

Embrace the Spirit

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A Note from the Editor

I think texting and tweeting are starting to affect my writing style—this is going to be very brief and to the point.

Another school year is well under way. In light of the troubles around the world, it seems appropriate that the theme of our conference this year was “The Power of Forgiveness.” Michael Marien’s report captures the essence of the message of our three speakers: Dr Nancy Reeves, Dr David Goa and Mr Wilton Littlechild.

Dr Lance Grigg’s article poses the question, “Is critical thinking pedagogy possible in the religious education classroom?” Given the pluralistic society in which we live, this is a crucial question for religious and moral educators, because we do not want to be perceived as indoctrinating students to accept uncritically a particular world view or ideology. A past conference speaker and previous contributor to this journal, Dr Grigg makes the case for a positive response to that question in his scholarly article.

Terri Lynn Mundorf examines, as a vice-principal, the perennial challenge—permeation of gospel values and the Catholic school community. Having had Terri Lynn as a classmate for a course on Catholic school administration, I know that she has a wealth of practical experience to inform her perceptions.

Our two regular contributors, Tim Cusack and Michael Marien, are insightful as always.

Check out *Pray Me a Story*, the new series from Loyola Press—a great way to permeate literacy with faith.

Unfortunately, we do not have our feature “Kaleidoscope” in this issue. This feature is intended to highlight a school division’s projects and activities that reflect the values supported by this council—faith, dignity, respect and collaboration. Ideally, we would like to highlight a minimum of five schools or projects, including pictures, if possible, and a brief write-up (250 words maximum) per project or activity. If you would like to contribute to this feature, the deadline for the spring issue is January 31, 2011.

Until next time!

Dorothy Burns



From the President

I Have a Dream!

As I wrote this, the leaves on the trees were turning as many colours as there were in Joseph's coat, and I was reminded that summer was over and fall was pushing its way into our calendar. Our schools are now settled and our students are working their way through another year of joyous learning.

Before we know it, Christmas will be here. The busyness of our lives tends to make us forget where we should be going. In the season of Advent and Christmas, take time for yourself and your family. Take time for your community and all that are a part of it. There are so many needy people. Give of your time and your talents to help them.

I pray that in my lifetime there will be no war, and all people will be cared for and have a sense of purpose. There will be peace for all. The problems of refugees and homelessness will be conquered.

Elizabeth-Anne Stewart wrote of such a world. The cry of her peace movement would be "Bread, not bombs!" All schools in the world will flourish. They will provide education for all, not just the privileged. The poor will be able to walk with their heads held high, because they will have a new sense of belonging.

What a dream! Martin Luther King Jr held that dream in his heart. Think about *your* dream and work to make it come true.

May you and your loved ones have a wonderful year.

May your students join in peace with one another.

May we all see the results of using time and talents to help our fellow beings.

Sharon Malec



Sharon Malec is a teacher with Holy Spirit Catholic Schools, in Lethbridge, Alberta.



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Mission Statement

The Religious and Moral Education Council exists to inspire and foster learning communities by providing professional development for teachers to help them nurture the moral, ethical and spiritual lives of students.

Vision Statement

The Religious and Moral Education Council will, in search of peace and the common good, be a principal resource for Alberta teachers.

Values

We are committed to serving teachers of all traditions and cultures, through the values of faith, dignity, respect and collaboration.



RMEC Conference 2010— “The Power of Forgiveness”

Michael Marien

Michael Marien was a codirector of RMEC Conference 2010.

About 35 delegates and their families enjoyed the beauty of an Alberta fall weekend to probe their understanding of the power of forgiveness at this year's RMEC conference. All three of our speakers approached the topic from unique perspectives, providing a depth of experience we won't soon forget.

Dr Nancy Reeves began our conference on the evening of Friday, October 15, by asking us to reflect on the spirituality of forgiveness. Nancy explained that the difficulty in forgiving others is that we believe we will lose power, that others will gain power over us, or that the other will be reinforced for the behaviour and do it again. Our barriers to forgiveness are what she terms “expensive emotions” — those emotions that in themselves can be positive but can become costly, for example, when appropriate anger turns to bitterness and resentment or when embarrassment turns to shame. It soon became apparent to the delegates that the first step to forgiving is to learn how to forgive ourselves and to learn to accept forgiveness. We

also need to release guilt by listening to what the guilt is saying. Nancy concluded by showing us that education or re-education, especially regarding expensive emotions, can pave the way for releasing guilt and moving toward reconciliation.

