tertiary Christian groups on campuses and Christian youth movements. Conscious attempts to form networks with such organisations can be important strategies in 'passing the baton', particularly during the senior years of secondary education. Youth workers and ministers from local churches can be invited to speak at the school, perhaps for Chapel, and to advertise church activities throughout the school. Staff workers from the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES), the umbrella group for Evangelical Christian movements in universities, and state branches of Scripture Union can usefully be invited into school, in the hope that sustaining links will be formed.

Conclusion

In an age where youth have largely forsaken churches, schools represent a strategic opportunity for Christian ministry. A comprehensive penetration of faith through the curriculum and life of the School will prove much more influential than relegation of faith matters to Chapel and Christian education

classes alone. A scaffolding curriculum will be far more formative than a piecemeal approach.

Didactic transmission of the content of Christian faith is unlikely to resonate weil with current youth. A more interactive and engaging manner is likely to achieve better student commitment than resort simply to narrative teaching styles. Schools will do well to attempt to articulate students into sustaining faith communities, and support their staff in exploring viable models of Christian education. TEACH

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Developing Values Through The Imagination

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TEACH[R]

Developing values through the imagination

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Abstract

From 2004 to 2010 I served as a researcher and advisor in the Australian Government's values education projects. During the task of helping schools implementing and conducting research on values education, I took the opportunity to observe the importance explorative and imaginative modes of teaching and learning might have in the formation of values. In this essay, I argue that imaginative teaching and learning is essential in any type of values education, particularly if a constructivist view of values clarification (as opposed to values imposition) is favoured. As such, a warning is offered about the potentially counterproductive push for 'character' education, as seen in some parts of America, as well as the nationalistic approach to values education sometimes emphasised in Australia.

The problem

Values education has been high on the agenda in many Western countries in the last couple of decades. And justifiably so. Problem behaviour is a major issue for parents and educators across the Western world. The teacher attrition rate, particularly among entry-level teachers, is high in most western countries (Ewing & Smith, 2003), with many teachers and researchers citing behaviour problems and student discipline as the main reason for leaving the occupation (AGQT, 2006). Youth suicide and depression rates have been rising steadily since the end of World War II (Seligman, 2002; World Health Organisation, 2008), and violence, anti-social behaviour and binge drinking among young people are now so prevalent as to be viewed by some as the norm rather than the exception; moreover, all of the above phenomena are now being observed in younger age brackets across the full spectra of socio-economic strata and demographics (Childs et al., 2008). Clearly, we can do with some better human relations—and not only in classrooms.

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The only problem is that values education carries an innate complexity. Values are not as straightforward to teach as fractions and nouns. Much of the curriculum with regard to reading, writing and calculating is based on shared definitions. A triangle is a triangle by definition; we have all agreed upon what makes up a triangle. Values are different. One person's values can be different to another's, leaving us with the dilemma and frequently asked question in the values education debate—whose values are we going to teach?

Background

Since 2004, I have been working with the Australian Curriculum Corporation (now Education Services Australia) in the Values Education Good Practice School Project Stage 1 (2004–2006) and Stage 2 (2006–2008), as well as the Values in Action Schools Project (2009–2010). In these projects more than 395 schools across Australia have been supported by government funding to identify good practice for implementing the Australian National Framework for Values Education, a set of guidelines that has been formulated to assist educators in teaching values in Australian schools (see Final Reports at www.curriculum.edu.au/values).

Values education is a broad term, often encompassing, or linked to, other approaches such as 'socio-emotional education' (Clouder et al., 2008), 'positive psychology' (Seligman, 2002), or 'service learning' (Billig, 2000, 2007). Whatever the particular emphasis in individual schools, however, the general aim with these types of approaches usually is to assist students acquire personal attributes, such as respect, honesty, empathetic character, responsibility, agency, etc. The intent is to increase individual and communal wellbeing, thus counteracting the aforementioned problems in schools and society through preventative measures. My role in the Australian values education projects has been to assist schools with the research and implementation of the schools' respective values education programs, many of which have included elements of socio-emotional learning, positive psychology and service learning, to name a few.

Before I became involved in values education, I had been researching imaginative teaching and learning for a number of years. Ever since I began my doctoral thesis in 1999 on Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy of imagination (Nielsen, 2004), I have had a deepening interest in how to make education more engaging via imaginative means, a topic that has also received attention in the wider educational community in recent decades (see Blekinsop, 2010; Nielsen et al., 2010)

Imaginative education, like values education, is a broad term, sometimes encompassing pedagogies with each its own approach and research tradition. A general definition of imaginative education, however, could be said to be that of exploring possibilities when solving problems or creating, to go beyond the confines of conventional thinking, to think outside the box, or to think 'of what is not' (Egan, 2005, 1997). Such fluid and creative thinking has been associated with image formation in the brain (LeDoux, 1996), and images have been found to be strongly associated with emotional responses (Damasio, 2003), which is why imaginative education generally is believed to be increasing student engagement and make learning more holistic (Nielsen et al., 2010).

Because of these two research interests and affiliations—values education and imaginative education—I have asked myself the questions: Does imaginative education have anything to offer in the values education debate? And if so, what about the apparent paradox that imaginative education seems to be about *fluid, organic* structures of learning, and values education which seem to be about helping students to acquire a *particular set* of human values? Having developed some understanding of imaginative education, I felt inclined to look through this lens while working with the values education projects, hopefully developing insights into any possible relationships between imaginative teaching and learning and the formation of values.

An example of values education?

Whilst the following example of values education I experienced in an Australian primary school is in essence 'negative', I think it may contrast well, and thus illustrate, the argument to follow.

It is nine o'clock on a Monday morning and the whole school is gathered in the gym for assembly. "Congratulations to students of the week," the principal announces into a scratchy microphone. The whole school claps, and the 'students of the week' receive their certificates one by one, followed by an awkward handshake from the principal.

As the children return to their seats, the principal goes on: "These students have all made an effort and showed good manners!" While the whole school gives the students another round of applause, I notice a huge poster on the wall with the very same phrases: 'make an effort' and 'show good manners'.

Later that morning, I am in one of the classrooms. "What do you need to do when you want to say something?" the teacher asks. "Put up your hand," the children respond in unison. A bit later: "What do you do when someone gives you something?" The children, well conditioned, respond: "Say thank you!"

It is not that there is anything wrong per se with the above strategies when teaching values. My concern is that these were the *only* strategies I saw over a long period of time in that particular school. Why is it, for example, that we seem widely to have accepted that students learn best when they are actively and critically involved in the learning process but then do not apply this principle to all areas of learning? Is it only fractions and nouns that must be constructed by the learner in order for these to be more than superficial facts, implanted artificially via an outdated transmission model? Should values not be taught via constructivism and experiential learning as much as other parts of the curriculum, especially considering the argument that values are somewhat subjective and therefore need de- and reconstructing by those they are meant to serve?

In all fairness to the teachers I observed in that school, I think that educators in general struggle with facilitating constructivist learning in their classrooms. Yes, research has shown the benefits of guided constructivism and hands-on learning, but it takes considerable skill to create true 'treasure-hunting' in the classroom—without pointing to where the treasure is buried, and at the same time, not letting the students wander too much to and fro, wasting valuable time within a busy curriculum (see John Dewey's classic essay, *The child and the curriculum*, 1902). In other words, there might still be a gap between what theorists (like myself) say should go on in schools, and what actually goes on. Perhaps we need to be shown many more concrete ways of being treasure-hunt facilitators, as well as develop teacher training that nurtures such methods. But this is exactly why imaginative teaching is so interesting to consider in relation to values education.

Imagination as transcendence to the whole

The imagination possesses a unique quality: it makes things tangible to the conscious mind via intangible pathways. Look at it this way: in using

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a metaphor, we are explaining one thing in terms of another via images—for example, 'he was in a sea of emotion'. Stirred-up feelings are, of course, not literally the same as seawater. But the mysterious depths of the sea and its powerful undercurrents resemble roused feelings. There are shared principles, or 'essences', that connect the two concepts. What binds the 'sea' and 'feelings', in other words, is encapsulated by the metaphor— or more accurately, by the imaginative link created between speaker and listener (or writer and reader). A metaphor is, like imagination itself, an example of language transcending the form, connecting us to 'essences' and 'worlds of meaning'.

There are essences of 'significances'—of the spiritual—which transcend and connect the physical particularities that words tend to represent, even if this 'binding glue' is what we might call human meaning and thought. That is, after all, a spiritual aspect of human existence, I would argue. As John Dewey (1934) put it:

> To have 'aesthetic' experience is to depart from the observable and objective to the ineffable and subjective, telling us about 'love,' 'truth' and that life can be beautiful; it helps solve the pseudo-problem of the existence of another world and aids us in making sense of the material world through our imagination. (cited in Nielsen, 2004, p. 11)

In imagination, therefore, one finds a direct link with the 'meaning world', the world of the spiritual, exactly because its nature, by virtue of being imaginative, is to go beyond the physical world—that is, beyond what is known, the particular, the 'reality'. Put another way, imagination can work as a bridge between abstract thought-feeling and the more concrete sense experiences of daily living—between spiritual / aesthetic meaning and the more mundane world of particularities.

Why is this important to the values education debate? Because in this debate we see an example of how easily living principles of meaning (the spiritual) can become crystallised into very concrete and set forms of particularity (matter). The values education debate often revolves around the concretisation of values , prompting the question— "What *are* the values we want our students to have?" Meaning that if we figure these out, we'll be able to instil values in our students. However, when one follows this kind of logic, one is trying to set in stone what is of a fluid, abstract nature; one is trying to create immovable truisms without the living principles underpinning the creation of them in the first place. As I have argued so far, however, we

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cannot disconnect our spiritual-aesthetic life from our physical-tangible life if we hope to keep either of them whole and connected to practical living.

And this is exactly where the values education debate sometimes goes astray. In the nature of values, there are 'essences' too—principles that do not exclude cultural, individual subjectivity and the social construction of values (see especially Seligman 2002, pp. 129–133). In fact, the inability to find common principles of values might be the single most important problem facing humanity today: it is called fundamentalism. The problem with Fundamentalism is when one is unable to see how that which appears different on the 'outside' can still be connected and share underlying principles. When things are black and white. And when black has no white in it and vice versa. I am not arguing here that we are all the same, or that there are no opinions more valuable than others. I am not a relativist. But I am arguing that if one is not able to see the connectedness of life when it is appropriate and indeed useful, one is doomed to live dissected 'truths', always unable to transfer, modify or adapt life's challenges as well as gifts.

Towards a living approach to values education

So how do we apply this rather philosophical discussion to the problems of teachers, who are out there, being expected to teach values—and then criticised when theorists come into their classrooms? Well, the antithesis to fundamentalism (as well as its extreme opposite, relativism), in relation to values education, is to know about our commonness as well as our differences, and to understand that our 'differences' do not preclude shared principles of universality—such as honesty, respect, kindness, etc. This means that, when governments create a 'list' of values that 'ought to be taught' in schools, while the list may be a useful starting point for discussing generic principles of values, shared across the community, the list has to be de- and reconstructed by learners to become of internal and social benefit.

In the many Australian schools I have had the pleasure of visiting, the attention paid to constructivism is reflected in the regular talk among staff and with children and parents about the needs and values of the group, school and community and how the considerations of such needs relate to individual needs. Even though core values appear to be similar around the world, they still need to be reinvented, indeed *re*constructed, by those systems and individuals that the values are supposed to serve. Then, and only then, as Townsend (1992) points out, will such settings be able to answer the

frequently raised question in the values education debate—'Whose values?'—with the appropriate reply: 'Ours!' In the Christian school context these would be based on school communities interpretation and level of adherence to the denominational views shared.

Having accepted this premise, that values are a living thing and must remain so in the learning of them, it follows that there is no easy way of creating a 'set' formula for teaching values, or indeed, any worthwhile learning for that matter. Good teaching is about important principles being alive and constantly being rebuilt by the individual student. And important principles can, of course, only be alive in any kind of teaching if they are alive in the teacher (Weissbourd, 2003).

For example, there are those who seem confused about why anti-bullying programs are producing different results in different schools. It is the same model applied, so shouldn't they produce the same results? In my humble opinion, the answer is obvious: we know that schools in which staff express a greater level of concern with managing bullying generally experience lower levels of it (see e.g. Lee, Buckthorpe, Craighead, & McCormack, 2008). Conversely, high levels of bullying, often correlate with teachers having nonchalant attitudes towards bullying—e.g. 'It is character building', 'Kids need to work it out among themselves'. Do you get the picture? One can employ the best 'models' for getting rid of bullying, but if the underlying principles and attitudes underpinning the models in the first place are not present or cultivated, it does not matter how 'good' the models are; they will always be destined to fail.

By the same token, it does not matter how 'perfect' the lists of values stipulated by governments or religious groups are, if there is no deep understanding of how values are shared, constructed and made useful and alive in the individual student's life. Further, this requires teachers to have values alive and vibrant within themselves, as well as a pedagogical understanding of how to engage their students in deep-surface inquiry. In other words, I would argue, it requires explorative, constructivist and imaginative teaching.

An imaginative example

As part of my doctoral study on the pedagogy of imagination (Nielsen, 2004), I recorded the following class discussion in a rural Steiner school in Victoria, Australia. It was not planned by the teacher but initiated spontaneously by the remarks of some of the children.

Suddenly, in the middle of a lesson on Noah's Ark, there is a class discussion of last night's eclipse of the moon. The teacher explains how the 'redness' of the moon was created by the moon moving into the shadow of the earth's atmosphere.

One child claims that the moon is always red, that red is its real colour and that "we just see it as white." The teacher listens patiently, showing interest in the child's comments. The other children do the same. Every opinion in the classroom is valued and given the same amount of respect, it seems. The teacher does not argue against the child's argument. It is as if he silently says, "Who am I to say that one explanation excludes the other—better to travel than arrive."

I suddenly remember once seeing a video with another teacher, discussing a shared story about a 'macaroni forest' with her class. "There is no such thing as a macaroni forest," she said in an unarguable manner. "You haven't seen a chocolate biscuit forest either, now have you," further supporting her point.

"Uhm... yes," said a child insecurely, "I have."

"And where have you seen this?" the teacher asked in disbelief.

The child, now even less confident, replied, "Well... on the floor in my room... after I've eaten chocolate biscuits."

A moment passed, after which the teacher resumed with factual precision to the other aspects of the story, brushing off the comment with a forbearing glance.

I become aware again of the classroom I am in at the present, where red moons and chocolate biscuit forests seem possible.

Usually, when I tell my pre-service education students this vignette, there is always someone who says, "But what about the facts—don't we need to teach the facts as teachers?" To which I always reply, "Yes, we need to teach the facts, but we also need to cultivate an openness about what the 'facts' might be. Wasn't that a chocolate biscuit forest on the floor in that child's room?" Or, as the teacher in the above example seemed to believe, "Who are we to say that the moon cannot be red at some level of existence?"

Then I usually also point out that the grade 3/4s in that particular classroom were probably some of the most knowledgeable and 'factual' 9–10 year-olds I have come across. Why? Because they had a great teacher who knew his content. But just as importantly, he knew how to build a space for the children's own processing of the content—a space where everyone's opinions would always be

> *Yes, we need to teach the facts, but we also need to cultivate an openness about what the 'facts' might be.*

treasured and valued. Teaching the 'facts' does not preclude an openness for what goes beyond the factual—the imaginative, the spiritual, the aesthetic. One does not exclude the other. Indeed, perhaps each depends on the other.

Why I so often tell the above vignette as an example of imaginative education is not because it is a striking example of an imaginative teaching 'strategy', or 'model'. It is because it exemplifies the space where imagination has permission to live, and where its nature and significance are understood and appreciated by the teacher. The vignette exemplifies how the *principles* of imaginative education have to be alive before any 'strategies' or 'models' will work. In the 'macaroni forest' example, which I came to regard as antithetical to what I had hoped to observe, there was actually little difference between the teacher's conception of 'facts' and that of the teachers portrayed in Charles Dickens' humorous account of modern teaching in *Hard times* (1854). At one point, a teacher asks his class, "Should you have wallpaper with horses on it?" To which the children excitedly shout, "Yes!" However, the teacher rebukes the children by saying, "No! You should *not* have wallpaper with horses on it, because where in real life do you see horses walk up and down walls? Never should you see in *representation* what you do not see in fact!"

While Dickens depicts an extreme example of enlightenment thinking in education, the above vignette illustrates that the repercussions of the modern scientific period's separation of thinking and feeling, facts and imagination, still resurface within our educational settings today. Whether conscious of it or not, we still favour 'facts' over imagination, 'reality' over the imagined. We test the testable and measure the measurable. Then we think that our 'statistics' show the reality of our students' learning (yes, I am thinking NAPLAN here). But they do not. They only show how much students know about 'particularities'. In relation to values education, this is not only non-pedagogical; it carries certain dangers.

A word of caution

If one accepts the premise that values education should be taught with the same constructivist principles that the last 30 years of research has shown as necessary for deep-surface learning, then we should truly stop to reconsider the behaviourist approaches to values education emphasised by some governments at the moment. The whole idea of 'character education', as expounded in many parts of the U.S.A., rests on a behaviourist notion of imposition. That is: we know what virtues we want

> *If what is emphasised primarily is 'good' behaviour, with little or no interrogation of what that means and why it is good, there is reason to believe that it will actually counteract what we are hoping to achieve*

our students to have; now let's impart those virtues. In Australia, our governments have sometimes taken a nationalistic approach to the debate, emphasising the 'values that makes us Australian'. Both approaches, however, are counterproductive to what should be the ultimate goal of values education: the nurturing of moral, independent individuals with the ability to think for themselves.

Indeed, a purely behaviourist approach to values education, with no element of critical constructivism or imaginative inquiry, will at best only produce sheep (something that people like Alfie Kohn say would motivate some of those in power!). Such an approach is not only non-educational; it is mis-educational (if we take the act of education to be an act of liberation). In fact, a common definition of indoctrination is that one is (a) told what to do or think, (b) provided with no reasons and (c) given no alternatives; for something to qualify as indoctrination, in other words, it must have these three ingredients (Tan, 2004). This means, then, that as long as we provide *reason* and explore *alternatives* alongside the teaching of certain core values, we can have explicit values education without indoctrination. If, on the other hand, we forget the two other clauses—providing reason and alternatives—we actually indoctrinate, however noble our 'core' values and intentions.

Thus, to teach anything in schools, it is useful to consider how to complement a legitimate need for clear instructions, expectations and reinforcement strategies with the inherent need in learners to be able to construct their own knowledge. As indicated, it is not that the first example of values education I gave is to be avoided at all costs; it is just that there needs to be a balance between reinforcement strategies and opportunities to interrogate what is being reinforced. The problem I experienced was not that behaviour modification practices occurred but that they were the *only* practices I experienced.

In a word, we should not be fooled into the belief that values education is to simply drill in a set of prescribed values. Research has shown on more than one occasion that an overemphasis on extrinsic motivation tends to erode intrinsic motivation (Kohn, 1997). If what is emphasised primarily is 'good' behaviour, with little or no interrogation of what that means and why it is good, there is reason to believe that it will actually counteract what we are hoping to achieve: independent, self-motivated people with inner values and integrity. Such internalisation does not come about through reinforcement alone but through imaginative exploration and constructivism.

Conclusion

I have in this short essay tried to highlight that, while values education is high on the agenda in many Western countries at the moment, we need to be cautious about not reverting to outdated transmission models when trying to instil so-called 'core values' in students. Such behaviourist approaches do not provide the space for imagination and exploration needed for students to truly own values.

Also, by allowing a space for the imagination in exploring values, one is by virtue of the nature of imagination, encouraging excursion beyond the narrow confines of any particular sets of values—the 'forms'—to reach a place where 'essences' and 'worlds of meaning' are nurtured. Thus, transcending the dilemma of whose particular sets of values to teach, the imaginative teacher stands for generic core values, not caring about the particularity with which they might crystallise for the students. The important thing is for teachers to live the values they teach and to encourage students to make values come alive in their own lives.

As such, programs, or models, of values education may be useful starting points, but it is ultimately the quality teacher and quality teaching that determine the success of any values education initiative (Lovat & Toomey, 2007). Good programs can support teachers who wish to improve, but they cannot substitute the principles that underpin the models in the first place.

Seeing both positive and negative examples of values education through my involvement in the Australian values education projects, I noticed how positive examples are almost always associated with imaginative, explorative learning activities and how negative examples more often than not lack such approaches. I can only conclude that, if we want teachers to teach values in schools, we do them and their students a favour by investigating with them the realms of imaginative and emotionally engaging teaching much more than is currently the case in most teacher training institutions. The engagement of students' imagination is the key to reaching their emotional selves, and reaching their emotional selves may be the only way to reach their moral selves.

> To reach a child's mind, a teacher must capture his heart. Only if a child feels right can he think right.
>
> Haim Ginott **TEACH**

The engagement of students' imagination is the key to reaching their emotional selves, and reaching their emotional selves may be the only way to reach their moral selves

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Is Christian Education Really 'Ministry'?

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Is Christian education *really* 'ministry'?