Dr Reeves's talk on Saturday morning centred on providing tools for educating children in forgiveness. Using kinesthetic strategies such as role-playing allows children to work out the root cause of the conflict that required forgiveness. As teachers, we must be role models for forgiveness and must provide those strategies. When dealing with children who are struggling with forgiveness, Dr Reeves suggests that we interview adults at home and ask them about times when they forgave or were forgiven. As well, encourage teachers, youth leaders and pastors to share their own experiences with forgiveness. Children (and adults, too) need to learn to discern through daily spiritual practice, self-awareness and right living.

Our second speaker, Dr David Goa, from the Chester Ronning Centre, is no stranger to RMEC—

he has been a speaker at previous conferences. Dr Goa shared his experiences and relationships with the Muslim world, particularly his recent visits to Turkey. Towards the end of his talk, the delegates moved into small groups and discussed how the Islamic world is portrayed by the Western media by examining some current news items that Dr Goa had collected. It certainly opened our eyes and hearts to the necessity for continued dialogue and critical thinking if we are committed to peace and forgiveness in the larger context of Christian-Muslim relations.

Our third speaker, Mr Wilton Littlechild, presented a very personal understanding of the residential schools issue. Mr Littlechild is a commissioner on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. He related his experience of residential schools and gave us insight into the commission's central purpose: to allow those involved to tell their stories so that healing might take place. His warmth and humour were appreciated by the delegates, as was the powerful video of the survivors that he showed us before our awards ceremony.

Thanks to all who made RMEC Conference 2010 a success, in particular

- Janice Bilyk, who organized the event, the meals, the registrations, and so on;
- the RMEC executive, who helped at every turn, especially Cynthia and Quintin for all the goodies for the gift bags;
- Jennifer Bilyk and Majella Rymarz, who took care of the kids; and
- Anne Bourassa, who created the beautiful crosses for the speakers.

Our next conference will be in the Edmonton area and will focus on world religions. Hope to see you there!



Centring prayers focused on the season of our spiritual autumn—display created by Michael Marien



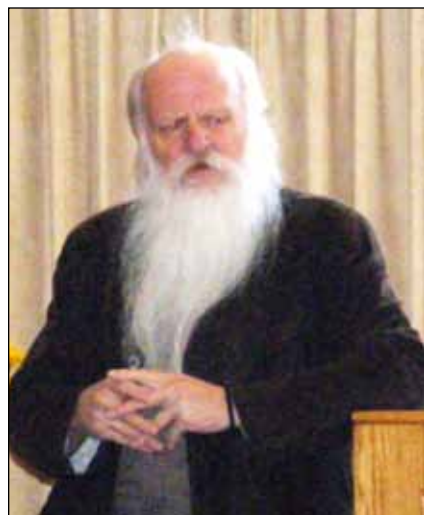
Left to right: Mardi Renyk, presenter; Jim Spiess, Award of Merit recipient; Sharon Malec, president/presenter; Colleen Rink, Award of Merit recipient; Dean Sarnecki, William D Hrychuk Memorial Award recipient; Alene Mutala, presenter



Nancy Reeves, signing books



Wilton Littlechild



David Goa



*Award ceremony display,
created by Mark Nixon*

Is Critical Thinking Pedagogy Possible in the Religious Education Classroom?

Lance M Grigg

Lance M Grigg, PhD, is a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge, in Lethbridge, Alberta.

A current area of interest to many educators at all levels is critical thinking and critical thinking pedagogy. Science, social studies, language arts, mathematics and now religious education (RE) are somehow expected to teach for and about critical thinking (CT). But many claim that there is more to CT and critical thinking pedagogy (CTP) in RE than teaching students to spot logical fallacies, identify relevant sources and formalize theological arguments. But what exactly is that *more*, and what relevance does it have for RE?

If CT is about taking a critical stance toward everything, does it have any place in the RE classroom at all? Can one think critically about a religious belief? If so, what does this kind of thinking look like in action, and how does one teach for it? But if one can't think critically about religion, is RE just another form of brainwashing? If so, does RE have a place in *any* school, private or public? Consequently, is CTP simply impossible in the RE classroom?