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> " To think with a Christian mind challenges one of our greatest weaknesses: our tendency to live compartmentalised lives in which we separate the sacred from the secular "

Key words: Teaching, ministry, Christian teachers, curriculum

Christian education is replete with terms and expressions that purportedly describe its character—'Christ-centred education', 'teaching from a Christian perspective', 'Bible-based curriculum', 'redemptive discipline', 'servant ministry', and so on. They are typically spontaneous expressions. To Christian educators, it seems a reasonable and proper way to describe the enterprise in which they are engaged. While each term or expression has particular connotations, the ideas they represent cluster around the notion of what constitutes 'ministry'. It is not uncommon to hear Christian education referred to as 'the ministry of teaching'. But is it just fanciful jargon and cliché? Or is Christian education really 'ministry'?

This question prompts many others: What do we mean by 'ministry'? How many ministries are there? Are all ministries the same or share anything in common? Are different ministries of equal status? In this paper we are endeavouring to identify and explain the essence of ministry, whether the concept applies to Christian education, and the ramifications for its practice and administration. However, when the discussion is done, a final question is also pertinent. If, indeed, Christian education can be described rightly as 'teaching ministry', then how well does current practice in Christian schools measure up to this ideal?

Primary considerations

It is fundamental to our discussion that we pursue it with a biblically informed consciousness, or what Harry Blamires and others call 'a Christian mind'.[1] This is more than a casual label. It is undeniable that in the West, we live in a secular age and are impacted by its profound effect.[2] The impact is greater than we realise, and we need to be ever vigilant to secularism's subtle inroads and consciously resist following blindly, practices that conflict with biblical principles and values.[3] To think

with a Christian mind challenges one of our greatest weaknesses: our tendency to live compartmentalised lives in which we separate the sacred from the secular.[4] At its worst, spiritual sensitivity is diminished as secular modernity prevails. Despite the fact that Christian educators frequently speak of 'a balance between the spiritual, mental, physical, social', the reality is that it is often fragmented and piecemeal. For example, the 'spiritual' activities of a Christian school frequently stand distinct from the formal curriculum in which subjects are taught to criteria dictated by external public authorities.

Can genuine Christian education rightly be described as 'ministry'? The Bible provides us with an orientation and frame of reference to provide answers to this question, and also to all the 'big questions' relating to what is real, how we know, and what is good and of value. The answers to all these questions stem from the historical flow of Scripture. Together they form a powerful metanarrative, described variously as 'The Cosmic Conflict', or the 'Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation' theme. In the face of postmodernity's disparaging attitude to core metanarratives, Christians assert that this metanarrative is the basis of a distinctive, normative worldview that is the centre of their personal faith. The heart of that faith embraces and responds to an understanding of who God is, what He has done, the origin of humanity, humanity's dilemma, God's response to that problem, and humanity's ultimate destiny.

Appreciating what it means to be human

Fundamental to our discussion is a clear under-standing of what it means to be truly human. Unlike widely held assumptions of humans evolving from some primeval state, this discussion endorses the biblical account of humans being uniquely created by God himself.[5] As creatures, humans are seen as primarily dependent on him as the source of life, meaning, understanding and purpose in their capacity to display intelligence, decision-making, creativity, emotion, physicality, individuality, sociality and spirituality. In so doing they are intended to be image bearers, designed to reflect in some small

measure, aspects of what God is like. But personality is more than merely the sum of those parts. These qualities comprise an interrelated whole, the human soul, which 'lives, and moves and has its being' in the Creator.[6]

Recognising humanity's predicament

A fundamental problem confronts every member of the human race. It is recognised that a rebellious choice by humanity's primal parents severed the open relationship they had enjoyed previously with the Creator. As a consequence, they, with the world were plunged into a conflict of cosmic proportions, with the capacity of those who would follow to reflect the image of God well nigh destroyed. Despite this predicament, human nature in its very essence craves and actively seeks to be reconnected with the Creator. Thus Saint Augustine reflected, 'Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee'.[7]

The context and essence of ministry

The 'Good News' or 'Gospel' proclaimed in the Bible essentially makes people aware of the way God has provided hope and meaning for human existence in the face of the dislocation, brokenness caused by the Fall. Contrary to the popular accusation that God is harsh and vengeful, His compassionate, redemptive nature is highlighted in a theme beginning in Genesis 3 and traced throughout all Scripture.

The oft-quoted declaration of Gospel in John 3:16 is followed by another of profound significance:

> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17 NKJV).

Many readers of the Bible tend to be preoccupied with the forensic side of salvation and miss recognising that the word 'save' or *sozo* (Gk.) also has connotations of 'healing', not only of physical ailments, but of comprehensive healing—body, soul and spirit. In His miraculous acts of healing, Jesus bore testimony to this. Physical healing was accompanied by emotional, spiritual healing. Broken relationships were restored and exclusions were dissolved resulting in social acceptance, reconciliation and peace. 'Salvation' is restoration in the most comprehensive sense. Restoration is holistic; that is, it is more than 'the sum of the parts'. It focuses on the development of the 'whole person'—spiritually, intellectually, physically and socially. The term 'whole person' carries with it important implications. Although aspects of personhood can be identified as distinct elements, the notion of 'holistic development' assumes the effective integration or interweaving of each element

with the others. To the western mind this poses a conceptual challenge that must be transcended.

The concept of ministry comes to prominence in the writings of Paul the Apostle in addressing the *ekklesia* or 'the church of the New Testament'. Due to its function, it was referred to as the *koinonia*, that is, 'the fellowship' or 'community of faith', and 'the body of Christ'. The goal was always upbuilding, restoration and reconciliation. Paul's words are noteworthy and illuminating:

> It was [Christ] who gave some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors, some to be teachers, to *prepare* God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ...From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:11–16).

The word translated 'prepare' has significant connotations. The verb, *katartismon*, implies healing. To the Greek mind, it was akin to the setting of a broken limb, or restoring a dislocated joint. It also has significance in the political sense of bringing together alienated parties to enable harmonious governance to continue.[8] In essence, this process represents a reversal of the alienation resulting from the sin of our first parents. This ministry is focused in Christ. As Paul states so eloquently:

> He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross. (Colossians 1:18–20, The Message).

It must be stressed that this 'ministry of reconciliation' happens in community. Except what we are considering is more than just 'a community' as a sociological phenomenon. William Andersen argues that the New Testament church, or *ekklesia*, fits the community profile, but takes the argument a step further. He argues that the Christian school should be recognised as a ministry of the church at large, reflecting the same elements of community, and sharing the same ultimate goal—restoration of wholeness, or, as often stated, 'the restoration of the image of God in man'.[9]

> *Readers of the Bible tend to be preoccupied with the forensic side of salvation and miss recognising that the word for 'save' also has connotations of 'healing'*

Implications of ministry

Clearly, while there are different ministries that are called to serve in specific contexts, including church, health, education, welfare, and counseling, it is argued that their goal is the same—restoration. Thus these ministries are complementary. They are not discrete and independent. Rather they are interdependent. From time to time, assumptions of superior status produce attitudes that reflect a sense of superiority and assumed authority that are obstructive and disruptive. The validity of such assumptions bears questioning. The evangelical church often asserts its roots in the Reformation but forgets Martin Luther and John Calvin's view on the ministerial status of 'theologians, gardeners, janitors and tradespeople'.[10]

Christian schools adopting such a vision and mission truly emulate the redemptive, restorative ministry of Jesus Himself. That ministry of restoration has salvific implications. 'Salvation' is reconciliation in the most comprehensive sense. As Westly explains:

> Salvation in the biblical sense cannot be understood in one-dimensionally, narrow, reductionist, parochial ways. The salvation the Scriptures speak of offers a comprehensive wholeness in this fragmented and alienated life. Salvation in the biblical sense is a newness of life, the unfolding of true humanity in the fullness of God (Colossians 2:9), it is salvation of the soul and the body, of the individual and society, of humankind and the whole of creation (Romans 8:19).[11]

Such a view represents a significant challenge to the false dichotomy commonly posed between the sacred and the secular. As Harry Blamires argues, the 'Christian mind' is able to see the most 'secular' aspects of life from a Christian perspective because of the individual's orientation to biblical presuppositions and values, that is, their worldview.[12] George Knight argues, Christian education is true ministry and each teacher, an 'agent of salvation'.[13] It is also 'religion' in essence (Latin *religere* = 'to bind together again').

The ultimate goal of Christian education

Christian education can be regarded as one of the complementary ministries envisaged by Paul (Eph. 4: 11–14). The process that underpins Christian education in all phases and aspects is 'formation': the ultimate goal of that process is sometimes expressed as:

> The restoration of the image of God in man through the harmonious development of the mental, social, physical and spiritual faculties.

This goal envisages a process that in all phases and aspects represents holistic renewal. In recent years, the term 'spiritual formation' has gained wide usage and describes such renewal. But in our adoption of the term it needs to be clearly stated that we are not talking about a nebulous spirituality that is commonly encountered in postmodern thinking. Even Rachel Kessler's acclaimed *The soul of education*[14] needs to be contextualised when considered in the context of Christian education. We are speaking of dynamic, formative, biblically-grounded development empowered by the Holy Spirit as part of the shared work of the Triune God. It assumes a disposition that accepts as a given that 'in [God] we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:25). Dallas Willard reminds us that the term can be rightly regarded as 'spiritual re-formation' in recognition of our origin, our fall, and our new potential.[15]

Spiritual formation is nothing short of re-creation in response to our predicament and God's answer through the work of Christ and the conviction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. As such, it is the work and prerogative of the Holy Spirit. Such formation aligns with the 'Redemption' phase of the Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation motif. It constitutes a life-long response to personal acceptance of God's act of grace in Christ at Calvary. It is an essential part of God's plan of restoration, transformation and renewal, seeking to heal human disconnectedness resulting from the Fall, and part of the ministry of the Gospel as commissioned by Jesus in the New Testament. It leads to the reflection of God-likeness, personal integrity and unselfish service rather than the elevation of human greatness, material gain and status. This development is viewed as progressing through stages of maturity and character development relative to age.

Understandably, teachers of Mathematics, Science, Technology, Commerce and the like will query the fit of their subject specialisations in the overall scheme of things. The contribution of Christian teachers in a pastoral role alongside their teaching specialisations is accepted by most. But that role tends to be seen more as a complementary role than an integrated, holistic one: 'value-added' benefit of the Christian school. But there is a fundamental problem in such a dualistic view. A preoccupation with the 'here and now' and preparation for a working career tends to eclipse other perceived roles. But this paper argues that 'this-world' needs are not ignored, but are part of the whole. It advocates a macro view that provides a context in which these specific elements—the subjects of the formal curriculum—

> *The 'Christian mind' is able to see the most 'secular' aspects of life from a Christian perspective because of the individual's orientation to biblical pre-suppositions and values*

are integrated into that which extends into eternity. Over recent decades, discussion and debate has ebbed and flowed around the term, 'integration of faith and learning'. This paper is (emphatically) not advocating a contrived cobbling of spiritual allusions, object lessons and the like into every lesson—in other words, *pseudointegration*[16] unless those linkages are natural. What is the relationship of the apparently 'secular' subjects of the curriculum to spiritual formation? The short answer is, 'Everything!' Otherwise we are upholding dualism that is inconsistent with Paul's assertion that 'in God we live, and move, and have our being' (Acts 17:29). A notable example of a disposition that does not separate the sacred from the secular is that of Brother Lawrence, the Carmelite monk, who 'practised the presence of God through the washing of pots and pans and serving his brothers'. It does not apply just to 'religious' life. It is based on a holistic view of life in which the distinction between the sacred and secular is not an issue. In this regard Pettit argues strongly and rightly when he asserts:

> This process should not be divided into the spiritual and physical, private and public, or secular and sacred. It involves the integrated, whole person— one's manner of thinking, habits and behaviors, and the manner of relating with God and others— and it should result in a life of living God and loving others well.[17]

Pettit further explains that by using the term spiritual, we are referring to the dynamic, holistic, maturing relationship between the individual believer and God, and between the individual believer and others (both believers and unbelievers). Thus two principles emerge to prominence—first, formation is personal where a particular individual is being changed (formed) at the core of their being (spirit). This lifelong transformation is set into motion when one places his or her faith in Jesus Christ and seeks to follow Him. Secondly, the change or transformation that occurs in the believer's life happens best in the context of authentic, Christian community and is oriented as service toward God and others. But the whole of life is not lived in monastic seclusion. As 'response-able' image-bearers, our worship, study, work, recreation, community service, cultural pursuit and expression and social interaction—in all things, 'whether eating or drinking or whatever is done, it is done to the glory of God' (1 Corinthians 10:31). As such, it encompasses all facets of personhood, and bears testimony to the quality of comprehensive formation.

The implications for teaching as ministry
The formal curriculum

A biblical view of knowledge recognises both a supernatural and a natural order where God is acknowledged as the ultimate, essential source of all wisdom and virtue. Thus true knowledge is more than a body of factual information and marketable skills to be transmitted, learned, reproduced and applied. True knowledge encompasses cognitive, experiential, emotional, relational, intuitive, and spiritual elements functioning as an interrelated whole. Christian education seeks to restore to factual information its true meaning as a way of knowing God and His creation, and acting responsibly as disciples, servants and stewards to one another and the created environment. The commonly viewed distinction between the sacred and secular is artificial and false. All truth is part of God's order, and His presence can be recognised and practised in even the apparently secular and mundane aspects of life. Acquisition of true knowledge leads to understanding that is manifested in wisdom, integrity, appropriate action and worship. True knowledge is active by nature—knowing is 'doing', and knowing comes through 'doing'.

Christian schools respect the place of the traditional disciplines or learning areas in representing particular realms of meaning that are typical of the respective subjects. These are seen as part of the human quest to explore, discover, understand, test, and communicate those understandings. Ronald Nelson argues,

> Each [discipline] develops its own heuristic, that is, its own principles and methods of discovery. Each devises and revises its own special categories, its own conceptual system. Each claims the prerogative of formulating its own criteria for judging the validity of what is put forward by scholars in the field. Each has its own sense, diffuse and debated though it might be, of what the integrity of the discipline requires.[18]

Thus, the disciplines may be regarded either, as 'windows' through which 'to see', or 'windows of opportunity' by which 'to act'. As 'windows', they provide an opportunity to see or perceive and understand something of God and His activity. These are reflected through the created world, the Bible and the Cosmic Conflict and to promote appreciation for Christian heritage. As 'windows of opportunity', they motivate response, application, expression and practice that are conducive to community building, citizenship, social justice, and stewardship of the environment and resources in ways that are consistent with biblical values. These values are sometimes described as 'Kingdom'

Christian education seeks to restore to factual information its true meaning as a way of knowing God and His creation, and acting responsibly as disciples

values because of their foundation in the New Testament account of Jesus' life and teachings. Therefore in planning the formal curriculum, a balance is sought between spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, emotional, understanding. While some learning areas fit closely with one category, they often have relevance in other categories, or 'realms of meaning'.[19] They are not discrete one from the other. Because they all find their shared origin in 'God-centred reality', cross-disciplinary linkages are recognised and engaged, particularly in the primary and middle years of study. This can be seen as providing opportunity for 'integration' around relevant themes of study.

The formal curriculum serves as a venue for true learning: opportunities to make connections, see patterns and wholeness, form a 'big picture' and in doing so, portray meaning.[20] Such learning reflects a move from 'surface knowledge' to 'deeper meaning'. In similar vein, research on the function of the brain in learning accounts for ideas and experiences being built into 'neural nets' or 'maps of meaning' that go together to make up a 'big picture' (or gestalt). Such conceptualisations of learning help us to understand what faith is and how it grows. These ideas are not new in essence. Fowler[21], for instance, speaks of the development of personal 'master stories' as part of one's faith. These master stories are at the heart of what Stephen Covey[22] describes as 'paradigms' that inform and drive the development of personal integrity of character, meaning and effectiveness.

The Christian teacher's role

As 'minister-teachers', Christian teachers' role is of central importance. As well as being experts in their teaching fields with the ability to promote and support learning in those areas, the teacher's role in Christian schools is more extensive and holistic. Such teaching is 'a sharing of realities', or 'weaving connections' between their subjects, themselves and the world until the students make it their own. So as 'professional educators' they are expected to be competent in their respective fields of teaching, motivating and maintaining high levels of engagement in learning in a fair, just, non-discriminatory and emotionally supportive manner. They will be sensitive to the spiritual implications and connections inherent in their learning area. They will reflect a disposition that is open to new perspectives, collegial, reflective and self-critically in their quest for excellence to the glory of the Creator. Christian teachers will also be people of faith and integrity who share the vision of the school and its goals and will actively model the culture, ethos and lifestyle of the school system within and beyond

> *Teaching is 'a sharing of realities', or 'weaving connections' between teachers' subjects, themselves and the world until the students make it their own*

their own classrooms. While specialists may take a designated pastoral role, individual teachers will actively nurture and support children in pastoral ministry. They will be conscious continually of the impact they have upon the unplanned learning of their students.

The learning environment

Christian schools seek to provide an enriched, meaningful, spiritually and culturally sensitive learning environment. There is effort to make connections between the student and the subject matter, between the head and the heart, and the development of maps of meaning in the minds of their students. Thus, there is sensitivity to the culture, typical methodology and skills of the different learning areas and where they fit within the larger scheme of learning. Teaching approaches will acknowledge and affirm the diversity of intelligences and gifts shared between the learners, and promote excellence in all facets of development. Teachers will generally function with students as facilitators and mentors in an interactive, emotionally supportive manner, and students will often work in collaborative, cooperative learning and peer-sharing settings in a wide range of activities, both within and beyond the school. Teachers will recognise and follow opportunities to explore new spiritual insights and understandings, both planned and incidental, and encourage personal decisions and commitment in students.

The Christian school: A community of faith

Learning, as we have reflected upon it, is obviously not limited to the classroom. As a community of faith, the Christian school provides a cultural setting or context that enhances the quality of learning, and conversely, the community's ethos is enhanced by the quality of that learning. Just like the New Testament *koinonia*, personal identity and physical, spiritual and psycho-social well-being are nurtured and maintained. Dwayne Huebner[23] describes this dynamic graphically. He adopts the metaphor of 'weaving' to describe how individuals create a 'fabric of life' comprising an interweaving of ideas, abstractions, memories, biblical metaphors, and cultural *mores* derived from the faith community and the relationships within it. He argues that life in the intimacy and context of those relationships affirm a personal and a collective past that in turn, acknowledges, practices, and celebrates the presence of God. And it is dynamic, nourishing, and renewing. Such ideas are consistent with the kind of individuals God created in His image, with the capacity to think and act.

Conclusion

Just calling a school Christian doesn't make it so. Being a teacher in a Christian school doesn't automatically qualify one to be called a 'teacher-minister'. To be so-described is, in verity, an honour. But it is also a responsibility borne by all those who believe they are called to serve in any of the ministries. If we are honest with ourselves, we cannot help but recognise disparities and flaws in what we presently observe in Christian education. Some are just relatively more up-market, selective, academically competitive clones of the public school down the road, but with a veneer of spirituality thrown in. The challenge will always be there to resist the secular tide, subversive threats and the influence of those who would compromise the potential for authentic Christian schools. It will only be in such a context that such vocation and service can truly be called 'ministry'. TEACH

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> *The challenge will always be there to resist the secular tide, subversive threats and the influence of those who would compromise the potential for authentic Christian schools*

1-1-2013

Eternal H&S Issues

Eternal H&S Issues

At present my workplace is focused on accreditation and the preparation of documents. Various groups have spent time reviewing, and in some cases writing, policy documents. There are policies that relate to a broad spectrum of school activities including workplace safety. Written policies exist to clarify common knowledge and provide guidance to employees. Policies generally are a natural progression from decision making, and may develop from current practice. The best policies are those that have developed from best practice.

Clinton Bond, principal of Cairns Adventist School, took policy making to a new level when he sat down with his staff to write a school policy for Eternal Health and Safety. Using best practice as a guide they came up with a succinct policy, which with Clinton's permission, is shared below.

While we recognise that policies cannot dictate individual or corporate spirituality, the process of collaboratively writing an Eternal Health and Safety policy is a certain way for staff to clarify the purpose and mission of their school, and their responsibility as staff members for the eternal health and safety of their students.

As educators we are continually made aware of our duty of care and the numerous policies that govern our practice. Are we as meticulous in promoting our core business as we are in other areas of education? TEACH

EH&S issues is a joint initiative between the Adventist Schools Australia Curriculum Unit and Avondale College of Higher Education.

Eternal Health and Safety policy

Rationale
It is essential that all who are involved with the school, whether it be members of the community, students, families or staff, are shown how to obtain eternal health and safety. If we are not doing this as a school, then we are not fulfilling our God-given calling.

Aim
The critical aim of this policy is to ensure the eternal health and safety of all who are involved with Cairns Adventist School.

Policy details
This policy is VERY STRAIGHTFOWARD:
1. To show in our own lives that Christ is alive and that He has the power to change lives.
2. To ensure that we are being used by God so much that, through us, lives are changed for Him.
3. To nurture those who are being changed into His image, from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).
4. To enjoy eternal health and safety when we are finally transported home.