Using the thought of Bernard Lonergan¹, this paper claims that there **is** a place for CT and CTP in the RE classroom. In short, Lonergan has developed a cognitional theory that acknowledges the

value of both religious experience and CT without overemphasizing one at the expense of the other. If such a theory has merit, CTP and RE can fruitfully coexist within a classroom that keeps religious experience and its subsequent expressions in an open conversation with one another. So what are CT and CTP, and how does Lonergan's cognitional theory help us reconstruct and infuse them in the RE classroom?

Current Conceptions of CT and CTP

CT is a broad, diverse and ever-changing landscape of scholarship with multiple interpretations. Nonetheless, I will attempt an overview of a representative sample of its basic schools of thought. Notably, many new curricula have a recognizable CT slant to them, social studies and mathematics in particular.

Current approaches to CT are often categorized into three perspectives: cognitive, informal logic and feminist (Brodin 2008, 141–63). Within the cognitive perspective, the main goal of CT is using rationality to make reasoned judgments. Hence, basic skills and procedures associated with hypothesis testing, problem solving, and argument construction and assessment are emphasized. CT is a highly rational activity that can be broken down into anatomical parts, sequences and psychological

processes (Brodin 2008, 142–44). Ennis, a popular figure in the field, called CT “reasonable reflective thinking” (1992). Facione and Facione (2007) define CT as “reflective decision-making and thoughtful problem-solving about what to believe and do.” Essentially, the cognitive perspective relies heavily on empirical, psychological research for its basic understanding of what we are doing when we are thinking critically.

Although similar in its emphasis on the rational, the informal logic movement views CT from a philosophical perspective rather than a psychological one. As a branch of both logic and psychology, CT is understood as a set of moves designed to assess reasoning that focuses on solving real-world problems, evaluating natural language arguments, identifying fallacies and establishing criteria for the justification of nonformal arguments (Johnson and Blair 1987). Harvey Siegel sees CT as the educational cognate of rationality, as rational thinking justified by appropriate reasons; a critical thinker is one who is “appropriately moved by reasons (and) has propensity or disposition to believe and act in accordance with reasons” (Siegel 1988). CT and CTP rely on philosophical research in formal and informal logic theory for their conceptual framework. Consequently, exploring informal reasoning in everyday life, such as in advertising, politics and legal

matters, remains a central focus for informal logic approaches to CT and CTP. However, some have argued that the term *informal logic* itself is problematic (Woods 2000).

Criticisms of the narrowness of the categories used by both the informal logic movement and cognitive psychology led many to reconsider the nature and activity of CT and CTP. Since both movements conceptualize CT in scientific and/or philosophical terms, they unduly emphasize the skills or principles basic to problem solving, hypothesis testing and argument analysis. Hence, they undervalue strongly inductive activities such as problem posing, problem recognition or problem revision. As well, many of the political, economic and gender-based assumptions basic to philosophical and psychological methodologies are ignored; they must be brought into the conversation about what one is doing when one is thinking critically.

Critical of the individualistic bias of informal logicians and psychologists, feminist scholar Barbara Thayer-Bacon (2000) sees CT as a collaborative and communal activity. For her, it is a matter of social interaction among members of a community, maintaining a critical connectiveness. She argues that CT theory needs to be transformed and sees it as *constructive* thinking (p xiii).

Thayer-Bacon suggests that CT is somewhat like a quilting bee, wherein each quilter brings a different voice to the activity with a unique perspective on colour, pattern and purpose (2000, pp xiii, 33 and 93). As these voices engage one another, the texture and fabric of the thought change. Hence, CT is viewed as a constructive, communal, collaborative activity undertaken with other critical

thinkers doing the same thing, which is significantly different from traditional deductivist and rationalist approaches to CT.

But are there any problems with this feminist perspective on CT? While it effectively critiques a disembodied approach to CT, does it go too far? Is distance unfairly critiqued in a relational account of CT? For example, predictability, independent of the one doing the predicting, grounds confidence in scientific or mathematical judgments. Being too close to a scientific judgment can cloud the scientist's or mathematician's objectivity. It seems that the greater the distance between the thinker and the thought, the better.² Making this point a little more interrogatively, one might ask, Is the personal stressed at the expense of the distant?

On the other hand, do informal logic and cognitive psychology stress distance at the expense of the personal? When one is thinking critically about a beautiful piece of music or work of art, need one distance oneself from the aesthetic experience itself? It seems that a continual attentiveness to the power of the experience is crucial to understanding its meaning and reasonably judging its impact.