Legislation
Please refer to Exodus 20 and the two great overarching laws which summarise Exodus 20: Love God supremely and love each other selflessly.

It is imperative that we do not neglect our DUTY OF CARE when it comes to this policy.

Evaluation
This policy and our life's procedures should be reviewed moment by moment, as it is the 'work of a lifetime'.

....

This policy was last ratified by School Management Council on _____.

Chairperson: _____   *Principal*: _____

1-1-2013

Navigating Educational Change: A Teachers' Voyage

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Navigating educational change: A teachers' voyage

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Key words: Change, principals, teachers, coping

Introduction

Much time is now consumed not with teaching, but with dealing with the increased paperwork required by government and school administration. (Primary School Teacher)

Like Department of Education and Communities (DEC) schools, Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) are also facing the pressures of external, societal and internal organisational change, largely due to increased accountability.

By gaining an understanding from the teachers' perspective, one is more likely to be able to help teachers to adjust and deal successfully with the impact of these changes. The following study focused on primary teachers in the system of Adventist Schools Australia (ASA). In order to support teachers working in a significant change environment, it is helpful to understand why there is a difference between those teachers who are dealing successfully with the challenges associated with change in ASA Schools, and those who are not.

Methodology

The research design of this study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and was conducted in two stages.

In the first stage of the study, an empirical survey, was constructed by the researcher. This instrument was developed after an extensive review of the literature relating to the topic and the theoretical framework of the study. It was found that there were no previously-designed instruments specifically for this area of research: teachers' perceptions of factors that help them deal successfully with the challenges associated with change. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a purpose-designed survey.

From the literature, a series of statements defining a leader's actions that were considered helpful in enabling teachers to deal successfully with the impact of change in their professional environment, was generated. The researcher then instigated consultant groups among practising teachers and administrators to gauge the concerns and issues relating to the connection between their leader's characteristics and teachers' ability to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change. The aim of these teacher and administration 'think tanks' was to evaluate and extend the survey statements generated from the literature in an attempt to answer the stated research questions. These individual statements were then grouped as leader characteristic constructs using a Delphi approach involving Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) academics and professional educators.

The pilot study was conducted in 11 SDA schools across New Zealand in order that the Australian sample size would not be reduced. Using the feedback from this pilot study, the survey instrument was further refined before the final empirical survey was conducted.

All primary schools within ASA were contacted and invited to take part in the empirical survey. As a result of this contact, 48 of the 51 schools returned 282 usable surveys; the response rate was 66 percent. This empirical data was analysed by using the Statistical Packages, Service and Solutions (SPSS) software package.

In addition, a semi-structured interview schedule was developed and refined for the second stage of the study. All survey respondents were invited to indicate their willingness to be involved in a follow-up interview. In this second stage 28 interviews were conducted, using the semi-structured interview schedule developed and refined for the purpose.

The results from the analysis of the two stages were then considered and compared. The purpose of this triangulation design was to obtain complementary qualitative and quantitative data on the same topic, bringing together the strengths of the two approaches.

Summary of the research findings

The analysis of the data gathered from this mixed methodology allowed the development of multiple inferences that supplemented or complemented each other and also provided opportunities for

By gaining an understanding from the teachers' perspective, one is more likely to be able to help teachers to adjust and deal successfully with the impact of these changes

further development, initiation and expansion. This is evident in the responses to the three research questions:

- *What are the challenges that primary teachers in Australian ASA schools perceive that they are facing as a result of changes in their professional working environments?*

Results from the quantitative data analyses focused on the origin of challenges and demonstrated that the majority of teachers perceived that there were considerable increases in expectations of their teaching role from parents and society and that there were many challenges arising from the rapid changes taking place in the schools' curriculum.

The qualitative data analyses, on the other hand, provided results that focused on the challenges in an operational sense, and identified the following three major areas of challenge for these teachers: firstly, a shortage of time to do all that the job now required; secondly, the increased likelihood of litigation against teachers as a result of societal changes that impact on the school environment, together with the challenge to keep up with an internal protection process to ensure teachers are safe guarded; and thirdly, the lack of resources to implement the required changes.

This lack was particularly evident in resources required to support the implementation of ongoing curriculum change. Teachers reported a feeling of being left with little or no support. This was also the case when it came to resources needed to assist with increased workload and other aspects of their role, including behaviour management and people-related issues arising from changes in their professional working environments.

While the literature and the data of this study were in agreement that teachers experienced a shortage of time, there was variation in how the shortage of time limited them.

The literature states that scarcity of time makes it difficult for teachers to plan more thoroughly, to commit themselves to the effort of innovation, to get together with colleagues, or just to reflect on their own. This lack of time is a vital issue for matters of change, improvement and professional development (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 15). The data from this study, however, indicate that teachers experienced a shortage of time just to do all that their role entailed.

A further difference between this study and other studies reviewed was in regard to litigation. Teachers in this study perceived there was not only a need

> *Teachers were not certain that they were coping successfully with change in an emotional sense—ap- proximately one-third of them indicated they were struggling to cope successfully*

to alter their day-to-day processes to reduce the likelihood of litigation, but that they lacked knowledge of litigation processes and implications.

Changing parent and societal expectations, and rapid changes in the curriculum were evident in the quantitative study, and reinforced by the qualitative data analyses. The time, litigation and resource issues from the qualitative data analyses were highlighted as the most prominent challenges that teachers perceived that they faced. Primary teachers in ASA schools were reflecting other Australian primary teachers' conclusions (Beare, 1995).

In summary, the challenges, in an operational sense, highlighted by this group of ASA primary teachers in general terms, follow that which has been identified in other Australian-based studies: time shortage, potential litigation and resourcing issues (NSW Department of Education, 2007).

- *To what extent do the primary teachers in Australian SDA schools perceive that they are dealing successfully with the challenges resulting from change in their professional roles?*

This question was specifically addressed in the quantitative stage of the study and the inferences from the qualitative data supported the quantitative data. Results from the quantitative data analyses indicated that the responses to this research question were multi-faceted depending on which aspect of change was being considered: dealing with change in a *functional sense*, dealing with change in an *emotional sense* and attitudes towards potential *future* change

The teachers perceived that they would in most instances be able to deal with potential *future* change, registering overall a rating of 5.05 on a 1 to 6 scale. Even though they were not quite as positive about their ability to *manage* change in a *functional sense*, that is, still able to fulfil their assigned roles (4.82), more than 70% of them indicated they were *managing* change well or very well. The teachers, however, were not so certain that they were *coping* successfully with change in an *emotional sense* (3.98), and approximately one-third of them indicated they were struggling to *cope* successfully.

Many of the interview responses portrayed teachers were experiencing *emotional* reactions to the challenges of the change that they face. Most of the teachers expressed this challenge in terms of a negative emotional response. Even though there were challenges due to change, in most cases the comments reflected that they were still able to *function* in their roles.

For each aspect of change—*managing*, *coping* and potential to deal with change in the *future*—the data was analysed against the respective demographic factors, (gender, age, experience, qualifications, position, classroom structure and employing regional conference). It found there was no significant difference in terms of *managing* change in a *functional sense* or attitude to potential *future* change between the various sub-groups based on each of the demographic factors. In contrast, there were significant differences in a number of demographics in the teachers' perception of their ability to *cope* with change in an *emotional sense*.

The trend in emotional coping capacity indicated the 20–29 year age group had a high *coping* rating (4.56 on a 1 to 6 scale) with a category reduction in the rating for the 30–39 years age group (4.08); this continued to decrease with ageing until the over 60 years age group, where there was a considerable increase (5.14). These facts could be due to novice teachers being confident and optimistic about their new roles, believing they had been prepared to tackle and overcome any obstacles or challenges of the future. Perhaps they were still naive to all that the job entailed. Beyond 30 it seemed there was a clearer understanding of all teacher's role entailed, however the over 60 years age group, approaching retirement, were confident in their experience and this may have caused them to feel they could last the distance.

There were also trends related to years of experience and qualifications. Those with very little experience had a high *coping* rating (4.54), that reduced for subsequent years of experience (3.88 to 4.45) but showed a slight increase as the teachers' experience ultimately grew, paralleling the age related results. Those with a Masters degree scored higher on their ability to *cope* compared to other levels of qualification, the degree, diploma or certificate.

In summary, the teachers in the study were relatively confident that they would be able to deal with potential *future* change. Further, even though they were feeling the pressure of change in their professional working environments, most perceived they were still able to successfully complete all their required duties, though this may mean taking considerable work home. There was, however, an emotional cost to this successful functioning, with one-third of the teachers describing the cost as being considerable.

Even though the literature did not distinguish between the different aspects of dealing with change as identified in this study, it did highlight the reality of teachers facing greater stress than ever before (NSW Department of Education, 2007). This seems to parallel the emotional cost of dealing with an ever-changing work environment identified in this study.

• *What is the relationship between the principal's leadership characteristics and the ability of primary teachers in Australian SDA schools to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change as perceived by the primary teachers themselves?*

The quantitative data (Matthes, 2011) showed that it was the leader who displayed both the *Relator* leadership characteristics of relating well and empathising with staff at a personal level, and the *Collegial Manager* leadership characteristics of a participative and inclusive style, that had the greatest impact on teachers' ability to successfully deal with the challenges of change. These people-orientated leadership styles and managerial practices emerged as imperatives in supporting teachers to deal successfully with change.

In the qualitative stage of this study (Matthes, 2012), data was obtained from teacher interviews, and focused around two questions. First, "What are the things that your head teacher is doing to assist you that you consider to be effective in helping you deal successfully with the change you face?", and second, "What more do you think that your head teacher could do to assist you that you consider to be effective in helping you deal successfully with the challenges of change that you face?".

Analysis of data on the first question indicated most teachers interviewed were of the opinion that being personable and respectful—having a *people-focus*—was the essential element in enabling leaders to assist teachers to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change.

Consideration of data related to the second question indicated that teachers were of the opinion that the principal could also assist them by implementing some or all of the following nine identified strategies.

Strategy one: The head teacher to provide enough time to teach. This included avoiding interruptions to the valuable classroom teaching time and being selective in the extra curricular activities and programs that were approved for the school community to be involved in.

Strategy two: The head teacher to minimise duties for the classroom teachers. This included looking for ways to minimise playground

> *People-orientated leadership styles and managerial practices emerged as imperatives in supporting teachers to deal successfully with change*

supervision and other related duties in order to free up the teacher to complete the necessary paperwork, marking, and meetings with parents and fellow teachers.

Strategy three: The head teacher to maximise encouragement for the classroom teachers. This included the head providing genuine personalised encouragement, praise and reinforcement for a job well done. This was most effective when done face-to-face as opposed to what was often commented upon as being an electronic impersonal approach (email).

Strategy four: The head teacher to give personal attention to the classroom teachers. This included the head taking a personal interest in them by listening and sharing concerns and ideas, and being available.

Strategy five: The head teacher to provide further supervision and support of the classroom teachers. This included the head themselves observing in classrooms to reinforce the good things that were happening, and providing staff development in order to encourage and assist teachers to fully develop the talents and skills that enhance their teaching, and improve student learning.

Strategy six: The head teacher to assist with classroom management. This included assisting with suggestions of suitable classroom approaches and modelling these while taking a class for the teacher where there was a need.

Strategy seven: The head teacher to provide opportunities for teachers' renewal. This included having a mission to keep all staff 'growing' as far as spiritual growth was concerned, occasionally having retreat days held in a quiet setting away from the school.

Strategy eight: The head teacher to oversee first-year teacher inductions. This included providing help with the induction process for beginning teachers.

Strategy nine: The head teacher to provide mentors for classroom teachers. This included taking responsibility for all teachers' professional growth and well-being and enabling each teacher to have a colleague to consult with. This was particularly essential when the teacher moved into a new role.

These nine strategies summarised the responses of all the interviewees, providing valuable insights into their perceptions. It was not always possible to determine from the data the relative importance of these nine strategies; however strategy one, enough time to teach, was the issue that was most regularly referred to and was high on teachers' ranking of need strategies.

> *Staff need to feel and know that they are supported and will be listened to when it comes to their needs.*

Review

The data from this study indicate that primary teachers in the ASA system are impacted by a number of societal and educational changes, and that the action of the school leader is an important factor influencing the teachers' ability to deal with the challenges of change.

Rucinski, Franco, Nocetti, Queirolo, and Daniel (2009) concur with Blasé and Blasé (2004), whose work showed the importance of head teacher support and modelling for teacher reflection. They maintain that the actions and behaviours of school leaders are key factors for understanding teachers' dispositions about teaching and learning within the context of change efforts. Their research showed clearly that, when school leaders change implementation designs, and remove their support of change efforts, one effect may well be to reduce teachers' motivation and to diminish their engagement in and commitment to school change efforts.

McEwan (2003) outlines ten traits of highly effective principals. One of these was the *change master*. As a *change master* the head teacher is a flexible, futuristic and realistic individual who is able to both motivate and manage change in an organised, positive and enduring fashion. Effective leaders advocate, nurture and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Hubbard and Samuel (2002) recommended that organisations should start with what they call *captain-coach* leadership. This style of leadership provides *coaches* who are 'with them on the field', building effective relationships and providing a cause to follow. Coaching is about becoming a partner in the team-member's journey toward enhanced competence and effectiveness, while enabling teachers to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change by providing processes that facilitate support to achieve the desired results.

The emphasis on the *people focus*, as a central factor in enabling teachers to deal with change (particularly their ability to *cope* in an *emotional sense*), is also identified in the literature. The literature indicated, and this study supported the concept that staff need to feel and know that they are supported and will be listened to when it comes to their needs. School leaders are heading in the right direction when they make the creation of a supportive school environment a primary goal. Teachers with supportive leaders do not feel the same 'role strains' as those who are not supported, even if their roles are ambiguous (Rodgers 1995, p. 25).

Research by Fechner (1997, p. 154) revealed that teachers are more likely to 'go the extra mile' when they feel valued, be it by their immediate school leaders such as heads of school, or by the principal. Authoritative leaders, who place an emphasis on relationships, find ways to use change to the school's advantage (Dinham, 2005, p. 351).

This study relates to the *captain-coach* style of leadership (Hubbard & Samuel, 2002) which relies on trust and a relationship to be built. These are important components in affecting change. This study also acknowledges the importance of a collegial approach where the leadership style is more fluid. The *captain-coach* model is being fairly widely accepted in schools as a model. It is people orientated and effectively initiates and nurtures change taking place. In the *captain-coach* model the individual is very much a part of taking action which leads toward the desired change. It is an ongoing staff development activity underpinned by the leader's belief in the employee and it helps him/her take responsibility for the change process.

The *task focus* component of this model with its inclusion of teacher involvement in decision making, systematic and open processes, and providing teachers with resources, is supported by the literature. The literature suggested that the involvement of teachers in educational change is vital to its success, especially if the change is complex and is to affect many settings over long periods of time. Also, if this involvement is to be meaningful and productive, it means more than teachers acquiring new knowledge of curriculum content or new techniques of teaching (Wideman, 1991, p. 119).

Research suggests that allowing teachers to take part in decision making yields productive results. Employee satisfaction, motivation, morale and self-esteem are affected positively by involvement in decision-making and implementation (Gamage & Pang, 2003).

The study data also parallels the literature in indicating that the growing threats of litigation and the escalating demands of accountability have also created in schools a proliferation of notes of permission and explanation, along with other form filling and paperwork (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 30). Teachers are feeling the tensions of this increasing phenomenon, and the increased workload it creates.

The research of Meyer, Macmillan and Northfield (2009) suggests that a principal/head teacher who practises consistency, clarity of communication and congruence between word and action with a sensitivity of context, will be more successful in initiating change. Without these practices, teachers

may only pay lip service to the principal/head teacher, and may in fact seek ways to reduce his/her influence. Their research confirms that teacher morale is a critical factor that influences the ability of the new principal to initiate and manage change. They 'found' that teachers who do not feel valued or part of the decision-making process become less committed to work outside their classrooms and tend to focus on the immediate instead of the long-term needs of the school. For this reason, Meyer et al. (2009) suggest that new principals/head teachers need to attend to the development of positive relationships among staff by: "Developing and maintaining a culture of open communication", "Building trust through being consistent between what they say and what they do", "Ensuring transparency in decision making" and "Considering the context when implementing initiatives" (p. 184).

TEACH

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> *A principal/head teacher who practises consistency, clarity of communication and congruence between word and action with a sensitivity of context, will be more successful in initiating change*

1-1-2013

School Choice: What Parents Choose

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School choice:
What parents choose

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Key words: Schools, choice, parents, priorities

Introduction

The educational system in Australia allows parents to have a choice when it comes to selecting a school for their children. Parents have become consumers in an educational market, and schools, including Christian schools, now find themselves operating in a competitive space.

The research reported in this two-part article sought to explore the factors that influence parents' choice of school for their children using a mixed methods approach. Parents with students attending Christian schools in an Australian urban environment completed a total of 102 School Choice questionnaires, and 17 families with children in schools were interviewed.

> **What influences school choice is not necessarily one or two factors, but rather the interaction of many factors**

The analysis of the data generated two separate but interrelated reports. The first article (Beamish & Morey, 2012) investigated what motivates parents in the choice of a school for their children. All too often discussions on school choice are reduced to discussions of parents' preferred collections of isolated school characteristics. This reductionist view is often at the operational level, resulting in educators focusing on a limited set of operational characteristics that are deemed to be important. This serves to limit the school choice discussion. The first article sought to take the discussion to a higher level, to consider what are the main motivational considerations that drive parents choice of school. The data from this study indicated that parents are motivated in their school choice by two main considerations: the aspirations that they have for their children, and the anxieties they hold for them. This result parallels the findings of Campbell, Proctor & Sherington (2009). School choice is therefore

a parental attempt to maximise aspirations and minimise anxieties associated with their children's future. These decisions are made in a competitive market place (English, 2009) where, for example, school data on school performance is made public through websites such as the *My School* website.

Having considered the factors that motivate parents, this component of the study investigates the specific characteristics that parents focus on as they choose a school for their children.
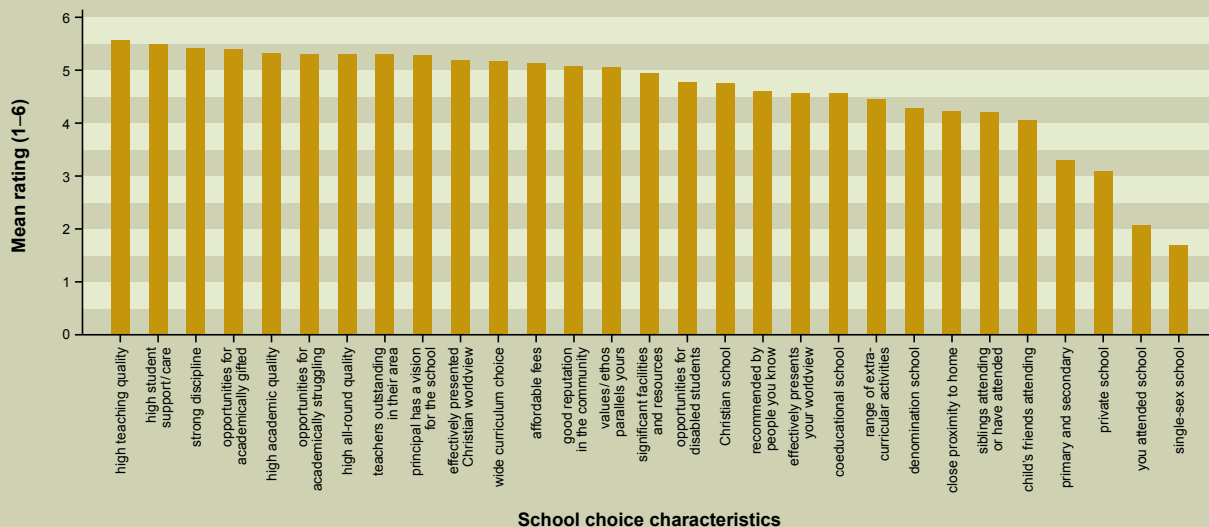
School choice: Factors and influences

In the School Choice survey parents were asked to rate a series of school related factors in terms of their importance in making school choices for their children. The survey used a scale that ranged from 1 to 6, where 1 indicated not important and 6 indicated extremely important. The survey consisted of 29 different factors ranging from teaching quality to catering for students with special needs, principals' vision to school ethos, and fees to location.

The mean responses (*M*) from the whole group are illustrated in Figure 1 where the factors have been arranged from the highest to the lowest ranking mean, with the highest ranked factor having a mean of 5.59 and the lowest ranked factor receiving a mean of 1.71. All characteristics, except for the last four, scored above 4 on a 1–6 scale, which indicates they are important, very important or extremely important. This hints at the concept that what influences school choice is not necessarily one or two factors, but rather the interaction of many factors.

It is interesting to consider the last four characteristics. The data from the present study indicates that being a 'single-sex' school or a school that 'parents attended' has no significant positive impact on one's choice of school. There is ambivalence towards the next two survey factors: the school is 'a private school' and the school 'has a primary and secondary section', with as

Figure 1: The mean value of the respective school choice characteristics

many respondents considering these positive characteristics as those that consider these negative characteristics. It is interesting to note that anecdotal evidence from school administrators suggests that having both a primary and secondary section is a high priority in school choice, but this result was not supported by the findings of this particular study.

School characteristics: A close look
The responses to the School Choice survey are further teased out by interaction with the interview data. The data from this study indicates that the families have prioritised clusters of school characteristics, which in turn give an indication of how families process school choice. The interview data elaborates on these decisions. Each of these clusters are now discussed in turn.

Academic characteristics
Academic characteristics are those that impact the learning and teaching program of the school and were the top priority for parents. They want their children to realise their potential and parents perceive that the academic program of the school plays a key role in this process. In particular parents prioritised the following characteristics:

Characteristic 1: Quality teachers
Families want quality teachers for their children. *Teaching quality is high* (*M* = 5.59) and *Teachers outstanding in their area* (*M* = 5.32) were prioritised as the first and eighth most important items respectively.

There was an overwhelming response from families when asked about the role of the teachers at the school their child was attending. Every family interviewed had a very strong position on the impact of teachers on their child's education.

Some commented about the passion and enthusiasm of teachers:

> I want the teachers in the school to be diligent enough and passionate enough to take on any kid even if they are the troublemaker in the class.

Others commented how the teachers at the school were an important consideration when it came to school choice, and the reputation of a teacher or teachers was enough to influence them to select that school. For example several families commented that a particular teacher had:

> a great reputation as a good early childhood teacher,

and this attracted them to the school.

Overall, parents wanted teachers to be role models who were dedicated, qualified, active church members, interested and involved with kids, who could provide a great learning environment, nurture students and give them guidance, and be able to answer foundational spiritual questions.

Characteristic 2: Academic quality and performance
Parents want schools of high academic quality for their children. The means for *Academic quality is high* (*M* = 5.34) and *All round quality is high* (*M* =

Overall, parents wanted teachers to be role models who were dedicated, qualified, active church members, interested and involved with kids

5.33) were in the upper range of the very important category and were prioritised as the fifth and seventh most important items in the survey.

Approximately half of the families interviewed said they were looking for a school for their children that had a high academic quality and performed well, particularly with respect to year 12 grades. A typical response follows:

> I was interested in the academic quality of the school, teaching methods and classroom management, and the percentage of students that take year 12, and what are the pathways after school.

Many parents commented on how easy it was to get performance data through the *My School* website. Several of the families commented that they perceived their local Christian school to be struggling in terms of academic quality and performance and this has been confirmed for them by the data on the *My School* website.

Characteristic 3: Opportunities for a diverse student population

Parents recognised that children generally and their children in particular, are very diverse. They want schools to offer opportunities across a broad spectrum to assist students across a range of academic abilities. They ranked *Opportunities for academically gifted students* (*M* = 5.41) and *Opportunities for academically struggling students* (*M* = 5.33) as very important, and the fourth and fifth highest in the ranking of school characteristics.

Many parents in the interview process commented on this aspect of schooling:

> I want my children to be empowered through their education so they can be whoever they want to be, and [as well] have the intelligence and ability to make good decisions whether it be career or life partner, whether it's God or whether its friendships.

> Kids should have every opportunity to excel.

This aspect of schooling is very important and can be problematic for schools, especially small schools due to resourcing implications.

Quality of school life characteristics

Parents are looking to schools to provide a good quality of school life for their children. Students spend a significant amount of time in school and Quality of School Life has been shown to impact success at school (Mok, 2002; Leonard, Bourke & Schofield, 2000). In particular, parents want their children to attend a school that provides an

> *Student nurture and support is needed for all students, independent of their academic and ability levels, further the parents perceived that this care plays a significant role in students' success*

environment of care, acceptance and support. It is not surprising that the current study finds that parents prioritised highly student care characteristics. In particular they identified the following as important:

Characteristic 4: Student support and pastoral care

Parents are anxiously looking to schools for high levels of support and pastoral care. *Student support/care high* (*M* = 5.53) was prioritised as the second most important item in the survey. Approximately half of the families interviewed said they were looking for a school to nurture and support their children. A typical comment was:

> We wanted somewhere where he would feel nurtured, where the teachers take a lot of interest in the kids.

Parents recognised the need for support both inside and outside of the classroom as students are supported and mentored by the school. In particular, parents noted the role of mentoring, and the impact schools can have on setting children on a course for a successful future:

> …academics are very important but so is the nurturing side. I want the school to help my child to build their self-esteem through a high level of care, and by directing the kids to their future.

It was widely recognised that student nurture and support is needed for all students, independent of their academic and ability levels, further the parents perceived that this care plays a significant role in students' success at school and positively influences their life outside the school arena.

Characteristic 5: Discipline

Parents want high levels of discipline. *Discipline is strong* (*M* = 5.43) was prioritised as the third most important item in the survey.

Several of the families interviewed mentioned the importance of the school's approach to discipline. Most families indicate they are looking for a safe and accepting environment for their children, and a school where high behaviour standards are maintained. Poor discipline led some families to change the school their child was attending.

> School had an open enrolment policy but failed to keep all the kids in line. We ended up moving schools.

There was some criticism of schools for growing their enrolment by accepting students that had been asked to leave other schools. Some families felt that this has led to a lowering of behaviour standards at the school.

The following response summarised the position of a number of families:

Schools need to be more discerning.

Vision characteristics

Parents are looking to schools to assist in the complex job of facilitating the personal growth of their children. They are seeking a school where the school has an expansive vision for the role that it plays in students' lives. Parents recognise the important role that the principal plays in this process and prioritised highly the visionary role of the principal. In particular they were looking for a school where:

Characteristic 6: The principal has vision

The role of the principal was acknowledged as being very important (M = 5.30). *The Principal has a vision for the school* was ranked relatively highly (9th of 29).

Nearly all of the families interviewed acknowledged the important foundational role of the principal in the school. The comments were similar in nature across all families interviewed.

We know how it works if the principal is good and doing a good job, the rest of the school will flourish. The principal plays an important role in the school. We know that corporate culture comes from the top.

If there had not been a change of principal at our school then our child would be going to a different school.

Many families make the determination on the school for their children based on the principal of the school.

We were looking for a good principal, in fact, the principal was the most influential [factor] in the decision making process, there was a stark contrast in the schools we looked at. The Principal at the school we chose we thought was absolutely fantastic.

Yes, the principal of the school played a big part in us selecting the school. She is an amazing woman.

He thought he was interviewing us, but really we were interviewing him. He had a great vision for the school.

It would seem that schools benefit from having a principal with vision, the ability to make the vision a reality, and the ability to clearly communicate this to the families that support the school.

School ethos characteristics

Most schools have a particular ethos and identity that provides a distinct and unique educational environment (Freund, 2001). Christian and Public schools have a shared ethos in many areas. However, they are distinctly different in others (Youlden, 2008). Many parents are looking for schools with a particular ethos and special character, and school ethos characteristics were found to play a significant role in influencing parents' choice of school. In particular parents were influenced by:

Characteristic 7: The school is a Christian school

Most of the families surveyed and interviewed were very clear that they wanted their children to attend a Christian school. *Effectively presents Christian worldview* (M = 5.20), *Is a Christian school* (M = 4.77), *Effectively presents the worldview of my denomination* (M = 4.57), and *Is a school from run by my denomination* (M = 4.29), are all seen as very important to important by parents.

The interview data identified different attitudes amongst the families interviewed. Some families interviewed responded that they were looking for:

An evangelical Christian school.

A Christian school was paramount. We wanted overt spirituality with students, teachers, and parents all supporting the values we have in the home.

A school that followed the same spiritual guidelines that we have at home.

A common theme was that families wanted a school that had a value system that paralleled their own. This will be discussed again in the next section.

Some families were particularly keen on selecting a school that was run by their denomination:

We wanted kids to have a Christian basis and to be nurtured by Christians but we also wanted our children to know why we belief (sic), what they believe.

Some families were critical of schools run by their denomination, and they believed that some of the schools had lost their distinctiveness by opening their enrolment up to a wider community enrolment.

We were looking for a school with a Christian influence, but the local Christian school has changed ethos by opening it up to the wider community.

> *Parents are seeking a school that has an expansive vision for the role that it plays in students' lives*

Characteristic 8: The values of the school parallel the values of the home

Parents want schools to support family values. *Values/Ethos parallels yours* (*M* = 5.08) was seen as very important even though it is comparatively mid-ranked.

Many families expressed the desire to have the school support their family values. There was unanimous support for the idea that the home is foundational in setting the values for children, and the school needs to play a supporting role.

> The school reinforces the spiritual life that is taught at home.

Some families expressed dismay that with an open enrolment policy, not all students at the school reflect the values established in the home, even though the school itself may endorse those values.

> With kids at our local Christian school from non-Christian homes, there are influences on our children that we were not happy with.

Academic and physical resource characteristics

Successful schools have the resources to successfully sustain the curricular and extracurricular programs of the school. These characteristics were rated the next most important by parents. In particular parents were looking for schools with:

Characteristic 9: A wide curriculum and subject choice

Has a wide curriculum choice (*M* = 5.18) indicates that parents saw the curriculum choice available at schools as very important. A significant number of families commented on how curriculum and subject choice impacted their choice of secondary school. Some families with children in Christian schools, tended to downplay the importance of subject choice.

> We were not impacted by subject choices. We were looking for spiritual blessing.

Other families indicated that subject choice was a major consideration, particularly in the secondary school.

> Subject choice for us was a real issue. We try and not make it the top issue, but it is really important and needs to be considered.

Characteristic 10: Facilities and resources are significant

Parents completing the school choice questionnaire indicated *Facilities and resources are significant* and very important (*M* = 4.97) in choosing a school, yet ranked this trait in the middle of the school choice characteristics. There was however, a difference of opinion expressed across the interviews.

Some families interviewed, with children in Christian schools, did not rate the facilities and resources of the school as being very important. A typical comment from this group is:

> The resources of the school were not an influence on our choice.

Other families did rate school resources and facilities as an important determinant of school choice.

> When we looked elsewhere we were amazed at the level of resources of some schools.

> The local Christian primary school was not an option as it was too small and could not offer the calibre of education with the facilities that the school has.

Characteristic 11: A range of extra curricular activities

A similar pattern to the previous item emerged with respect to extra curricular activities. This item *Range of extra-curricular activities* was ranked in the last third of the school characteristics, but was still listed as important (*M* = 4.46).

The interview data revealed a similar pattern. Families with children in Christian schools were happy with the level of extra curricular activities.

> We do not care what sport programs, music the school offers. We are looking for our children to be nurtured.

Some families would like to see the Christian school offer more, particularly in the area of service activities.

> In high school we would like to see more extra curricular activities for students, particularly in the area of service opportunities and positive peer group opportunities.

Other families, however, mentioned extra curricular activities as one of the main reasons they selected the school for their child.

> We were looking for great extra curricular activities particularly in music and sport.

Some families claim that the many extra curricular activities that the school offers are a great way for parents to become involved in the life of the school.

> We are as involved in the school as we want to be, due to all the extra curricular events the school offers such as sport and excursions.

Some families expressed dismay that with an open enrolment policy, not all students at the school reflect the values established in the home

Logistical characteristics

Logistical factors impact on school choice. Parents with limited means have limited choices, while those with significant means have far more choice (Cahill, 2010). Certainly, in the present study, parents indicated that logistical factors, particularly fees and time required to travel to school, impacted their choice of school for their children, but these factors were given a lower priority.

Characteristic 12: School fees: The figure values

The fees that schools charge were seen as being very important to families. *Fees are affordable* (M = 5.20) ranked in the top half of the school characteristics. For many there is a threshold value for fees, and fees above this value ruled out that school as an option.

The interviews supported the idea that some families find the school fees a significant factor in selecting a school. A typical comment was:

> Finance played a role in our decision.

Characteristic 13: Time required to travel to school

Although *Close proximity to home* (M = 4.22) was ranked in the last third of school characteristics, it was still seen as important by parents.

This factor, like the fees factor, is seen from two specific perspectives, the needs of primary students compared to secondary students. Travel time is interpreted as having a threshold function, such that there is a time to travel to school above which, the school is not seen as a realistic choice. This data would suggest that for many of the respondents this threshold time is 30 minutes for the primary aged student, and 60 minutes for the secondary aged student.

The interviews supported the idea that school proximity to the home is a major factor in influencing school choice. Over half of the families interviewed indicated that proximity played a large role in school selection.

> Geographical proximity played a large role in selecting a school for our children. Especially when you have young children at home who were not in school. Hopefully this will not be an issue once the kids are in high school.

> Proximity is a big issue due to the time needed for homework and extra curricular activities, and the travel puts the kids under too much pressure.

Some families are very committed to Christian education and move to be close to the school.

> Proximity was not an issue for us. We moved to be close to the school. It would be good if there was a K–12 Christian school in our area.

A trend emerged from the interviews of families who were sending their children to Christian schools. Parents chose schools for their children based on criteria they had established for pre-primary. Some of these parents had every intention to change their child's school once they were old enough to travel on the bus. Many families however, became very comfortable in the school and when the time came to change, they did not follow through on their original intention.

> At first, proximity was a big issue for us. We would never have considered sending our children to a Christian school at a distance when they were in Pre-primary. It was just too far for us and too long on the bus. We are very happy with the local school we selected and now he is older we do not want to shift him.

This is a real challenge for Christian schools. If children do not commence their education in a Christian school, it is very unlikely that parents will change the school the child attends part way through their primary school years
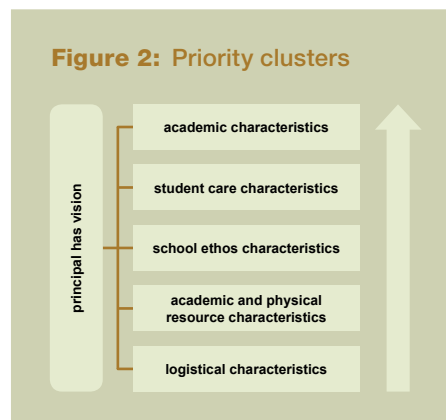
Conclusion

Schools are now operating in a competitive environment. Principals, teachers and others interested in Christian schooling, need to acknowledge and pay attention to the various factors that will make their school attractive to parents. Forming a well thought out strategic and operational plan, may enhance the number of students whose lives benefit by attending a Christian school.

What is obvious from this study data, is that it is not one or two factors that significantly influence parents when making school choices. Rather, there is interplay of a range of factors. These are derived from clusters of school characteristics. These factors are selected and prioritised by two main

> *If children do not commence their education in a Christian school, it is very unlikely that parents will change the school the child attends part way through their primary school years*

Figure 2: Priority clusters

principal has vision

- academic characteristics
- student care characteristics
- school ethos characteristics
- academic and physical resource characteristics
- logistical characteristics

parental motivations: the aspirations that they have for their children, and the anxieties they hold for them.

The factors identified in the current study include: Academic, Student Care, School Ethos, Resources, and Logistical considerations. These factors were assessed within the context of a leadership team and school principal who set a clear vision for the school (Figure 2).

The emergent factors (clusters of school characteristics) affecting school choice were clearly prioritised by parents, though the quantitative data was less clearly discriminated. Firstly, parents were looking for schools that have strong academic orientation. This has always been a key consideration of parents (Delaney, 2008) and can be understood as a strategy that parents use when they are trying to maximise the educational aspirations that they have for their children. It is known that the quality of teaching has a large influence on students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes in school (Rowe, 2003), and parents should attend to these factors as being very important.

Student care factors were considered the next in importance by parents. They want their children to experience a high quality of school life, as this contributes to student success in school (Leonard, Bourke and Schofield, 2003). Parents would like their children engaged in learning and to be supported in that process, as research shows that young people who are not engaged with learning, or who have poor relationships with peers and teachers, are more likely to engage in at-risk behaviours, report anxiety / depressive symptoms, and perform poorly at school (Bond, Butler, Thomas, Carlin, Glover, Bowes, & Patton, 2007).

Parents want the values of the school to reflect their own. The data from the study supported the idea that Christian families wanted to have their children in Christian schools. Most families agreed that the family was primarily responsible for the nurture of their children, however, they were looking to schools to assist them in this task. Schools are particularly important as social and academic learning environments, impacting not only on academic pathways, but also health and well-being of students. In fact, parents recognise that children need substantial connections in their lives and that along with connectedness to family, connectedness to school has emerged as a key factor in building positive educational outcomes and lower rates of at-risk behaviours (Bond, et al., 2007). Families would prefer that these connections are established within an ethos that is compatible and acceptable to them.

> *Schools should not focus on being better than the neighbouring school but rather should seek to maximise the outcomes for their students in their context*

In selecting a school, parents are mindful of the academic and physical resources of the school. Most parents are looking for a school that offers a wholistic educational experience for their children and has the resources to deliver such. They are very aware of the logistic factors that are associated with attending school. Logistics is a complex issue and very individualistic, therefore it can be difficult to extrapolate and apply across differing contexts. For example, with respect to fees, there is a threshold above which parents cannot cross, and this threshold is distinctly different for different parents. Schools need to understand the threshold limits of their communities.

The results of the current study encourage educators to more fully understand what parents are looking for in a school. Such an understanding can enlarge vision, and allows them to respond with a set of actions that are often more contemporary and mesh with parents' expectations. In doing this, there are benefits for schools and school systems in the adoption of a broader perspective.

This report concludes with a word of caution. School leaders should keep the data presented in this report in perspective. When two cars in a race start jockeying for position, and trying to overtake each other, they quite often slow each other down. It is interesting to note that the evidence of the effectiveness of school choice in improving student achievement is mixed, and the evidence of the effects of competition between schools is inconclusive (Loeb, Valant and Kasman, 2011). Schools should not focus on being better than the neighbouring school but rather should seek to maximise the outcomes for their students in their context, and in doing so, should strive to establish a high quality educational environment for the benefit of all their students. **TEACH**

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Does It Really Matter? Choosing a Bible Translation for Use in Schools

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Does it really matter? Choosing a Bible translation for use in schools

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Key words: Bible, choosing, school, apps

Abstract

There are numerous versions of the Bible in print and e-copy, each of which has been thoughtfully translated by qualified persons using reliable source documents and reference works. Due to the complexities of translation and the backgrounds of readers, no single version 'tells it all'. Each one, a product of the methods of its translators, and the readers targeted by its publisher, accomplishes some parts of the translation task, and meets some reader needs, better than others. Which Bible translation is best for your school or classroom, and how can you make use of digital versions of the Bible? This article will discuss these issues and help your school make a choice, informed by each school's heritage and needs of its constituency. It also looks at the use of digital translations, and outlines the clear advantages and disadvantages of e-Bibles.

> *Due to the complexities of translation and the backgrounds of readers, no single version 'tells it all'*

Introduction

Choosing an English Bible translation was once a simple task. For Protestant adults it was the Authorised King James Version (KJV or AV of 1611, latest revision 1769) or the New International Version (NIV 1978, latest revision 2011). For children, the Good News Bible (TEV of 1976, renamed Good News Bible, GNB of 2001). For Catholics, either the Douay-Rheims (1582–1610, latest revision 1750), the Revised Standard Version (RSV Catholic version of 1966) or the New American Bible (NAB of 1986). The choice could be made during a brief visit to the nearest bookshop on the way home after school. Those days of limited Bible choice have ended. The scene has changed dramatically with the appearance of a tsunami of recent translations, plus revisions of some older ones. There are now more than 400 English Bible translations, according to the *Encyclopedia of English Bible versions*, and another thousand or so of parts of the Bible (Taliaferro, 2012, p. 1). What motivates this tsunami of translations? In the words of linguist David Crystal (2006), religious texts such as the Bible,

> have to satisfy two criteria, which are always incompatible, because one looks backwards and the other forwards. First, the translation must be historically accurate…Secondly, it must be acceptable to the intended users of the translation—which, in practice, means that it must be intelligible, aesthetically pleasing, and capable of relating to current trends in religious thought, social pressure, and language change. No translation can ever satisfy the demands of all these factors, and all translations are thus to some extent controversial.
> (pp. 471–472)

This article provides information, which may help guide in the choice of an appropriate translation for school use. It will do so, first, by introducing the two methods of translation employed by translators, and by illustrating some of the gains and losses that result from their efforts to work within the incompatible criteria of accurately presenting message from the past that conforms to the parameters set by present readers. It will flag efforts by publishers and translators to target particular user groups. Finally, it will suggest ways schools can harness the benefits of widely available digital Bibles. But it will start with insights into Bible translation, and suggest what might lie behind that tsunami of recent English translations.

Translation—definitions and aims

What is a translation? For the purposes of this article "translation" (from Latin *translātiōnis*, "handing over, bringing over") expresses the translator's basic task to "bring over" meaning from a written text across the

gap separating the text's language and culture into the recipient language and culture. Translators make "there and back" journeys, bringing what they find, expressing it in their own language with minimum distortion. A related Latin term, *interpretātiōnis*, carries the work of translation a step further by expanding what is meant by "bringing out meaning." In the words of translator Edith Grossman, "The most fundamental description of what translators do is that we write…in language B a work of literature originally composed in language A, hoping that readers of the second language…will perceive the text, emotionally and artistically, in a manner that parallels and corresponds to the aesthetic experiences of its first readers" (as cited in Nelson, 2010, p. 22). Bible translation consultant Stephen Pattemore defines translation's goal as an extension into another language of one group's wish to "change the mental state of another group by means of a coherent text" (2011, p. 265). Crystal (2006) declares that a translation aims "to provide semantic equivalence between source and target language" (pp. 417–418).