RE is similarly disposed. It needs both a deep, sustained connection to a personal and social experience of the divine and the capacity to think critically about that experience. Cognitive, informal logic and feminist perspectives cannot offer a fluid and dynamic structure that accommodates this holistic, bidirectional movement from the experiential to the critical.

Is there a way out of this impasse for the religious educator who wants students to have a healthy respect for both CT and religious

experience? Moreover, is there a way of envisaging CTP that can accommodate the fundamental importance of religious experience and the need to think critically about its subsequent expressions in the RE classroom?

This paper argues that such a way exists. What is needed is a theoretical construct that values experience and reason in understanding and judging the meaning of an experience, without overemphasizing one at the expense of the other. In other words, CTP and RE can fruitfully coexist if and only if religious experience and its subsequent expressions (interpretations and judgments) remain interdependent.

The cognitional theory of Bernard Lonergan promotes this interdependence. What is his theory and how can it help us out of the impasse?

Bernard Lonergan's Cognitional Theory

Lonergan argues that knowing is a creative and critical activity comprising three interdependent activities: experiencing, understanding and judging. Rather than a closed system like most informal and formal logics, Lonergan's cognitional theory has both openness to experience and a healthy criticality, by virtue of its holistic approach to experience, intelligence and judgment. Because we (1) desire to understand religious experience, (2) create expressions that try to explain the meaning of that experience and (3) critically assess the quality of our understanding of the meaning of that experience, human knowing begins but does not end with religious experience. Nor does it end in propositional expressions of that religious experience.

But, specifically, what does Lonergan's cognitional theory look like in action, and how does it help us infuse CTP into the RE classroom? Basically, Lonergan claims that religious knowledge begins with an experience of transcendent wonder that unleashes the unrestricted desire to know: a desire that (1) wonders what is happening and why, (2) poses questions to our experiences, (3) stimulates inquiry and (4) produces religious knowledge.

For example, through an experience of sense-data (hearing, seeing, smelling, touching, tasting) or the data of consciousness (internal experiences: feelings, images, emotions), one may daydream or ask questions. Initially, questions for intelligence are asked: What is it? Why is it? These questions seek explanations of what one has experienced (interpretations, hypotheses, correlations, etc). In an active mind, inquiry into the data usually ensues. This happens at the level of understanding, and often produces direct insights into the data of one's religious experiences.

An insight can be defined as a creative act of intelligence in response to appropriate symbols, sensations and images (Flanagan 1997). Generally, insights have a unifying effect. They organize disparate sets of data (sense or consciousness) into intelligible wholes. In turn, if an insight into the data occurs, answering questions for intelligence, that insight may get formulated in the appropriate format: words, symbols, numbers, etc.

For example, I may have a deep religious experience of peace while reading a passage from a holy text (the Bible, Koran or Torah, for example). I may simply enjoy that experience or I may inquire into its nature, sources and impact. At this

stage, I ask questions for intelligence: What is happening? Why is it happening? What does this experience mean for my life or the lives of others? I may get an insight into my experience that answers these questions. I then express these insights in words or symbols: interpretations, drawings, liturgical artifacts and so forth.

But if I let my natural curiosity or desire to know unfold, I can't stop there. I still need to affirm or deny the validity of my direct insight. Because insights are common (a dime a dozen, as one theologian once told me) and correct ones not so common, I need to ask if my insight hits the mark or is at least close to doing so.

In Lonergan's words, one is moved to seek out the *best* available answers. Hence, at the level of judging, one asks a question for reflection: Is it so or probably so? This question for reflection is a product of and a stimulant for further critical reflection. It operates upon answers given to questions for intelligence, and can only be answered with a yes or a no. If one answers yes, one judges the explanation of the religious experience to be correct/probably correct *at the time*. At the levels of experiencing and understanding, therefore, one does not yet know what is or is not likely the case. For Lonergan, it is at the level of judging that something moves from possibly being the case to most likely being the case—or, in a fallibilistic sense, true. Naturally, one reflects on what should be done with this reasoned judgment, and decides what actually is to be done about it.

Lonergan's cognitional theory follows a distinct pattern.

- At the level of *experiencing*, we see, hear, touch, taste, smell, feel, perceive, and so on.