Translation—methods

How do Bible translations bridge the gap to achieve this "semantic equivalence" of meaning? They are divided over what they believe to be the correct answer. Some would call for what is known as a formal or word-for-word translation, which attempts to bring over into the receptor language the *form* of the original, translating a noun with its equivalent noun, a verb with a verb, and so on. Others believe a so-called dynamic or thought-for-thought translation brings across the meaning most effectively. Both methods have been employed and their merits debated since antiquity (Brock, 2007, p. 875). Both continue to be debated and employed by Bible translators.

Word-for-word, literal translations?

It is important to understand that no Bible translation in wide use today is literal, word-for-word. Such would be partly unreadable. Genesis 32:20 contains a Hebrew idiom "I will cover his face with the present" which the KJV paraphrases "I will appease him with the present." This and hundreds of similar Hebrew idioms, if translated literally, would so complicate the task of the English Bible reader that much sense of the flow and fluency of the Bible's message would be lost. Neither ancient Hebrew nor ancient Greek had a specific word for the colour blue. Modern Bibles paraphrase with "blue", ancient words that refer to a range of colours between what we know as green and black, without alerting the reader to the linguistic "gap" behind

the English word (Deutscher, 2010, p. 43). Words in isolation potentially express a range of possible meanings. Only when embedded in sentences and larger discourse units do words make a precise and specific contribution to meaning. This is why sentences, rather than words, are the basic carriers of meaning in written texts.

Formal translations

Translators using the formal method believe their task is to bridge the language gap by bringing across not only individual words, but also the forms of which they were part. Formal translations attempt to reflect not only the words, but the sentences and other literary forms of the original biblical languages, while at the same time making sense to readers of the receptor language. Readers of formal translations are expected to become engaged, mentally selecting from among the options the contemporary meaning that best fits the biblical writers' expressions. This can be illustrated by the story of the confusion of languages at the biblical Tower of Babel, Genesis 11:1, 6–7. A literal translation would be something like:

> It happened all the land lip one and words the same…And YHWH said…Come, let us go down and mix up there their lips so that a man cannot hear the lips of another.

The English Standard Version (ESV) of 2001, a formal translation, reads:

> Now the whole earth had one language and the same words…And the LORD said…Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so they may not understand one another's speech.

Note here that Hebrew "lips" becomes either "language" or "speech" depending on the meaning required by its place in the sentence. Formal translations tend to preserve an archaic form of English as part of their faithfulness to the atmosphere of the original languages (Alter, 1996). They also tend to employ without explanation theological words such as grace, iniquity, justification, righteousness.

Dynamic translations

It is clearly the translator's task to bridge the language gap. But should the culture gap also be attempted? Or should that task be left to the reader? Translators who attempt to go beyond bridging the language gap and bridge the culture gap produce what are known as dynamic, or thought-for-thought translations, whose goal is to

It is important to understand that no Bible translation in wide use today is literal, word-for-word—such would be partly unreadable

identify and employ the contemporary expression which prompts in the reader the cognitive and emotional response intended by the ancient author, even if quite different words are employed. The apostles Paul and Peter instructed believers to "greet one another with a holy kiss" (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14). J.B. Phillips bridged the cultural gap between the first century Roman empire and mid-twentieth century England when he replaced the holy kiss with "Give each other a hearty handshake all round." (*The New Testament in modern English*, 1958). In the New Living Translation (NLT of1996) "holy kiss" becomes "in Christian love." Other recent translations insert "kiss of peace", familiar from the concluding ritual in some worship services. This gives modern readers the impression that Paul referred to an early Christian worship service in Romans 16:16. The context does not support this. This illustrates the major strength of dynamic translations—they fit our culture! It also illustrates their potential weakness—the contemporary "meaning and message" selected by the translator may not be what the biblical author meant.

> *For ancient Hebrews, God examined a person's kidneys as well as heart to determine their inner moral state*

For ancient Hebrews, God examined a person's kidneys as well as heart to determine their inner moral state: "the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins" Psalm 7:9 KJV ("reins" meant "kidneys" in 17th century English). See also Jeremiah 11:20; 12:2; 17:10; 20:12. While contemporary readers may react uneasily to the image of God scrutinising a human kidney to discern its owner's deepest convictions, apparently ancient Hebrews did not. Nearly all recent translations, including the formal ESV, replace "kidneys" with "mind", without linguistic justification, but justified on the basis of cultural equivalence.

Greek *logos*, which most informed Bible readers assume should be translated "word", did not usually mean simply "word" to ancient Greeks. *Logos* could express for them "gathering", "calculating", or "reckoning" and more commonly, "narrating." Prior to the New Testament era, *logos* came to refer, generally to "the giving of an account"; "a narrative"; "a speech"; "statement or discussion based on and guided by reason." This meaning is behind the "saying" or "statement" in Mark 7:29 ESV, NRSV, World English Bible (WEB, commenced 1997–ongoing; online only). Other translations employ "answer" for *logos* at this point, but not in the sense of an answer to a question, since there was no question. Rather, "answer" in the sense of "a good contribution to a dialog or debate."

There are no purely formal Bible translations on the market, nor are there any purely dynamic ones. All are products of a mix of both methods, to some degree. Sometimes the presence of doctrinal bias is cited as a factor influencing translation choice between a formal and dynamic translation. While Bible translators' deep religious convictions can impact their work, no translation reviewed for this article stood out due to doctrinal bias. By definition, Bible translations are produced by groups, while individual translators produce Bible paraphrases. The checks and balances provided by groups producing bona fide translations work against doctrinal bias that more easily appears in paraphrases.

Non-cognitive elements of texts

So far, what might be called the cognitive, factual meaning conveyed by texts has been this article's focus. But non-cognitive components of texts also influence meaning. Grossman considers non-cognitive elements to be just as important as cognitive ones. She hopes "that readers of the second language…will perceive the text, emotionally and artistically, in a manner that parallels and corresponds to the aesthetic experiences of its first readers" (as cited by Nelson, 2010, p. 22). Two of these, which are relevant for Bible translators and readers, are triggers of emotions, and literary artistry.

Triggers of emotion

Some translations deliberately aim for an emotional impact on readers: "[the Bible's] living language… has an emotive quality that will make an impact on the listener." (*Holy Bible: New Living Translation*, 1996, p. xliii). This may be subtle. While most translations of Psalm 30:9 read "if I go down to the pit, can the dust praise you?", the NLT changes "the dust" to "my dust" without Hebrew justification, personalising "dust." While the New King James Version (NKJV of 1982) translates John 8:7 "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first" the NLT's "the one who has never sinned throw the stone!" heightens the moral qualification for potential stoners of adulterous women!

Social scruples

Translators must decide whether to shelter modern readers from the naming of body parts and bodily functions, which in contemporary polite English discourse are unmentionable, or wrapped in euphemism. In Galatians 5:12 the apostle Paul wished that persons troubling gentile Christians by urging on them circumcision, might have

something of similar consequence done to them in return. According to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV of 1989) Paul wished that "those who unsettle you would castrate themselves!" The Revised English Bible (REB of 1989) avoids the surgical term but names its consequences with "make eunuchs of themselves." The NLT leaves open the precise nature of surgery Paul wished upon the troublers: "I just wish that those troublemakers who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate themselves."

The KJV translates 1 Samuel 5:9 quite literally "the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts." These haemorrhoids disappear from nearly all modern translations, formal as well as dynamic, and are replaced with "tumours." Most recent translations likewise omit reference to the private parts of the body targeted by that particular haemorrhoid plague.

The "filthy rags" of Isaiah 64:6 [Hebrew vs. 5] is a euphemism for a Hebrew expression designating a cloth to catch menstrual blood, or a garment worn during menstruation. Contact with menstrual blood rendered ancient Hebrews unsuited for worship until they had undergone a purification ritual. This feature of everyday Hebrew life was transformed here by the prophet into a visceral simile for hearers and readers.

Literary artistry

The Bible is rich in literary artistry, which can convey considerable meaning. Like all literature the Bible contains a range of literary devices, which do not always cross the translation bridge intact.

Alliteration

Alliteration is embedded in the Tower of Babel narrative in the Hebrew expression *nilbenah lebenim* "let us make bricks" (Genesis 11:3). Note how the consonants *n*, *l*, *b* in the first word are repeated, but partly reversed, in the second word: *l*, *b*, *n*. There is also alliteration in verse 9 where *babel…ballal* means "Babel" and "mixed up". This latter passage also plays on the close proximity of "Babel" to "mixed up" introducing the Babel (a shortened form of Babylon) motif as source of confusion, trial and hardship for God's chosen people. New Testament alliteration is prominent in Hebrews 1:1, where five of the 12 Greek words begin with the letter *pi*. It is difficult to argue that such a feature contributes to the cognitive message of the Bible, but this is another example of literary artistry, which is lost in translation.

Sentence length

Sentence length is a feature of style that challenges translators. Formal translations usually reflect sentence length in the original. Translations aiming for easy readability employ shorter, simpler sentences. One of the New Testament's longest sentences is Ephesians 4:11–16 which the KJV dutifully preserves. The RSV and ESV break the sentence into 2, the REB, NIV and Todays New International Version (TNIV of 2005) into 4, the NLT into 6, the Contemporary English Version (CEV of 1995) into 7, and the New Century Version (NCV of 2001) into 9.

Register

Register is a term used by linguists for insider language—the departures from standard language used by, or about, social sub-groups to mark their partial separateness from mainstream society. The KJV expression "any that pisseth against the wall" in 1 Samuel 25:22 (see also 1 Kings 14:10) is a Hebrew expression for human males who customarily emptied their bladders in public, facing any convenient wall, instead of retiring to a more discreet place. Nearly all recent translations replace this with "male" or "men" instead of a register-appropriate term such as "layabout." The WEB Bible preserves the Hebrew expression, leaving the reader to choose the appropriate register.

"Insider" language

The most extensive and obvious register marking an "insider" group in the New Testament is the Jewish dialect of Greek used in the first three Gospels. One prominent feature of this "insider" language of Jewish communities living in the wider Greek-speaking world lies behind the "beholds" so familiar from traditional translations. "Behold" opens narratives, tags shifts of topic, and introduces new elements in reported speech. Native Greek speakers rarely used the word this way, so the greatly increased frequency of "behold" in the first three Gospels indicates that the reader has, figuratively speaking, "entered" a Jewish ghetto, where the language, though still Greek, is of a different register, that of a close-knit ethnic and religious minority. The ESV has preserved all 5 "beholds" in the announcements of the birth of Jesus in Luke 1:20–44, while the NLT has replaced the first one (vs. 20) with "and now" and the third (vs. 36) with "what's more" while omitting those in verses 31, 38 and 44. This "smoothing" of narrative and dialog by dynamic translations may accelerate reading and comprehension, but at the expense of removing a

> *The greatly increased frequency of "behold" in the first three Gospels indicates the reader has, figuratively speaking, 'entered' a Jewish ghetto*

marker that the Evangelists used to take the reader "inside" the Jewish subculture of this and other Gospel scenes.

Needs of today's readers

Meeting the needs of today's Bible readers challenges translators and publishers, who respond by updating translations to reflect changed word meanings, language usage, and reading habits. These changes in turn influence marketing of the Bible. Changing social attitudes and values exert pressure on translators and on Bible reading communities.

Changed word meanings

English words can disappear or undergo change of meaning through time. The "wimples" and "crisping pins" of Isaiah 3:22 KJV have become "capes and purses" and "sottish children" of Jeremiah 4:22 are now "senseless children." "Gay clothing" of James 2:3 has become "nice clothing" or "fine clothing." "Fall upon" (Judges 8:21; 15:12; 1Samuel 22:17) has become "kill" while "prevent" (Job 3:12; Psalm 79:8) has become "receive" or "meet."

Reading habits

The experience of reading the Bible aloud in a group can be impacted by the translation. Partly for this reason translators retain traditional expressions in very familiar passages. In the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:12) the ESV and even the TNIV retain "debts" for "sins." Psalm 23 remains quite close to its familiar KJV form in current translations. Formal translations, because of their heritage, are considered better suited for group reading in formal worship settings, and the REB translators acknowledge this. Groups with limited English however, may benefit by reading dynamic translations that use a more restricted vocabulary

> **There is no such thing as a 'best' translation—the success of a translation depends on the purpose for which it was made and the needs of the people for whom it was made**

Bible publishers—"publish or perish?"

Bible publishing is business. This has been the case from the time scribes were paid by the line for producing manuscripts. The Bible used to be marketed, like the Model T Ford, in the colour of the customer's choice, so long as the customer chose black. That sombre binding has now been replaced by a rainbow range of covers appealing to differing sub-groups of potential readers. Publishers issue an increasing array of editions targeting children, youth, women, men, and other groups. Revenue from sales of some Bibles is huge. Do publishers commission translations in hope for a best-seller? Could this contribute to the tsunami of translations on the market?

Sensitive social and religious conventions

Inclusive language and correct designation of gender occupy considerable translator attention. Gender expressions, which were current in ancient, male-dominated cultures, are reflected in the Bible's original languages. Some of them sound decidedly insensitive today, and if not handled effectively give readers a sometimes-unwarranted impression that the Bible itself supports gender inequality. Translators moving within the limitations of their craft make minor adjustments such as replacing "mankind" and "man" of older translations with more inclusive "people" or "human beings" when context allows or supports. In matters of gender it is vital to separate the Bible's message from the Bible's medium, its language. Numerous biblical passages seem to subvert rather than support a subordinate place for women in patriarchal society, and grant surprising freedoms to certain biblical women. This parallels the manner in which another convention of patriarchal society, the privileged position of first-born sons, is repeatedly subverted in the Old Testament in order to favour younger brothers.

So, which translation suits my school?

Crystal (2006) concludes his discussion of translations by asserting, "there is no such thing as a 'best' translation. The success of a translation depends on the purpose for which it was made, which in turn reflects the needs of the people for whom it was made" (p. 418). What are needs of schools and students? The authors of this article avoid endorsing any translation, and encourage those making a choice to carefully compare currently available translations. This task can be initiated by use of the online resource BibleGateway.com which places side by side a range of many (but not all—the REB is absent) currently-available English translations. The next step is to read through the complete text of the Introductions to a range of translations. Unfortunately most of these are not available online, so a visit to a well-stocked bookshop may be necessary.

Reading comprehension level and vocabulary ceilings

Some recent translations impose ceilings on their vocabulary and literary complexity. The NLT's ceiling is "the reading level of a junior high school student" (*Holy Bible: NLT*, 1996, p. xlii). The NCV likewise limits its vocabulary in accordance with guidelines that inform authors for the *World Book Encyclopedia* (*The Everyday Bible: New Century*

Bible, 2001, p. vii). Translators of the CEV cite research indicating that, "almost half of U.S. adults have very limited reading and writing skills." The CEV is therefore "a text that an inexperienced reader can read *aloud* without stumbling, that someone unfamiliar with traditional Biblical terminology can *hear without misunderstanding*, and that everyone can *listen to with enjoyment* because the style is lucid and lyrical." (*The Bible for Today: Contemporary English Version*, 1995, p. 1628).

Limited vocabulary Bibles are not for everyone, and young readers can grow and thrive on the challenge presented by more literary translations. Philip Davis, professor of English at Liverpool University, recently argued "Serious literature acts like a rocket-booster to the brain. The research shows the power of literature to shift mental pathways, to create new thoughts, shapes and connections in the young and the staid alike" (as cited in Henry, 2013, p. 2). The most literary contemporary translation is the REB. Its language is described by the chair of its translation committee as "fluent and of appropriate dignity for liturgical use" (Coggan, 1989, p. ix).

Use more than one translation

No single translation can capture the complex riches of the Bible's meaning. "Literary work requires a sensitive consideration of form as well as content, and may prompt several translations, each of which emphasises a different aspect of the original" (Crystal, 2006, p. 418). A formal translation, good for reading aloud, and for insights into the ancient form of the Bible, can be supplemented with a dynamic translation for its greater sense of immediacy. Comparing their readings would reveal differences, which could spark useful discussion and stimulate further study into the Bible's culture and message.

Getting the most out of digital Bible formats

The Bible has taken many forms over the generations, and many versions.

Early Christians changed from scrolls to papyrus. From the mid 15th century Gutenberg and then Luther helped transfer rare manuscripts from the hands of the priests into the hands and minds of many people. Today, digital Bibles are fulfilling an age-old vision of distribution and dissemination.

In the 1960s, publishers began to repackage the black leather standard with more modern, contemporary designs. Editions range from mass-market paperbacks to 'Teen' designs with the aim of reaching a younger demographic who would otherwise not pick up a Bible. Today, there are still beautifully bound versions of the Bible in print, but

you are just as likely to see Bible students reaching for a computer, iPad or smartphone to access the Word of God (Neff, 2012). In the 21st century we have moved from the printed version to the digital.

What are the benefits of using a digital Bible?

Many people prefer 'real' books over their digital counterparts. The digitisation of the Bible has many advantages however that make it an attractive option for use in the classroom. To choose paper over digital does not need to be an either-or proposition. They can be used in conjunction with each other. Some of the advantages are:

1. Annotations

Annotations, note taking and highlighting are easier and more manageable than print. Unless it is your own personal Bible, with your own annotation and highlighting system, annotating or marking a physical copy of the Bible is usually frowned upon in educational circles. Unless it belongs to the individual student, a class set or library edition of the Bible would look a little worse for wear with multiple students making notes in the margins. Many Bible apps and online editions let you highlight, annotate, bookmark and cross reference at the click of a button. This can be saved on the device, as well as online, thus syncing across multiple devices (ie. tablet, phone, and online). Whether shared, or listed as private, you can store your favourite verses and associated notes on Bible apps such as YouVersion (www.youversion.com). This can serve as an individual or collaborative tool for shared annotation (O'Neill, 2010).

2. Convenience and cost

Digital versions of the Bible are quick and easy to access on a range of hardware. Your school will already be equipped with a range of digital devices ranging from laptops and tablets to desktops and projectors. Harnessing the powerful capabilities of e-texts is usually cost effective and convenient. They will usually take up less space, can be searched quickly, font size can be adjusted for your younger or older readers, and multiple versions can be used to suit reading age and vocabulary level. Online bible portals such as Bible Gateway (http://www.biblegateway.com/) and YouVersion (https://www.bible.com/) help you to tailor your experience to enhance reading, study, and devotions. YouVersion is available for both online and mobile devices, and offers more than 150 different Bible translations in 45 languages. And all for free (Nelson, 2011).

> *Serious literature acts like a rocket-booster to the brain. The research shows the power of literature to shift mental pathways*

3. Research

Digital texts such as the *Glo Bible* (www.globible.com), let users explore the text through five different lenses: Bible, Atlas, Timeline, Media and Topical. Each of these lenses enhances the user experience by harnessing touch screen and visual interaction. A user can do 360-degree virtual tours, access videos, artworks and reference information. As is the case with many Bible apps, some of the information is free, whilst other modules or content requires an additional cost or 'in-app purchase'. A multimedia rich experience is more likely to engage today's digital learners.

4. Engagement

Particularly for the secondary religious studies student, a digital version of the Bible will provide a more engaging and practical platform for research. But it's not just multimedia enriched Bibles that enhance engagement with the word. Even simple Facebook pages such as "The Bible" (Facebook.com/TheBibleUBS) have 8.6 million followers and counting. The founder, Mark Brown says his "Bible engagement strategy" is "to be where people are. You need to learn their language—the culture, the nuances, and the particularities. With all of that, you start to build a community. And then I try to get their attention by finding out what will capture them. I know what gets them talking" (Crosby, 2012, p. 36).

5. Collaboration

Most digitised Bibles harness the social capabilities of the Internet. It is easy to download more versions, upgrade to new features, or to share passages or comments on Facebook or Twitter. These apps and websites also make use of the "cloud" or an online repository where you can store information, notes, bookmarks or other elements (Martin, 2011).

YouVersion Live can also provide your classroom with shared passages and notes through the app, and can encourage interaction by note taking or responding to online polling or prayer requests. Use of the "cloud" means that an app or website can be used at home, school and on multiple devices whilst syncing your notes, bookmarks, annotations and reading plans.

Disadvantages of using digital versions of the Bible

Whilst the benefits of using e-versions of the text are numerous, there are some disadvantages to take into consideration.

> *Screens that allow only minuscule chunks of text to be displayed at any one time effectively remove from perceptual awareness context, sequence, and narrative—doing violence to the book*

1. The display removes the chosen verse from its textual surroundings

If verses are presented on large screens (PowerPoint in church or chapel) or on very small screens (phone apps), it can decontextualise the verses being shared. The interpretation of those texts relies heavily on the presenter of information; particularly in the case of large screen projection. This may be seen as an advantage for the lower grades in school, as the ability to highlight, enlarge and fill the whole screen, will aid very young readers to focus on the text at hand rather than be intimidated by a sea of text. But for older grades and for adults, this can detract from the message. Alan Jacobs (2011) in his essay on *Christianity and the future of the book*, points out, "screens that allow only minuscule chunks of text to be displayed at any one time—and that effectively remove from perceptual awareness context, sequence, and narrative—do violence to the book qua book. If Christians forget, or forget more completely than they already have, the integrity and necessary sequentiality of their holy Book, and of the story it tells, that would be a catastrophe for Christianity" (p. 36).