- We can remain here or allow ourselves to move into *understanding*, wherein we
 - use our imagination to pose questions for intelligence: What is it? Why is it? How often does it occur?
 - have direct insights into the data of our experience (sense or consciousness),
 - formulate the insight into a hypothesis/explanation/interpretation in a context-specific expression and
 - conceptualize it.
- Our desire for criticality in our expressions moves us beyond this level to assess the quality of our understanding.
- Hence, at the level of *judging*, we
 - reflect,
 - pose questions for reflection (Is it so? Is it probably so?),
 - marshal and weigh evidence,
 - have reflective insights, and
 - make judgments that remain open to the self-correcting process of learning.
- Although knowing per se for Lonergan occurs on the level of judging, we can stop there or naturally move into *deciding*, in which we
 - deliberate upon what we are going to do with our knowledge,
 - ask questions for deliberation (What should/am I going to do about it?) and
 - act upon those decisions with integrity.

For example, I may overhear someone say that St Paul travelled to Malta. The experience of hearing such a conversation may move me to wonder where exactly St Paul did travel. Or, on a trip to Japan, I may have an experience of watching people observing Shintoism. This experience may cause me to wonder whether Shinto is a polytheistic religion.

I can simply appreciate these experiences, but if I'm true to my natural desire to know, I'll want to know accurately whether or not St Paul travelled to Malta or Shintoism is indeed polytheistic. Hearsay should not be enough for me. Accordingly, I make inquiries into my experiences. This occurs at the level of understanding. Hence, using my imagination, I begin my inquiry by asking a question for intelligence: Where did St Paul travel? or What are the basic beliefs of Shintoism? I seek out and read the relevant texts, read current scholars in the area and get an insight into where St Paul travelled, or whether Shintoism is monotheistic or polytheistic. Afterwards, I may get an Aha! moment wherein I get an insight into the data I'm experiencing (the texts I'm reading and people I'm talking to). I then express that insight in a hypothesis about St Paul's travels or the polytheistic nature of Shinto.

But my hypotheses must be tested because I want to know as accurately as possible. I don't want to just play around with the idea of St Paul's travels or Shintoism's belief structures. I want the best answers to these questions. Too often, we get our students to settle for less than the best available answer.

These expressed insights become the focus of a desire to know whether or not my answers are the correct ones. Accordingly, at the level of judging, they are subjected to questions for reflection: Is it so or probably so? Answers to these questions can only take the form of probably yes or probably no. I may answer yes, but it's always a conditioned answer. In other words, my answers to questions for reflection are probably true only under certain conditions—namely,

that St Paul did most likely travel to Malta, or that adherents to Shinto do worship many gods.

At this point I revisit the relevant texts and conversations and test them, looking for evidence of St Paul's travels to Malta or Shintoism's polytheistic belief structures. If the evidence is there, I can confirm that Paul did indeed travel to Malta and that adherents to Shinto do indeed worship many gods. This confirmation is experienced as an Aha! moment of reflective insight. Similar to a direct insight into data in response to a question for intelligence, a reflective insight is an insight into the quality of the explanation or hypothesis in response to a question for reflection. After having a reflective insight, I can conclude that those travels did indeed occur or that Shintoism is truly polytheistic. I then express my reflective insight in the appropriate language: words, symbols, numbers and so forth.

It's not unlike Archimedes' Aha! moment when he had the idea to weigh the crown in water. He knew he was on to something that needed to be further investigated. He had a problem that needed to be solved. He considered a number of possible solutions to that problem and had a direct insight into what was the best answer.

The quality of that insight, however, had to be tested. He needed to verify that weighing the crown in water would allow him to discern what metals it was made of. In other words, while he needed a direct insight into his experience at the level of understanding, at the level of judging he needed a reflective insight into his direct insight. That reflective insight is an Aha! moment that affirms or denies the truth-value of an insightful solution.

But what happens when I have a reflective insight? What is happening when I am testing my hypotheses about St Paul's travels or Shinto's polytheism? When I have a reflective insight, I grasp that whatever known conditions need to be met or fulfilled are indeed present. Notice that this fulfillment occurs at the level of experience. For example, I read a number of sources about the travels of St Paul. If the words, images and maps tell me that Paul did indeed travel to Malta or if other documents tell me that there are many Shinto gods to worship, I have the reflective insight that the expressions, *Paul travelled to Malta* and *Shintoism is polytheistic* are probably true. I then make the judgment that my reflective insight is the best one at the time. Importantly, both reflective and direct insights always remain open to the self-correcting process of learning.

As well, reflective insight operates on something that has been presented for one's critical consideration. Reflective insights arise from a natural desire to know whether a particular idea is merely another bright idea or the correct one. If the idea is correct (at the time), it will be so only under certain conditions and the fulfillment of those conditions. If those conditions are fulfilled (that is, present), the reflective insight under consideration is the correct one at the time. If they remain unfulfilled (those conditions are not present), further pertinent questions may arise and force one to revise or even disregard the reflective insight in question.

CTP, RE and Reflective Insight

But how does Lonergan's cognitional theory help us do CTP in

the RE classroom? To begin with, CTP gets reconstructed. CT itself is contextualized within a broader cognitional theory that maintains interdependence among experiencing, understanding and judging. Contrary to cognitional psychologists, members of the informal logic movement or feminist scholarship, CT is not just rule following or simply a set of procedures, sequences or moves. Nor is it a rejection, on the basis of patriarchal bias, of rules altogether. In short, critical thinking is thinking that fosters the formation of reflective insights and expresses them in reasoned judgments.

CTP, therefore, becomes something quite unique. It is related to but not reducible to rules, psychological processes or cultural conditionings. CTP involves instruction in spotting fallacies, formalizing propositions using logical rules, creating classroom activities that use the most popular learning theory and deconstructing reason according to the latest critical theory. It is not, however, to be identified with any one of these.

Rather, CTP becomes teaching for the formation of reflective insights that are always connected to and dependent upon one's ongoing understanding of one's experiences. It is a structurally interdependent way of teaching. Religious experience, direct insights into the nature of that experience and reflective insights conditioning reasoned judgments about the meaning of that religious experience are irreducible one to another. Importantly, they are also kept in creative tension. They are not hierarchically ordered. In turn, decisions about what should be done about one's judgments are always made in relation to those

understandings and judgments as well.

In the RE classroom, this is especially relevant for a number of reasons. First, RE and CTP both arise from an experience of wonder about the transcendent. One can meditate upon this experience or make inquiries into it and have direct insights into its nature, function and purpose. In turn, those direct insights can be expressed in propositions that are critically reflected upon. That critical reflection is a kind of thinking that (1) poses questions for reflection to the understanding of religious experience, (2) has reflective insight into the explanatory power of that religious understanding and (3) makes reasoned judgments, expressing that reflective insight in the appropriate language or symbolism. Last, if one is consistent, one naturally moves into deliberation, wherein one decides what should be done about one's religious judgments. The religious educator teaches about and for critical thinking, but not at the expense of the religious experience that grounds that thinking.

This innovative approach to CTP is possible because the process itself remains explicitly interconnected. The holistic nature of Lonergan's cognitional theory prevents the logical expressions of a religious experience or the rules governing its construction from dominating any performativity associated with religious experience.

Hence, religious experience itself and any inquiry into its meaning remain coextensive, fluid and differentiated. In the case of CTP in the RE classroom, formal or informal rules of logic and the psychological processes at work in the formation of reasoned, theological judgments must always be in

authentic and open dialogue with religious experience.

But the reverse is also the case. The experience of transcendent wonder foundational to RE is not dominant. It, too, remains in open and authentic dialogue with the theological understandings and judgments arising from it. In other words, religious experience isn't the final arbiter. It, too, exists because it co-exists within a cognitional structure comprising experience-understanding-judging.

One can have reflective insights into the meanings of religious experience without removing the appeal to experience throughout the educative process. As well, religious experience can broaden and deepen when exposed to a variety of expressions of that experience. As such, Lonergan's notions of direct and reflective insights can ground authentic interfaith dialogue.

Sadly, the challenge is not small. The current negative publicity that religion has been getting of late is not going to go away. Working solutions to how CT, CTP and RE can peacefully coexist and inform one another need to be creatively and critically explored. It is hoped this paper begins an important dialogue within the RE community about how to structurally infuse CTP in the classroom without falling prey to the varied forms of logicism, emotivism or relativism.

Notes

1 Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984) was a North American philosopher/economist/theologian. His collected works, in excess of 20 volumes, are being published by University of Toronto Press.

2 But does this analogy of science apply to RE? While religious educators

aren't expected to accept any religious belief simply because it comes from a believer, it does respect the value of a deeply personal religious experience. RE by definition should maintain a healthy balance between distance and proximity.

3 Regarding feelings, Lonergan distinguishes between non-intentional states (such as fatigue, irritability and bad humour, which have causes) and intentional responses, which answer to what is intended, apprehended or represented. These latter feelings relate us to objects and give intentional consciousness its mass, momentum, drive and power, without which our knowing and deciding would be paper thin (Lonergan 1971, 31).