2. Distraction from the Word becomes too easy

Many students believe that they are expert multitaskers. According to Maggie Jackson (2009), they juggle six hours a day of nonprint media content, and a quarter of that time they are using more than one medium. "Nearly a third of fourteen- to twenty-one-year-olds juggle five to eight media while doing homework" (p.18). Today our virtual split screen, and nomadic era is eroding opportunities for deep focus, awareness, and reflection. To access a Bible on an electronic device will increase the opportunities for multitasking. This in turn may have an effect on how focused they will be on studying the word. We want a quick fix for everything. But when do we stop, be still and know that He is God?

3. Materiality of the text is lost

Some people just prefer the paper rather than a digital copy of the Bible. But is this just because they are used to the physicality of their Bibles, or does it go deeper than this? If the Word remains constant, then a digital version of the Word undermines the philosophy of the Bible. Digital versions focus on fragmentation, hypertextuality, movement, fluidity, ease of navigation, resizing, realigning and are changeable. What does this digital manipulation of the text do to the way we interact and perceive the Word of God? Over time, this digitisation may give a message of transience rather than longevity and stability for our students.

4. Instant access can devalue

A physical Bible is more personal. It's yours. A digital Bible can be bought, downloaded, skimmed, or deleted quickly.

Even though the Bible is more accessible now than at any other time in history, students still struggle to read their Bibles. Many students spend much more time using screen media (TV, games, computers) with 83% of young children averaging 117 minutes per day. The time that young people spend with electronic media far exceeds that spent with parents or teachers. From 1999 to 2004, the average amount of time that students aged 8–18 spent on media was 44.5 hours per week, or the equivalent of a full time job (Callahan, 2007, p.253).

Even though some Christian teachers believe strongly that the Bible is the word of God from Genesis to Revelation, few will read it from cover to cover. Just because you have instant access to multiple versions, devotionals, concordances and multimedia, does not mean that you will pick up your iPhone and read the Bible over playing 'Angry Birds'. Perhaps the best version, app or Bible website is the one that you consistently read.

Conclusions

There are numerous versions of the Bible in print and e-copy, each of which has been thoughtfully translated by qualified persons using reliable source documents and reference works. Due to the complexities of translation and the backgrounds of readers, no single version "tells it all." Each one, a product of the methods of its translators, and the readers targeted by its publisher, accomplishes some parts of the task, and meets some of the needs. A choice informed by a school's heritage and the needs of its constituency, should be the goal. The digital versions can offer many added opportunities to explore the Word in education. For example, many apps have concordances, thesauruses, maps, concordances and cross referencing capabilities. Many teachers and students use the annotation features to enhance their study both as individuals, and in collaboration with others. The Word of God will always be the Word of God. It transcends time, generations, formats and versions. The love letter that God has penned for His children is the same, whether it is on paper or a screen. If the digital format can engage and inspire 21st century learners to delve into the word and get to know God, then teachers need to embrace these new methods of presenting the Word. TEACH

Resources

Primary and early childhood apps:
- The ABCs of God (iPad) (http://goo.gl/Tkvfe)
- Adventure Bible Memory HD (http://www.adventurebible.com/) (iPad)
- The Beginners Bible App (http://app.beginnersbible.com/) (iPad)
- Children's Bible (http://goo.gl/NlFf7) (Android)
- Toddler Bible (http://goo.gl/asg1t) (Android)
- Kids First Bible (http://goo.gl/WGfqy) (Android)

Secondary apps and websites:
- Olive Tree (http://olivetree.com/m/)
- YouVersion (https://www.youversion.com/)
- Logos (http://www.logos.com/iphone)
- Bible.is (http://www.bible.is/apps/)
- BibleGateway (http://www.biblegateway.com/)
- Glo Bible (www.globible.com)

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"Just because you have instant access to multiple versions, devotionals, concordances and multimedia, does not mean that you will pick up your iPhone and read the Bible over playing 'Angry Birds'"

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The Impact of a Physical Activity Session on Year Two Students' Subsequent Classroom Behaviour

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The impact of a physical activity session on Year Two students' subsequent classroom behaviour

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Key words: physical activity, children, classroom, behaviour

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a 30-minute physical activity (PA) session on Year Two students' subsequent classroom behaviour. Forty-eight students from three Year Two classes at a NSW private school participated in the study. The number of disciplinary comments directed by the class teacher to individual students (Individual Disciplinary Corrections, IDC) and the class as a whole (General Disciplinary Corrections, GDC) were recorded during a 30-minute lesson with and without previous PA. Subsequent to PA, there were 40% fewer IDCs (p=0.008) and 59% fewer GDCs (p=0.003), amounting to a 49% overall reduction in disciplinary corrections (p = 0.012). The PA session had a positive effect on the Year Two students' classroom on-task behaviour, as measured by a reduction in disciplinary corrections directed by the class teacher. These findings highlight the potential value of physical activity as a strategy for increasing student classroom on-task behaviour.

Introduction

There are many benefits of regular physical activity (PA) for children, most noteworthy being improvements in health and physical development. However, regular physical activity may also confer cognitive benefits (Heyn, Abreu, & Ottenbacher, 2004). Studies suggest that participating in physical activity can improve short-term cognitive functioning and academic achievement (Bates, 2006; Tomporowski, 2003). Castelli, Hillman, Buck, and Erwin (2007) found that physically fitter students achieved better outcomes in tests of numeracy and literacy.

More recently, there has been an increasing interest in the role of PA on children's behaviour. Many teachers perceive that PA improves children's subsequent classroom behaviour and that excluding PA from a regular school day results in more behavioural problems (Morgan & Hansen, 2008). Studies suggest that by incorporating a PA session either prior to or during an academic lesson, students display increased levels of on-task behaviour in class (Grieco, Jowers, & Bartholomew, 2009; Mahar et al., 2006). Indeed, Mahar et al. (2006) found that including 10-minute low-intensity PA breaks into the classroom improved student on-task behaviour by eight percent. Further, work by Morgan & Hansen (2008) suggests if students are involved in PA on a daily basis they are more receptive to learn, more able to concentrate and produce higher quality work.

While these studies show a link between PA and increased attentiveness and on-task behaviour, more research is required. Specifically, a greater understanding of the optimal type and timing of PA to enhance classroom behaviour is needed. The purpose of this study was therefore to examine the influence of a 30-minute block PA session on subsequent classroom on-task behaviour. The findings of the study may inform the use of PA as a strategy to facilitate classroom management.

> *There are many benefits of regular physical activity for children, however, regular physical activity may also confer cognitive benefits*

Methods

Study participants

Consent to participate in the study was achieved for 48 students, 20 girls (41%) and 28 boys (59%), from three Year Two classes at a NSW private school. All three teachers were female and had a minimum of seven years teaching experience.

Study design and protocols

The study was of a comparative design. In each of the three classrooms, the researchers observed eight 30-minute lessons: four lessons with no previous PA (No-PA) and four lessons immediately following a PA class (Post-PA). To reduce confounders, all observed lessons were similar in content and structure, occurred at the same time of day and did not directly follow recess or lunch during which the participants may have engaged in physical activity. To familiarise the researchers with the setting and the procedures incorporated in observing and recording the observations, several class periods were used as practice sessions.

The PA classes in which students participated for the Post-PA trials were 30 minutes in duration and involved various physical activities of a moderate-intensity.

During the in-class observations the researchers positioned themselves in an inconspicuous place in the classroom so as to avoid interference with the regular management and operation of the classroom. Throughout the lesson, the researcher(s) recorded all disciplinary corrective words or actions from the teacher that were directed at individual students (Individual Disciplinary Correction, IDC) or the class as a whole (General Disciplinary Correction, GDC). IDC referred to any comment made to a specific student by the teacher with the intent of correcting the student's behaviour. GDC described any comment made to the class collectively by the teacher with the intent of correcting the class' behaviour.

At the end of the lesson the total number of IDCs and GDCs were quantified. The data were then pooled for the three classes to compare the difference between the No-PA and Post-PA lessons.

Statistical analyses

The data were analysed using Microsoft Office Excel (2003) and are presented using descriptive statistics and figures. A paired T test was used to assess differences in the number of disciplinary corrections (GDC and IDC) between the No-PA and Post-PA trials. The 0.05 level of significance was adopted.

Figure 1: Comparison of IDCs, GDCs and total disciplinary corrections between the No-PA and Post-PA trials

Figure 2: The number of students who recorded a positive, negative or no change in the number of IDCs in the Post-PA lessons as compared to the No-PA lessons
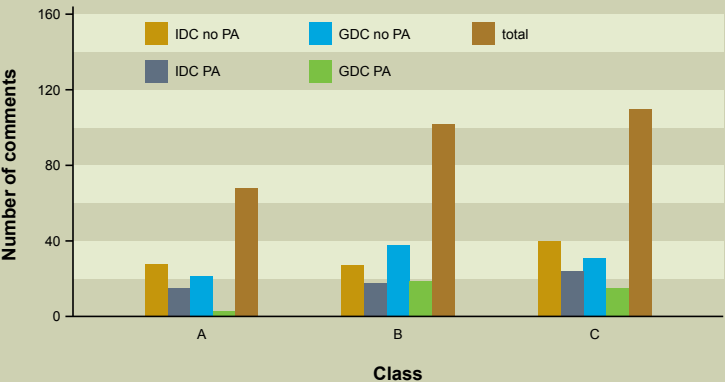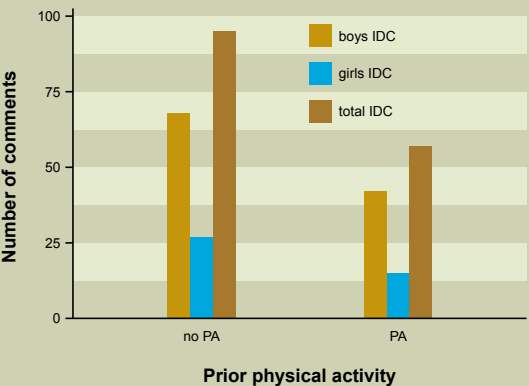
Results

As shown in Figure 1, there was a 40% decrease (p = 0.008) in the number of IDCs Post-PA compared to No-PA, and a 59% decrease in GDCs (p = 0.003). This represented a 49% difference (p = 0.012) in the total number of disciplinary corrections between the No-PA and Post-PA trials.

The effect of PA on class behaviour is further illustrated in Figure 2, which shows the number of students for whom PA had a positive, negative or no change in the number of IDCs in the Post-PA compared to the No-PA. While no difference in the number of IDCs were recorded for 40% of students,

Figure 3: The number of disciplinary corrections for the three classes presented separately

Figure 4: The number of IDCs directed to boys and girls

44% of students received less IDCs as compared to only 16% who recorded more.

While there were differences between the three classes in the number of disciplinary corrections, Post-PA recorded fewer disciplinary corrections (p<0.05) than No-PA for all classes (Figure 3).

The number of IDCs directed to boys was greater than girls in both No-PA and Post-PA lessons (Figure 4). However, both boys and girls had similarly fewer (boys—38%, girls—44%) IDCs in the Post-PA as compared to the No-PA.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that a 30-minute PA lesson involving moderate-intensity physical activities results in fewer disciplinary corrections and actions from the teacher during a subsequent classroom-based lesson. Noteworthy, the total number of disciplinary corrections following PA was approximately half that recorded during a classroom lesson that was not preceded by PA. Assuming disciplinary corrections to be a surrogate for general classroom behaviour, the results of this study suggest that PA is an important classroom management consideration.

It was anticipated that fewer disciplinary corrections would be recorded following the PA session, however, the extent of the difference between the No-PA and Post-PA condition was higher than expected. Mahar et al. (2006) only observed an eight percent improvement in classroom on-task behaviour following a PA session, as compared to the almost 50% observed in this study. The disparity between the findings of the present study and those of Mahar and associates may be explained by the duration and/or intensity of the PA prescribed in the studies.

With regards to duration, Mahar et al. (2006) trialled a 10-minute episode of PA incorporated into the classroom whereas the present study involved a more formal 30-minute PA session. The current National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend children engage in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity PA each day, although this can be achieved in 10 minute "chunks" (Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA), 2007). While it seems that the longer duration PA may achieve better subsequent behavioural outcomes, the advantage of using 10-minute "brain break" chunks is that they may be more easily interspersed into the school day. Further, as they are less time consuming, they may be used on several occasions throughout the day, such that the benefits of PA breaks can be utilised repetitively. The advantage of using a more formal PA session of longer duration is that it helps students achieve their daily PA requirements. Indeed, it has been stated, "physical inactivity is one of the most important health problems of the 21st Century, and may even be the most important" (Blair, 2009, p.1). It is estimated that physical activity levels have decreased by approximately 60–70 percent in the past 30–40 years, which equates to walking about 15 km less every day (Vogels, Egger, Plasqui, & Westerterp, 2004). Children are often spending more than 7 hours a day using televisions, computers, phones and electronic devices for entertainment (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2010), which is greatly contributing to sedentary behaviours. For this reason, peak bodies are encouraging parents to limit their children's "screen time" to not more than two hours per day

(Heart Foundation, n.d.). Schools need to be part of a solution to the inactivity crisis that is infiltrating children, and incorporating more PA into the school day is an important step towards achieving this.

With regard to PA intensity, the study by Mahar and colleagues (2006) only involved light-intensity activities as compared to the present study that involved more moderate-intensity PA. By definition, light-intensity PA is described as that which would be rated as only a 1–2 out of 10 in effort (Norton, Norton, & Sadgrove, 2010). For comparison, moderate-intensity PA is deemed as a 3–4 out of 10 in effort, producing a noticeable increase in breathing rate. While the National Physical Activity Guidelines recommend children engage in daily moderate-intensity, or even vigorous-intensity (5–6 out of 10 in effort), physical activity for good health, the results of the study by Mahar and colleagues suggest that even lower intensity activities are beneficial from a behavioural perspective. The advantage of lighter-intensity activities is that they can more readily be performed in the classroom, which may be more pragmatic.

In summary, while the longer duration and higher intensity of PA employed in the present study appeared to be associated with better behavioural outcomes than the shorter duration and lower intensity PA used by Mahar et al. (2006) , it is acknowledged that performing regular 30-minute PA sessions might not be feasible in the current educational context. Further research is needed to determine the most efficacious quantity, intensity and timing of PA to affect optimal behavioural outcomes. However, one important conclusion is that regardless of the mode or structure, incorporating PA into the classroom is likely to improve classroom on-task behaviour that may translate to enhanced learning outcomes. Consequentially, teachers should give careful consideration to the inclusion and scheduling of PA in their programs. This may require curriculum-planning administrators to offer teachers a flexible curriculum that allows them to incorporate PA sessions on a daily basis. Furthermore, teachers should not exclude students from PA as a form of behavioural punishment as it may indeed exacerbate disruptive behaviours.

It is unremarkable that the students in the study appeared to respond differently to a previous PA session, as reflected in the number of IDCs directed to them in the subsequent classroom lesson (Figure 4). Clearly, different students respond uniquely to the same stimuli. However, since a far greater proportion of students (44%) responded positively to the PA than those who responded negatively (16%), including PA into the classroom is warranted.

It is also interesting that there appeared to be no difference between the boys and girls in their responsiveness to the PA. Boys have been reported to misbehave more in the classroom than girls (Rollin, 2003; Gilbert, 2002) so it was not surprising that the boys received more IDCs than the girls in this study, both with and without previous PA. However, it is somewhat surprising that the difference made by previous PA was similar for both genders. This suggests that applying PA into the classroom environment is a worthwhile strategy for both genders.

It is acknowledged that there are several limitations of this study. Firstly, the study sample was small. Secondly, while effort was made to create consistency between the lessons observed with and without previous PA by ensuring they occurred at the same time of day and were similar in terms of content and structure, there are other factors that may have affected the students' behaviour on a given day. For example, changes in weather may affect students' behaviour. Also, the varying circumstances of the children's life, and indeed that of the teacher, may have affected the number of disciplinary corrections that occurred in the classroom.

In conclusion, the deleterious consequences of physical inactivity from a health perspective are well-established and have led to the development of National Physical Activity Guidelines for children. This study contributes to the growing literature suggesting that PA is also important for cognitive and behavioural reasons. Teachers and school administrators should give consideration to intentionally harnessing the benefits of PA as a classroom management strategy. Further research is needed to investigate the optimal duration, intensity and timing of PA into the school day to achieve optimal learning outcomes. TEACH

Schools need to be part of a solution to the inactivity crisis that is infiltrating children, and in-corporating more physical activity into the school day is an important step towards achieving this

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1-1-203

Science and Belief: The Big Issues

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Science and belief: The big issues

Stannard, R. (2012). Lion Hudson, Oxford.

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The subject of this book originally appeared as a twelve-episode series for the BBC. The author, Russell Stannard, is a physicist and licensed lay minister in the Church of England who, although finding no conflict between science and belief himself, allows the reader to make up their own mind after a stimulating discussion of the questions raised.

There are eight major issues raised in the book—that relating to Genesis and Evolution, Intelligent Design, Morality, Creation, Anthropic Principle, Extraterrestrial Intelligence, Psychology, and Miracles. Broadly speaking the author's approach is one that demonstrates an intimate knowledge of modern physics, which is not surprising, and one that is prepared to accept the major tenets of evolutionary theory. In fact the impression is left with the reader that scientific theory and practice can provide insight into Christian belief. Conservative Christians may find the book rather challenging from this perspective but the book does now represent the orientation of a significant proportion of the Christian church to the question of science and belief. However, regardless of one's particular profession of belief, the book provides valuable information for contemplation.

The chapter on Genesis and Evolution focuses on how a large proportion of biblical scholarship understands the language of Genesis. The author introduces the reader to the concept of 'myth' in a positive sense, to the concept of story or narrative, to the difference between the 'how-type' and the 'why-type' questions, and to some historical information that links the literal interpretation of Genesis with the Protestant Reformation.

Changes in the Roman Catholic understanding of biblical inspiration from the time of the Council of Trent (1540's) to Vatican II in 1962 are also briefly outlined. The point of this chapter is to show, in the author's opinion, that Genesis and Evolution are not on a collision course if properly understood.

The Intelligent Design (ID) chapter amounts largely to a discussion of the arguments for and against evolution. While suggesting that ID is essentially a "God of the Gaps" type of argument, Stannard claims that, "ID is at least a step on the way towards acknowledging that evolution has taken place". While some ID adherents might agree, others would disagree with this statement. Some common misconceptions of evolution such as the wholly unpredictable nature of evolution are discussed in terms of the emergence of complexity by a process known as 'convergence' which seems to be endemic to evolution. The author acknowledges the basic unfairness associated with evolutionary process, but also recognises that "the deep mystery of premature death, and indeed the other manifestations of life being unfair, has always been with us". In this regard, an interesting observation is made that there appears to be an "indissoluble link between love and suffering…an example set by God himself". The chapter concludes by pondering on the spiritual nature of human beings. Did this emerge through a process of evolution like that supposed to have occurred for our physical nature? Or was some other process involved?

Here are some commonly held opinions on the question of morality that the author uses to begin a discussion of the topic:

Opinion 1: Our sense of morality comes from God.

Opinion 2: Morality comes from society and our parents and it's ridiculous to say that if you're not religious then you can't be moral.

Opinion 3: I think the sole reason that humans behave altruistically is because it's an evolutionary advantage.

Opinion 4: I think that science has nothing to do with morality. If it wasn't given morality from religion then humanity would have no limits.

Stannard proposes that the Genesis account and the evolutionary account of human beginnings both point to the inherent selfishness of the human character. "Thus Genesis sets the scene for all that is to follow: namely our need to repent and, by an act of the conscious will, re-centre our lives on God. But being naturally selfish is the same sort of conclusion one comes to from evolutionary theory. Far from discrediting the Adam and Eve story, in this respect at least, evolution serves to throw fresh light on an ancient insight into the intrinsic nature of the human character". Altruism is discussed from the point of view of reciprocal altruism or enlightened self-interest and altruism on behalf of close kin, that is, on behalf of those who share the same genetic material. The author then challenges us to think about a higher form of altruism such as helping those who are not of close kin and who cannot pay you back, that is, where there is neither a genetic advantage nor a self-interest advantage. The question is then asked: "Is this where religion comes in?"

Creation is discussed in the light of modern cosmological ideas. This chapter gives the reader some interesting insights. If space-time originated at the Big Bang an interesting scenario arises as to the question about the cause of the Big Bang. Stannard expresses the scenario this way: "Now, for those seeking a cause of the Big Bang, this raises a problem. As we have seen, cause is followed by effect. But where the Big Bang was concerned, there was no before. Thus we cannot have a "cause". Although the question, "What caused the Big Bang?" strikes us as a perfectly reasonable thing to ask, it is not. Our line of argument appears to lead to the conclusion that the question is meaningless".

Stannard distinguishes between the words "origin" and "creation" in attempting to understand God's part in what came to be. "Origin" has to do with the methodologies and discoveries of science in relation to how things came into existence. "Creation", the province of theology, is concerned with the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?", and this has to do with the past as well as the present. The question of creation has to do with God

as sustainer coupled with God as the source. Stannard puts it nicely this way: "If God is to create a physical world—a block universe in which all instants of time are on an equal footing—why should he take a particular interest in the instant marking one end of the worldlines—namely that representing the Big Bang? It could be argued that that instant is no more significant than any other. It has to be the whole ensemble, or nothing. It is in this sense we say that God is the answer to the question of why there is something rather than nothing, and how the world is sustained in existence". The discussion on time includes the role of consciousness, and the meaning of 'transcendence' as opposed to 'immanence'. God is both transcendent, out of or beyond space-time, and he is immanent or within space-time. Finally the author sees no problem for Christian belief if our universe is shown to be part of a multiverse. The lack of a beginning or origin to the multiverse would not impinge at all, according to the author, on the creation question.

The Anthropic Principle deals with the interesting situation where the physical and chemical properties of the universe appear to be just right for the emergence of life. Stannard chooses to discuss eleven of these properties, including the fortuitous occurrence of the nuclear resonance that facilitated the formation of carbon, and while they do not prove the existence of God, "the idea that God designed the universe primarily as a home for life is certainly one possibility". The book points out that physically we are insignificant. Our death has no effect on the Sun but the Sun's death would have a major impact on us. The author concludes, however, that, "once we bring to mind the whole question of consciousness, that surely alters the situation. Recall the words of Blaise Pascal: *Man is the feeblest reed in existence, but he is a thinking reed…though the universe were to destroy him, man would know that he was dying. While the universe would know nothing of its own achievement*".

The chapter on Extraterrestrial Intelligence (ETI) is an interesting one as it is not commonly featured in books on science and belief to my knowledge. The position is taken that, "faced

with the knowledge we now have of the mind-bogglingly vast number of different habitable locations there are in the universe…it is more likely that ETI does indeed exist". Many conjectures are drawn about how beings of ETI might relate to God. For example, what would be the significance of Christ's death and resurrection for such beings? Equally unusual, but nonetheless informative, is a chapter on psychology. This chapter examines the notion that everyone has within them a religious drive and the author discusses at some length the concepts of free will and determinism. One of the problems outlined by the author is the question relating to the extent to which an individual can be held responsible for their choices and actions if determinism holds. That is, how can we be held responsible for our actions if we really had no alternative but to choose as we did?

In the chapter on miracles the author makes the following conclusions: that Jesus was against the unjustified use of miraculous power; for God's followers faith preceded the experience of a miracle; and one of the things that distinguishes the miracle accounts in the Bible from those in the writings excluded from the canon is that most of them appear to have some deep spiritual connection. Although there may be a modern scientific explanation or challenge for some of the miracles recorded in the gospels, this would appear not to be the case with the resurrection of Christ. Stannard, on comparing the accounts of the gospels, concludes that the "testimony has come down to us in this form presumably because this is what actually happened. It is the imperfect, incomplete account of a historical event…It is when each of the witnesses comes out with exactly the same story that we begin to suspect that they have previously got together to ensure they are all singing from the same hymn sheet". The authenticity of the resurrection account adds to its credibility.

In the final chapter Stannard describes the relationship between science and belief in four different ways: conflict, independence, interaction, and integration. His own preference is for the integration model but acknowledges that other models have certain strengths. The author's own approach is described as follows: "…the only intellectually honest position is to fully embrace everything that both science and religion are trying to teach us. This in turn means we have to examine how the two domains of understanding relate to each other".

The paperback edition is 176 pages in length. Each chapter begins with a small collection of statements on the topic made by a diverse group of individuals and each chapter concludes with a small number of probing questions. While the book appears to have been written as a response to the atheistic orientation of the books by Richard Dawkins and Stephen Hawking its aim is not to make converts but to present background information as impartially as possible and allow the reader to make up their own mind on the issues presented. It is understood that readers may disagree with some of the author's conclusions or approaches but the book is a useful guide to current thinking on the topic. **TEACH**

Teaching Scripture in Public High Schools

Kim Watts

Teaching scripture in public high schools

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Key words: Religious education, public schools, scripture, ministry

What is SRE?

Special Religious Education is a 'period allowance' for religious education in public high schools. It is not only for *Christian* education, but also for other religious persuasions.

I love *The Message* translation of Ephesians 2:20, and its message for those accepting the role portrayed.

> God is building a home. He's using us all – irrespective of how we got here – in what He is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now He's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone with Jesus Christ as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day.

The verse emphasises the need for teamwork and for each of us to play our part because we each *do* have a part to play. The prophets of old have done their part and we are invited to build on their contribution. Christians in the past 'stood their ground' and petitioned that Scripture continue to 'have a place' in schools. This led to government legislation that permitted one period each week to be allocated to Special Religious Education in public schools for all religious persuasions. In public high schools, this was not taken advantage of for many years, possibly due to a lack of resources and difficulty in finding those willing and skilled to teach high school students. In many areas Christian churches were not even aware that this entry entitlement into high schools existed.

This situation, however, is now changing and high school Scripture teaching is becoming the norm in many schools throughout the state of NSW. Its format may vary from school to school, but many students are benefiting from receiving Christian instruction in public schools from SRE teachers on a regular basis—every week or second week. Some schools operate with students going to Scripture classes every week for a term, then change over classes to allow students in other Year Groups to attend in the second term.

The efforts and commitment of those Christians 'gone before' are as evident as in the days of the apostle Paul, when he declared: "According to the grace of God, which was given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it " (1 Corinthians 3:10, NKJV). The openings available to us today are a result of our predecessors' hard work and it is exciting to see the Church making great use of a very unique opportunity. Indeed, we live in a fortunate country. It is one of a few where Christians are freely able to teach the Bible in our public schools. Let's continue to make the best use of the existing window of opportunity to teach the Gospel to students. Our heartfelt response should be: "Father we praise you and thank you for this great opportunity."

Why SRE?

In Matthew 28:19-20 (The Amplified Bible) Jesus tells us:

> Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days, to the close and consummation of the age.

We are commanded to go and share the Good News with all nations, including our own. So we bring the Good News of Jesus to public high schools and teach the students. What I love about Scripture teaching is that God promises to be with me (as He is in all aspects of life). We do not go alone; He goes with us.

SRE efforts in public schools have been pioneer work. In bringing the Gospel message into those places where Jesus has not been known or worshipped, my personal 'assurance' text has been: "Those who were never told of Him—they'll see Him! Those who've never heard of Him—they'll get the message" (Romans 15:20; *The Message*).

There is a great mission field on our own doorsteps. Many students have never heard the Good News of Jesus. If it were not for Scripture teaching in public schools (both primary and high schools) many would never hear the Gospel message. Many students

> "
> *If it were not for Scripture teaching in public schools many would never hear the Gospel message*
> "

no longer attend Church or Sunday Schools. They no longer come to us, so we go to them. This gives students the chance to consider the truth of God's Word, which they may not have previously heard. But now they have a choice. I tell my classes that they are all welcome, with their belief or unbelief; to listen and hear God's Word, and then to make up their own minds about what they believe. It's my passion to introduce them to what the Bible *really* says.

Seed sowing

There are times when we wonder how effective our efforts are. Is it worth it? Am I making a difference? Am I the one to do this? Could someone represent you better, Lord? I keep in mind: It is God's work, *His* work, not our work, but what a privilege to be used by Him to teach His Word to these school students. Without Him we can do nothing, as the apostle Paul reminds us: "It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the centre of this process, but God who makes things grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6, *The Message*). It is the Holy Spirit that draws all people to Himself. It is our task to be faithful—faithfully preparing and presenting the Gospel to our students, in the best way we know.

We do not always see the results we would like to see. We may never see the results of the seeds that have been sown, for we do not know the hearts of the students. We can't see behind the tough masks that some wear; hiding behind rebellion, apathy, or bravado. It is often in the hearts of the most unlikely students that God is doing a surprising work. We just do not always see.

As SRE teachers we frequently water seeds sown by those who have 'gone before us' (in primary schools); a process familiar to Paul in the early New Testament Church: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6, NKJ). There is also opportunity to plant new seeds; and long after high school more seeds continue to be sown by friends, family and strangers. Sometimes another will see the harvest; there will be a harvest. The Word of God is truth and it will produce fruit; it will not be a waste of time (Isaiah 55:11, KJV).

Scripture at Morisset High School (MHS)

At MHS, students attend Scripture lessons each fortnight for 1 hour. Students have the opportunity to opt out if they (with their parents' permission) wish to do so. Currently Scripture is offered to all Year 7 & 8 students (272 students), with 34 students choosing to opt out; so a total of 238 students (87.5%) attend Scripture classes at MHS each fortnight. Throughout the year their Scripture curriculum covers the following themes: Identity (Who are you to God?

Who is God?); Relationships (Love, How to treat others, Dealing with conflict); Choices (Free will, Consequences); Introduction to the Bible (Bible history, How to find verses); Who is Jesus? (His life, Why he died, What it means to you).

I must admit that sometimes I wonder if it's all worthwhile, for some students are so antagonistic to anything to do with God and the prophet Ezekiel's description, in a different context, seems apt:

> And the children are impudent and hard of heart. I send you to them and you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord God. And they, whether they will hear or refuse to hear—for they are a rebellious house—yet shall they know and realise that there has been a prophet among them. And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words; though briers and thorns are all around you and you dwell and sit among scorpions, be not afraid of their words nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. And you shall speak my words to them whether they hear or refuse to hear (Ezekiel 2:4-7, The Amplified Bible).

So I ponder, is this a good use of time?

Yet amongst this, there will be an experience of hope, as students listen intently to a story, ask a really great question and then wait for and listen to the answer. No class is the same; and each class can be so different from one week to the next. All I know is that it is a wonderful opportunity. It is not for me to decide which student is open to God, for the Holy Spirit is the One that draws all people to Himself. Often I just pray silently, "We love you Lord, we worship you. Let us tell them of your goodness."

But hope remains

Christ loves these students—who do not know Him, who do not care about Him and who mock Him. He loves them despite their antagonism and anger and rebellion. He loves them so much that Christ died for them. How do we know of that love and hope? Because he assures us: "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, ESV); and again, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13, NASB). So let us show them how much He loves them. Let us tell them of the love of Jesus.

God does not give up on us easily. God's Word speaks clearly on this matter:

> A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard. 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig

It is often in the hearts of the most unlikely students that God is doing a surprising work—we just do not always see

tree and find none. Cut it down, why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down' (Luke 13:6-9, NKJV).

He did not give up on me personally. He is forever patient and persistent with us. He gives us many opportunities to come to Him. Not giving up, he continues to draw us. Even the hardest of hearts can be softened by God, for He is the God of the impossible.

I recall a particular Year 7 student who was often most provocative and resistant to the very existence and goodness of God. Now in Year 9, he is reading his Bible. "I believe it now, Miss."

Another student, in Year 8, who had often seemed uninterested and almost asleep during Year 7 Scripture classes, was found retelling a story that I had shared the previous year with another student. He had actually been listening!

Some students have been asking for prayer. One student called out (and I believe it was in sincerity) in front of the whole Year 8 class: "My knee doesn't hurt now, Miss; after you prayed for it." Yes, praise be to God; He is doing a work through this ministry.

> " *One student called out in front of the whole Year 8 class: "My knee doesn't hurt now, Miss; after you prayed for it"* "

GenR8

If you are interested in the ministry of teaching Scripture in high schools or in Chaplaincy, look into the work of organisations such as GenR8. They employ many teachers and chaplains and advertise positions on their website: www.genR8.org.au. They are also responsible for working with local churches to develop committees and for liaising with school principals to set up Scripture classes in their schools. GenR8 has extensive experience and is a great asset for your church if it wants to extend ministry into its area but is unsure about how to start.

Testimonies

Few things can be more exciting for me than personal testimonies. The two that are given below tell of adults recounting the long-term impact of adolescent and childhood spiritual experiences.

Testimony 1

My teacher had such confidence in the love that God had for her. I was a difficult student at high school and very rebellious, but I remember thinking that if God could love her he could love anybody (I wasn't very nice). That thought stayed with me. I knew that God could love even me, though it took some years to take hold.

Testimony 2

Sunday school—I did not go all that often—only now and then. But I know what I learnt there has kept me aware of God and prepared the 'soil of my heart' to accept Jesus later, in my high school years. I asked God which people were significant to my salvation. He brought to mind my Sunday school teacher (though I can't remember her name) and the many prayers of my godparents.

To these testimonies I want to add my own, particularly in relation to the teaching of Scripture in public high schools: "Lord, I give you what I have and ask you to take it and use it for your glory." TEACH

Endnote

[1] Besides teaching Scripture classes in high school, Kim Watts teaches Maths and Science as a casual and relief teacher.

1-1-2013

In Memory of Arthur Nelson Patrick

Lynden Rogers
Avondale College of Higher Education

In Memory of
Arthur Nelson Patrick

February 23, 1934 – March 8, 2013

Lynden Rogers

Senior Lecturer, School of Science and Mathematics, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

Born in Cooranbong to Bertha and William Patrick, Arthur moved with his family to a new life in the bush at Pappinbarra Junction, near Wauchope, shortly after his fourth birthday. From ages 8 to 11 Arthur attended public school but formal education was interrupted when he and his mother relocated to Bellangry, 15 km away.

For the next five years Arthur's education centred around the farm. The initial task of clearing the re-growth on the home 45 acres, followed by contract timber-cutting, reinforced an ethic of dawn-to-dusk work. In quiet times young Arthur could be found riding his horse, lost in bush poetry, much of which he learned in the saddle twixt home and the timber.

It was one day while tree felling that Arthur decided that he should go back to Cooranbong, to the Australasian Missionary College (AMC), now Avondale College of Higher Education. The years 1950–1953 saw him lay the academic foundations which would later serve him so well. His Leaving Certificate results would have taken him to Sydney University but instead, in 1954 he enrolled in AMC's first intake for the BA (Theology) degree offered under the auspices of Pacific Union College (Angwin, California) from which he graduated in 1957. The next year saw Arthur appointed to Christchurch, SNZ, as pastor evangelist.

On January 14, 1959, Arthur met special Avondale friend, Joan Merle Howse at the altar in the Papanui Church. It was a union which would enrich the lives of countless associates, students and church members.

Then in 1970 it was off to the seminary at Berrien Springs and the post graduate study of which Arthur had long dreamed. By August 1972, after receiving special permission to overload, he had completed a nine-quarter MDiv and also a four-quarter MA in systematic theology. Unfortunately, the doctoral program in which he wanted to enroll was not yet accredited so Arthur took his DMin at the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. June 1973 brought graduation which was followed by a return to Australia.

Plans for church ministry in Sydney were quickly trumped by a call to Avondale where the Patrick family would be located for the next 18 years. Arthur lectured in the Theology Faculty, served as the first director of the Ellen G White/Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre, coordinated Avondale's academic processes as Registrar and served for one year as College Church pastor.

In the face of some employment uncertainty during this period Arthur also resumed formal study; an MLitt at the University of New England and a PhD at Newcastle focusing on the interface between religion and society in Australia, finishing in 1992.

Arthur was then appointed senior chaplain at Sydney Adventist Hospital, a position he enjoyed until 1996. Then followed two years as an associate professor of church history and pastoral ministry at La Sierra University in California. A final return to Cooranbong in 1998 commenced a well-earned but busy retirement. Since then Arthur presented many guest lectures in various places.
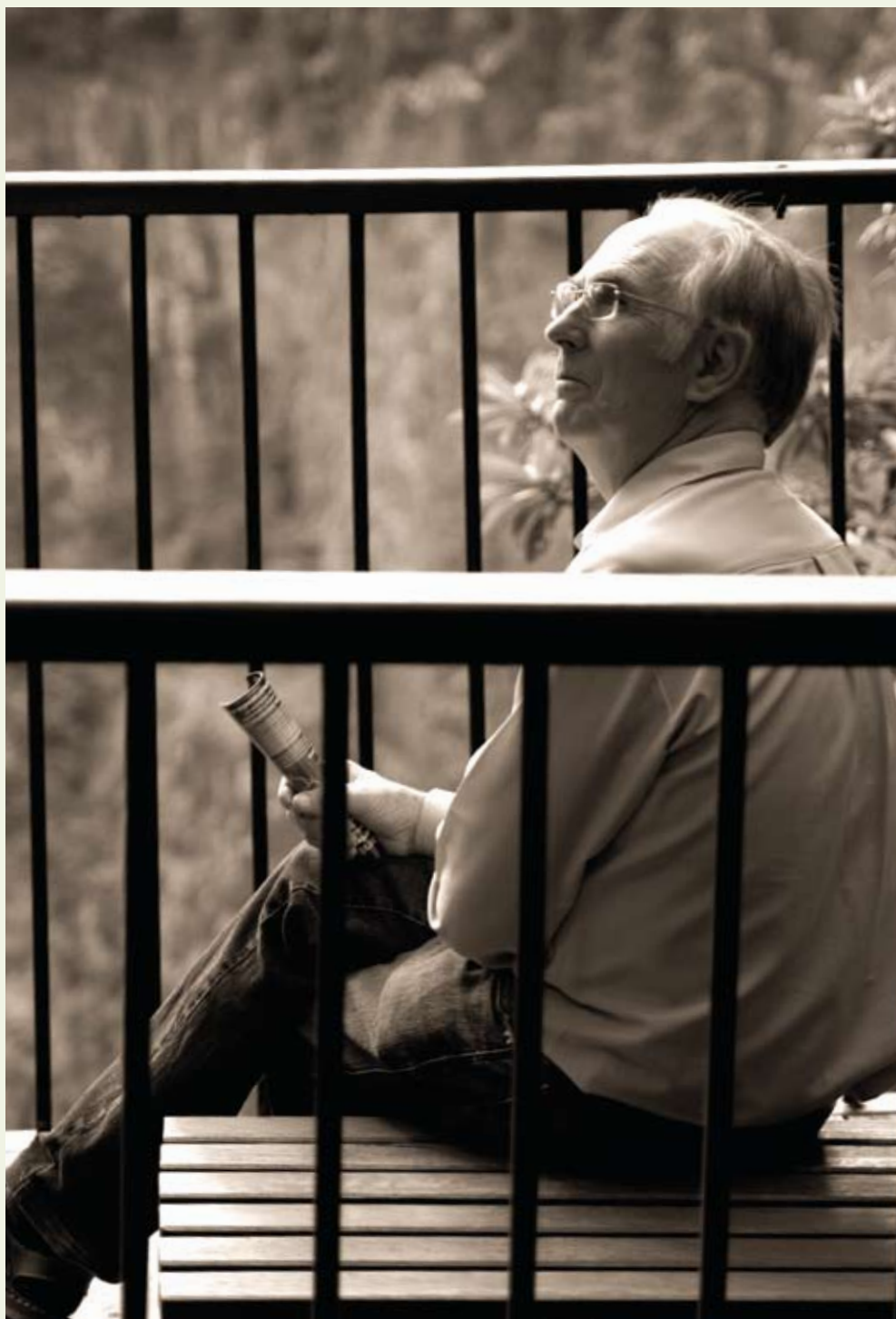
Arthur's skill with words was legendary and one of his most stimulating hobbies was writing for publication, an activity that began in the 1950s and persisted for six decades. His scholarly articles listed on ReseachOnline@Avondale have currently attracted 1,755 downloads and his own website, adventiststudies.com, has so far attracted over 11,000 visitors. The SDA Periodical Index lists some 121 titles from his prolific pen. Arthur received a number of honours during his life including the prestigious Charles E Weniger medallion.

He fought a successful battle against cancer for some 12 years, only to be recently diagnosed with an aggressive abdominal malignancy. He had sat at too many such bedsides not to know what lay ahead, yet his calm acceptance, his Christian faith, and his courage inspired all.

Arthur was quick to recognise unfairness or lack of charity in the way certain individuals and groups were treated, particularly by the Church he loved. This led him to expend himself on unpopular issues of social justice, such as the equality of women in the SDA Organisation, protection against abuse and exploitation of all kinds, and the better understanding of homosexuality.

He also possessed keen insight into more academic issues facing Adventism, such as developing an adequate understanding of the ministry of Ellen White, correctly contextualising early theological positions and exploring the interface between Christianity and science. Arthur was totally unafraid of evidence.

For those who strive for fairness and justice, who value honest and careful scholarship, and who uphold family values there can be few better models than Arthur Patrick. TEACH

1-1-2013

Email from Asia (February)

David Arthur

Email from Asia (February)

David Arthur
International School, China

"*The time has come*," the Walrus said, "to talk of many things…" (Thank you for that line, Lewis Carroll). Well, not too many because, as economists know, resources are limited. So, writer be mindful!