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Permeation of Gospel Values and the Catholic School Community

Terri Lynn Mundorf

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As part of the 2009/10 three-year Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools educational plan, the division listed the permeation of Gospel values as one of its primary goals. The intended outcome of this goal is to provide an understanding of permeation, bring to life what permeation actually means, identify the three different types of permeation and explore the ways that permeation consequently builds Catholic school community.

In the September 7, 2009, issue of the *Western Catholic Reporter*, Archbishop Richard Smith urged the staff of Edmonton Catholic schools to

Make Jesus the school's core....
He charged to teachers: Be absolutely clear in proclaiming the Gospel ... with consistency, ... both from the heart of the speaker and in the mind of the listener. [Our] ... schools must be places to encounter Jesus. (Gonzalez 2009, 1)

Given the current harsh economic times, it could be said that Catholic education is under the microscope in Alberta schools. When the recession hit Alberta in 2008, the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) documented concerns about whether the provincial government should continue

funding two education systems: public and separate. In the eyes of the members of the PSBAA, Catholic schools are taking children away from their system and, in turn, the PSBAA is losing hundreds of thousands of dollars. The public system is "entirely funded by per pupil and other grants from the provincial government, the loss of students [to the separate system] will have a negative impact on our financial ability and that in turn will have a negative impact on our programs, our staffing arrangements, and our facilities" (PSBAA 2009). PSBAA states on its website that only separate schools are protected under the constitution of Canada (PSBAA 2009, pgph 3). If taxpayers are knowledgeable about what happened in Newfoundland, they should carefully examine that very claim.

In 1998, Newfoundland lost its right to government-funded Catholic education (Mulligan 2005). Mulligan states that in 1998, many cradle and converted Catholics idly stood by, watching and listening to the unthinkable happen, and did nothing to preserve and make known the value and importance of Catholic education in that province (p 111). Furthermore, in Manitoba, Catholic education is privately funded; in British Columbia, the Catholic education system is only 50 per cent provincially subsidized

In this paper I will explore the meaning of and provide evidence

for what it means to permeate Catholic Gospel values, identify the unique characteristics of Catholic school communities and provide the inextricable connection between the two. Our Catholic schools should and must be different from our public education counterparts. My investigation and findings will encompass

1. an understanding and definition of permeation,
2. classification of the three types of Catholic faith permeation,
3. characteristics of a Catholic school that foster community,
4. identification and explanation of numerous Gospel values, and
5. roles and responsibilities of the Catholic school teacher, as defined by the Catholic Church.

Permeation is from the Latin word *permeare*, which means to pass through. In its general meaning, the word implies diffusion through all pores of some entity, like rain through sand (Wagner 1996, 9). In the context of a Catholic philosophy of education, permeation implies a diffusion of religion, values and morals into all areas of school life. The concept of permeation should cause Catholics involved in education to think beyond the classroom and to focus their attention on what happens in the life of a child or teacher both during the school day and outside the school (Wagner 1996, 4). This requires us to take a holistic approach to education in our

interaction with one another and with the students we serve. Laplante (1985) states that

Catholic schools have always held to the education of the total person: the intellectual, physical, affective, social, moral, aesthetic, and religious ... Therefore, its role will never be limited simply to offering courses in religious education. Permeation challenges all Catholics to care for others in society with generosity and respect. (p 5)

The Catholic Church identifies three types of faith permeation: inherent, intentional and incidental (Holy Spirit Catholic Schools No 4 2006, 1–4).

- *Inherent* faith is in us as Catholic teachers. Even if a Catholic teacher were teaching in a public school system, that teacher's faith would shine through. Our faith implicitly drives our being and humanness. When we perform an act of social justice, we show our faith in action.
- *Intentional* means that the action is intended or included with a purpose (Holy Spirit Catholic Schools No 4 2006, 4–9). An example could be collecting nonperishable items for a food bank or participating in a winter clothing drive for those in need. We intentionally set out to do good works.
- *Incidental* is something added on to what we do—for example, commenting on the beauty of nature as we run along the river or noticing that each snowflake is different and unique, just as God created humans.