> " *Mostly we focus on building each other up, equipping each other for what lies ahead. We recognise that all of us are here in this place for a reason, planned in the mind of God long before we were born.* "

Yes, that time has come; time to 'hang up the China boots'. We have made the decision to return to Australia at the end of this northern hemisphere school year. Do I put this at the start or the finish of this email? The reasons are not complex, and may be summed up by the admonishment of a close friend during our last visit home: "David, China will always be there, but your parents will not" (silly that I had to be reminded).

As a teacher, one is also a learner. So, what have I learned over the last seven-plus years as an expatriate teacher? Some would say, "missionary", but somehow it doesn't seem fair to accept such a title after being brought up on a "Jungle Doctor" diet. There are some lessons that stand out, at present.

First, expect the unexpected. Not long ago a lovely student came to see me. Beth* had just found out that she had been rejected by a famous British university, and she had come to talk about it. You might remember one of the posters above my office desk—"Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable"? We chatted about how she felt, and she described her initial feelings of great disappointment. Then, as I almost fell off my office chair, she proceeded to tell me that she was a born-again Christian and she knows that God has a better plan for her life. Stunning! We immediately felt that bond that comes from being part of the Family of God, and a very good friendship has continued to grow. We often take the chance to encourage each other, and Beth has a good friend whom she is introducing to the Master. Just when you need encouragement, it comes along in a most unexpected way. On another occasion, when a parent thanks you—for helping his adolescent son out of a messy social situation and setting the right direction again—it's an experience that is really worth having.

Second, the powerful support of a small group of believers (having being part of two such groups) will never again be discounted. Such an experience is really valued, even if we don't all agree on some tenets of the Christian faith. We are there to fellowship and support each other. Consequently it is often 'us against them'—'strangers' in sometimes hostile, foreign territory. We don't get together to argue about doctrine, but to concentrate on things we agree upon. Oh! If someone asks what Adventists believe about an issue, we're happy to tell them. But mostly we focus on building each other up, equipping each other for what lies ahead. We recognise that all of us are here in this place for a reason, planned in the mind of God long before we were born. So we try our best with His help not to waste the opportunities he gives us each day. One of the saddest days will be when saying "goodbye" to the people in these groups, though it will only be "until we meet again". Mizpah.

"But", you ask, "what about the teaching itself?" Here I reiterate some of the thoughts of past columns: As far as students' desire to learn and lack of discipline problems are concerned, it has been somewhat like being in 'teaching heaven'. As throughout all the years of one's teaching ministry, friendships that will last a life time have been forged, challenging new thoughts proposed, many good results attained, lives touched and students launched into undergraduate success; and beyond. But, what *really* matters in the end? You'll remember that this has been one of the major themes, over the years, of my stay in China. To me, what really matters is helping students decide to use their time and means to enable them to spend their lives making a positive difference in the lives of others, and to leave the world a better place. What really matters for the Christian teacher is changed lives, not trophies, certificates, high marks or degrees, even though these may have their usefulness at the right time and place, in a student's life.

And as with all of life, it is not about programs, or places, but about people. Friends made here amongst colleagues and students are very precious and will last forever. The time spent living here will have a very important place in my life, and I will never be the same again. What does the future hold? I'm unsure at present. Perhaps God wants me to make use of the lessons learned from experiences in China, on the next part of the journey—whatever it may be. More excitement awaits! TEACH

*Pseudonym

1-1-2013

Back to the Past

Christine Miles

Back to the past

Christine Miles

Events & Volunteer Team Leader, Howick Historical Village, Auckland, NZ; Children's Book Author

It's nearly 10am at the Howick Historical Village, a group of 100 students sit on the grass eating their morning tea dressed in a mish-mash of clothing gleaned from the depths of wardrobes and bathroom cupboards in an effort to look 'Victorian'. Parent helpers and teachers also attempt the Victorian look, but more often than not they miss the mark, ruining the look of a replica dress with a pair of sandals, or donning what can only be a shower cap above an apron that is none other than a lacey tablecloth. It's all in good fun, and the Education team at Howick Historical Village revels in the efforts people have made for their EOTC[1] trip.

The museum story

The Village tells a very specific story. In the mid-1800s, after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed and while Maori activist Hone Heke was busy cutting down the flagpole with the British repairing it just as quickly, a letter was sent from Governor George Grey to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, requesting a delegation of the armed forces be sent to New Zealand. Consent was given for soldiers who had seen at least 15 years of active service in the colonies (and were now retired due to age or injury) to apply. The soldiers (all of them old but none older than 45) were given free passage with their families, promised a house built ready for them on an acre of land, half of which would be cleared ready for planting. In exchange, the soldiers would attend church every Sunday, be available to practice their soldierly duties for fourteen days each year, assist in defence as needed, and get themselves a job as they would be paid only a token pension for their services. After seven years, the house and land would be theirs to keep, along with an opportunity to buy more land at a good price. This was to be the largest immigration scheme of its time with 2,500 people departing England and Ireland for a new life at the bottom of the world. The soldiers were known as "Fencibles", which is an ancient word meaning 'able to defend'.

Inevitably, the houses were not built, nor the land cleared when the first ship came into Auckland harbour, and a further six weeks (after an 8-month voyage) was spent on the vessel while the powers-that-be debated where to put the Fencibles. Should they go up north towards Kerikeri, or should they be sent to the Coromandel region? They went to neither—instead establishing the Auckland suburbs of Onehunga, Otahuhu, Panmure, and Howick.

Recreated village

The Village is a collection of buildings set on 7 acres of land. Most of the buildings have been donated to the Village by descendants of Fencible families. All of the buildings represent a Fencible family—some of whom actually lived in the cottage, others were more colourful or distinguished characters whose story is immortalised in a house similar to the one they once lived in.

> *How did they wash their clothes? Where did they get their water? Where were the toilets? Why were they called thunder-boxes?*

Twins Jennifer & Chloe explore the wonder of herbs

[Photograph: Christine Milne]

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[1] Education Outside the Classroom

The buildings themselves are distinctive. The promised houses were unable to be built for the Fencibles because there were not enough men in New Zealand to provide the labour. Instead, the Fencibles were given money to build their own houses. Privates were not given enough money to build a whole house, so they found their neighbour, combined their money, and built a 'siamese' cottage on the border of their properties. The sergeants had a stand-alone cottage, most commonly situated on the corners of the settlements in order to watch for danger coming in to the village, but also to more easily supervise the Fencibles as they were believed to be given to weakness of habit having been given so much freedom. The Captain's house, of course, is many times the size of those of their subordinates.

So that's the story

But there's far more to social history than a biography of a group of men, women, and children immigrating to New Zealand on a plan. There's the nitty gritty of how people lived. How did they wash their clothes? Where did they get their water? Where were the toilets? Why were they called thunderboxes? Why do the fences have only one rail? What is that funny straw building? What games did children play? Was school the same then as it is today?

There are so many questions…and all of them with answers that the students discover throughout their visit. Did you know that if you have a stubborn stain, urine will dissolve it? Or you can rub the spot with good soap and leave it on the grass in the light of a full moon, and the stain will be gone in the morning. Did you know that chlorophyll and sunlight act together to do the same job as 'blue', which makes the whites whiter and the brights brighter? Did you know blue even still exists? Do you know about settling pans, and graces, pokes, and spills?

It's all here for the discovering and the knowing. At our Village, we work to make our activities interactive. Students do the washing, the butter-making, role-play a court case. Toys and games aren't merely passed around; students play with them, figure out how to make them work. Boys let girls go first, children should be seen and not heard (not too strictly—just enough to gain greater respect!), and adults are always to be respected and promptly obeyed.

We communicate with teachers before their visit to identify their learning objectives—we offer more than twenty activities that can be adapted to student age and ability, and to science, social, technology, and history modules. We have also developed special events for one-off visits (e.g. sexuality / sex

> **"** *Today's modernism makes it easy to look at our church fathers and cast them aside as un-fashionable fuddy-duddies* **"**

education now and then; building design and construction) as well as re-enacting colonial attitudes in NZ society.

Enquiries from teachers are often doubtful. They're not sure if an historical setting is the place to find support for their 21st Century curriculum. But it is, and feedback from teachers and students alike, is nearly always positive.

With schools bringing 80–120 students every day of the week throughout the school terms, the Education team has its work…cut out for them. Not only do they provide a solid 4-hour programme, they also dress in Victorian clothing, including multiple layers of petticoats in the hot summer; they have Victorian expectations of student behaviour (with a healthy dollop of humour); and often use the Victorian manner of speaking while leading their activity. (If you want to try it, the simplest thing is to remove contractions from your sentences. Obviously planes, cars, computers and other modern apparatus need to be eliminated too!) To speak in such a way leads to an automatic slowing down of speech that somehow lends itself to more active listening.

Class-sized bookings are also welcomed. Occasionally, if other bookings have been made, a smaller group will be attached to another visiting group, but usually we are able to work things so that each school group has its own quota of educators.

Our Village attracts schools from all over Auckland. It attracts schools from Tauranga, Hamilton, Rotorua, and Whangarei. We've had visiting schools and special interest groups (e.g. touring school choirs, orchestras, and sports teams) from Australia. A school from New Caledonia visits the Village every year. The local secondary schools use the Village as their base for their drama studies; another visits every year over a period of five days, bringing 300 students for a two-hour intensive visit midway through a study on immigration to New Zealand.

Of relevance to Christians

In the 1800s, huge changes were being made the world over regarding religious beliefs. The Salvation Army, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptists were all establishing their theological viewpoint.

Today's modernism makes it easy to look at our church fathers and cast them aside as unfashionable fuddy-duddies. For Seventh-day Adventists, for example, Ellen White is a classic example—so often her God-given talent is diminished by our judgment of her hairstyle and her clothes.

Ellen White was no fuddy-duddy. Examine her portraits alongside other portraits of her period and she is as modern as any teacher today. Show your students that life back then was real—that people worked together for survival; that methods of communication, while developing, were slower than today and what that meant back then; that things like electricity, taps, dishwashers, washing machines, and garage door openers were inventions in the future.

Take a step further back in time, to Bible times when people lived in many ways as they did in pre-industrial revolution times. Make your Bible stories come alive with the detail of history—the science, the social norms, the technology, even the stories that happened before the story you tell.

A trip to the museum—especially living museums—is one of the best things you can ever do. Find a good one, make a day of it, explore your history, and have fun with the past so you can understand the present. TEACH

A suggestion
To find out more about what our Education team offers, go to www.fencible.org.nz or email education@fencible.org.nz

Young boys pose for a picture working in the carpenter's shop

[Photograph: Christine Milne]

1-1-2013

From Pediatrics to Ministry of Teaching: A Personal Journey

Sara Thompson

From pediatrics to ministry of teaching: A personal journey

Sara Thompson

Student, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

—*interviews*—

Wendy Jackson

Lecturer, School of Ministry and Theology, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

> " *I sat there and piously thought— isn't it good, I'm using all my talents. But God was telling me, "I want you to do something else with your life"* "

Wendy Jackson

Prologue: From many accounts, Wendy Jackson is more than just a Theology lecturer—she is a source of inspiration, a role model, and a friend. If you walk past her office on the top floor of the Turner building, you'll likely find her working cheerfully in her neatly arranged office, or hear her laughter floating down the hallways as she catches up with her students. It seems that Wendy is in her element; surrounded by students and books. But it hasn't always been this way. Recently I had the opportunity to discover more about her journey to ministry.

Sara: Wendy, thanks so much for the opportunity to talk with you. It seems that you are known for being more than just a theology lecturer on the Avondale campus. Why do people say that?

Wendy: I guess that is because this is a second career for me. My calling to teaching and to the ministry has been a rather recent experience, from my 'original' lifelong passion of practising medicine.

Sara: That's quite a change in careers! So you only recently chose to come to Avondale?

Wendy: Yes.

Sara: And that's a Kiwi accent.

Wendy: True, I grew up in New Zealand, but I was actually born just up the road in Kurri Kurri Hospital. My parents were living in Cooranbong at the time. I spent my first two years of schooling at Avondale Primary before moving to Christchurch at the age of 7.

Sara: So Avondale can claim a little credit for your success?

Wendy: Well, sure. I credit family and early schooling with giving me the values that enabled my later achievements in life. Education was always a very strong priority in our family.

Sara: Medicine seems to have been quite a large part of your life. Did you always plan to be a doctor?

Wendy: Back in Form One I had vaguely thought about being a teacher, but never seriously. All through high school I wanted to be a doctor. After completing school in Christchurch, I studied medicine in Auckland. At Uni I took the opportunity to mingle with fellow Christians through campus groups that focused on connecting Christian students. I graduated in 1990, choosing to specialise in paediatrics, and paediatric endocrinology in particular.

Sara: What was it that made you leave medicine?

Wendy: Everything changed after I had worked in medicine for about ten years. One Sabbath I was sitting in church and I saw the sermon was about talents. I sat there and piously thought—isn't it good, I'm using all my talents. But this was followed almost immediately by an overwhelming impression that God was telling me, "I want you to do something else with your life." I tried to ignore it but the impression came again, "I want you to do something else."

Feeling confused and understandably reluctant to leave my career I began praying that if this was really God's plan, that He would make it clear.

Sara: And did He?

Wendy: Later, after several months of prayer I became convinced that the 'something else' was ministry. I asked for, and received several irrefutable signs which I accepted as confirmation of this. So I began making plans to study theology at Andrews University in Michigan, USA. However, after only one year of my Master of Divinity, out of respect for my parents, who were unhappy with my decision and insisting I take time out to reconsider, I decided to take up a position in Cincinnati Children's Hospital. I completed a Paediatric Endocrine Fellowship there. But I still felt called to the ministry.

Sara: So God's plan was personally compelling, but uncertain for some close to you? Did you feel you were being sidetracked from His plan?

Wendy: I did, but in the end it just included a different route to the same destination, one offering clearer confirmation of His purpose. I took up the role of head elder in my local church, and through this time I came to realise that God had removed my passion for medicine and replaced it with a heart for ministry. However, when my fellowship at the hospital came to an end, I had difficulty renewing the visa I needed to complete my theological study. Immigration lawyers informed me I had less than a 0.1% chance of being granted the visa renewal that would allow continued study in the United States.

Sara: It must have been difficult, dealing with that kind of uncertainty.

Wendy: I prayed, and invited my friends to join me, asking for patience and another confirming sign—specifically that God would grant the visa if He wanted me to continue studying ministry. Despite all the negative predictions, I was again granted a visa. So I continued my study of ministry at Andrews University.

Sara: So, you felt called to study theology, and then ended up teaching at Avondale College? That's yet another change in career direction.

Wendy: Teaching theology was a ministry career path I hadn't foreseen. But Dr. Arthur Patrick, a valued mentor who recently passed away, asked whether I was interested in pursuing an academic career. I told him, "I'm going to have to pray about this before I say yes; I've prayed all the way through this and God's opened and closed doors for me." So I prayed about it, and was impressed that God was saying, "Go ahead and do this." I came into this role feeling like I'm right where God wants me.

Sara: So you're now lecturing in systematic theology; do you feel you have been called to that position?

Wendy: Absolutely. I love what I'm doing, I love the interaction. I still feel completely inadequate, but God somehow works and makes these things happen. Keeping ahead of the students was tough to start with, particularly if one is asked to teach in an area where one hadn't taken more than basic classes. For me, that first semester was 'crazy'. I was totally exhausted, just trying to keep on top of it all! It was difficult, but at the same time, the interaction with the students was really positive from the start.

Sara: You also have the unique position of being the only woman in the department—a daunting task to any woman—particularly for one working in theology, I'd imagine!

Wendy: Daunting perhaps, but I know I am where God wants me. And that makes all the difference.

Sara: So, what's it like? Do you feel like you have a lot of support from your co-workers in this field?

Wendy: That's an easy question! (laughing). I am treated very well. My colleagues are very supportive. While some students are surprised to find a female lecturer in the theology department, most have no problem with it.

Sara: Having personally felt that direct call to ministry, how does this impact your view on women in ministry, and other women who have felt a similar calling?

Wendy: I can relate to those who feel called to lead in a church that has traditionally been led by males only. I think it's very important that the Adventist Church includes women in ministry. I believe God has gifted everybody in the Church, and we should be actively using the talents of both men and women in our churches in whatever way God has gifted them.

Theology is not something I would have done voluntarily. It wouldn't have been on my radar screen to even think about that as a career. I'm not coming to it for any other reason than God said, "This is where I want you right now." And I know there are so many other women in that position.

Sara: I recently noticed that you authored the mission statement for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific, which focuses on *knowing, experiencing, and sharing our hope in Jesus Christ*.

Wendy: What I wanted to do was to suggest that Christianity is not just about a set of beliefs. Knowledge itself it not enough. Unless those beliefs make a difference to the way we live, then what's the point? Christianity involves a relationship, it's lived and experienced, and there's joy involved even when you experience hardship. What's more, we only have something meaningful to share with others when we have personally experienced Jesus and the hope he brings in our own lives.

Epilogue: Dr Wendy Jackson isn't the only one who has experienced God's leading in her life. Whilst most of us may never be called to something as dramatic as a complete career change, perhaps Wendy's story is an opportunity to look deeper into the way God leads in our own lives. May we never get too comfortable to notice God's nudge in another direction! **TEACH**

> *I still feel completely inadequate, but God somehow works and makes these things happen*

1-1-2013

In the Beginning: Science and Scripture Confirm Creation

Lynden Rogers
Avondale College of Higher Education

BOOK REVIEWS

In the beginning: Science and scripture confirm creation

Brian Ball (Ed.). (2012). Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association

Lynden Rogers

Senior Lecturer, School of Science and Mathematics, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW

In the beginning is a work of significance and brings together a wealth of useful information—how could it be otherwise when so many of its authors are widely published and respected scholars. This book consists of 17 chapters: eleven on theological themes, six more closely related to science and one critiquing social Darwinism. The editor, should be congratulated on bringing together so many contributing viewpoints. Although "aimed at the average reader" (p. 10) it is pretty solid nourishment, as acknowledged by the editor himself, and one's thinking cap must be firmly in place when working through some chapters, such as Richard Davidson's quite technical essay on different readings of Genesis 1 and 2.

Those looking for excellent material on the authority of Scripture, the origin and reliable transmission of the book of Genesis, its theological themes, its significance for the canon and its utilisation by not only Christ but the NT writers will not be disappointed. Some of this content, such as Rob McIver's work reinforcing the credibility of the ancient text, represents recent research and has not, to my knowledge, featured in earlier Adventist publications on Origins. Additionally, the discussions of design aspects and the limits of neo-Darwinian evolutionary mechanisms are offered at greater depth than in most previous Adventist monographs.

The book is double barrelled in that it purports to aim simultaneously at two quite different groups: those "that *a priori* exclude the existence of the supernatural" (p. 9) and others for whom "theistic evolution has replaced the biblical view of Creation" (p. 13). As noted above, it certainly presents cogent arguments in support of a Creator God and biblical authority, which might be said to address the first target group with bullet-like precision. The focus on the second audience, however, seems less precise, perhaps more like that of a shotgun than a rifle!

In fact, few theistic evolutionists would take issue with most of the valuable evidence presented. The same is true of some other theists who, while not persuaded of a full evolutionary scenario, still find the evidence for old life on Earth convincing. All such, whether Adventist or not, affirm that the biblical text has primacy in all matters related to faith, all recognise it as God-inspired and divinely guided, all acknowledge the importance of Genesis in establishing the major biblical themes and all concede the significant use made of Genesis by the NT. Also, while there are different views on how best to articulate the design argument, all are happy to acknowledge evidence for God as cosmic designer. Further, most if not all theistic evolutionists, as well as a few of their atheistic colleagues, admit some limits to the naturalistic mechanisms proposed by Darwin.

There are two shortcomings that might be raised against *In the beginning*. The first is that it does not substantially address the biblical arguments advanced by thoughtful Adventist, Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran and Jewish scholars, among others, who do not adhere to a literalistic reading of Genesis. While not questioning Scripture's primacy and authority such individuals substantially share Galileo's view in the context of the last great schism among Christians over a matter of science that "the Bible is there to tell us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go". Some might feel that a serious discussion of origins should at least acknowledge opposing arguments. Consequently, those seeking to understand more completely, or to oppose more effectively, the many scholarly Christians who entertain a less traditional exegesis may be disappointed.

While, to be fair, *In the beginning* does not claim primarily to present scientific data, some might also lament its failure to mention scientific evidence which appears to implicate life in some of the deep geological history already acknowledged by many conservative Adventists to embrace billions of years. Despite claims urged in this book, these data are not seen by all as being adequately addressed by earlier Adventist publications. Such data include correlations between radiometric studies, ice cores, deep ocean and lake sediments and successive soil layers, among other dating methods.

The second problem concerns minor inaccuracies. Whilst most essays are of a high standard, the book is marred in some places by a lack of precision. In the opening lines of the Foreword, for example, it is stated that Adventists have rejected the contention that the created order is many millions of years old. This is only partly true since many conservative Adventists, including some contributors to *In the beginning*, accept conventional scientific ages for the abiotic universe. Such inexactitude is not in keeping with the overall scholarly standards of this important and timely work.

Overall, *In the beginning* is a most interesting and valuable contribution to the origins discussion. TEACH