Catholic schools are called to embrace a holistic faith, which means that our faith demands our entire being: head, heart and hands. Our faith needs to permeate every breath we take and every

action we perform. Relationships with one another and with Jesus are two key ingredients that permeate our faith. We are called to be in relationships with others, always. Serving others through imbued Gospel values promotes the Kingdom of God on Jesus's behalf. The more we imitate Jesus, the more we become like Him. Any Catholic educator who wishes to replicate this must be familiar with the Gospel values—Jesus's life and teachings. Each one of us must have the fortitude to take the risk of getting to know Him more personally and sharing that experience with others.

In 1965, the Second Vatican Council made a "decisive change in stating that the Catholic schools were no longer viewed as an 'institution,' but rather as a 'community' permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love" (Dunlap, 2004, 21). In a Catholic school, each member of the school community, albeit with differing degrees of awareness, adopts a common vision—a common outlook on life, based on adherence to a scale of values in which he believes (Garrone 1977, 5). It is this shared vision that makes our schools Catholic, from the moment anyone enters our buildings.

From the first moment that a student [or guest] sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illuminated by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics (Baum 1998).

Guests should be able to feel an atmosphere that characterizes Jesus's life and teachings (Garrone 1977, 13) through the love in people's hearts, thinking and actions. Jesus continually encouraged and invited those around him to "change their hearts, their lives

and their world by following his way" (Groome 2001, 39). We are called to emulate his good works. We are the body of Christ here on earth (Romans 12:5). Each member must work together as one body; "likewise, every member of the faith community is valued and important unto them and yet find their Christian identity only by functioning together as 'Christ's body' (Romans 12:5) in the world—the Church" (Groome 2001, 40). As Catholic educators we are called to live as a community of Jesus's disciples, together in the world. Catholic schools are vital extensions of the Church and therefore we must work according to the values and teachings of the Church. Dunlap (2004) identifies six traits of Catholic school communities:

1. Welcoming—the demeanour of each person should be one of acceptance, respect and trust of all, including outcasts, the lonely, the poor
2. Celebrating—breaking bread and fellowship, serving others, participating in activities, enjoying one another's companionship
3. Learning—spending time talking and interacting; sharing our thoughts, feelings and concerns; listening to one another in the truth of the Gospel values
4. Reconciling—recognizing that there will be conflict, treating one another with respect, and giving everyone a chance to be heard
5. Serving—teaching one another to serve others through activities
6. Praying—prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition (pp 6–9)

Catholic Christians are called to share all that we are and all that we have with those around us, especially those in need. We see

things from an us/our perspective, rather than a me/mine perspective (Dunlap 2004, 32). It is by integrating the Gospel values with the unique characteristics of a Catholic community that a Catholic school community thrives. While Catholicism affirms the uniqueness and autonomy of every person, it also teaches that people have their greatest chance to reach their full potential in a God-centred community permeated by Gospel values. These common universal ideals bind and hold Catholic schools together. When combined gracefully and purposefully, Gospel values and Catholic community traits result in core beliefs and values that represent what we stand for, aspire to and hold sacred. "These commonly accepted ideals form a collective identity as they provide meaning and evoke pride" (Cook 2001, 17). Catholic school communities are Gospel-centred and a way of life rooted in Christ. The task of the Catholic school educator and administrator is to draw attention to these interactions and use the language of permeation in supporting and acclaiming the teachers' and students' interactions with one another.

One of the most interesting parts of Roman Catholic faith is that in order to permeate Jesus's values into the community, we need others. These duties simply cannot be accomplished individually. "Whenever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am" (Matthew 18:20, New International Version). The first place where students should find this companionship is in Catholic schools. In order to understand the permeation of Gospel values, it is important to identify attributes of a Catholic school and its community characteristics. The Gospel values are considered to be the life teachings of Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools must have Jesus as their foundation. It is imperative that they be "filled with constant reference to the Gospel and frequent encounters with Christ; and must be constantly inspired by the principles of the Second Vatican Council" (Edmonton Catholic Schools 2002, Appendix, 3). According to the Second Vatican Council, Jesus Christ is the "foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school, and the principles of his Gospel are its guiding educational norms" (A M Miller, March 6, 2009, personal communication). Catholic schools are the primary places to foster this relationship. Catholic education has the task of "communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others" (A M Miller, March 6, 2009, personal communication). Jesus must be at the heart of our schools, as His light (John 8:12) must act as a beacon for every student. Years of learning about effective teaching have revealed that great teaching strategies engage the hearts and emotions of students. Jesus's values and teachings, found in the Gospels, must permeate the affective lives of students in order for the values to have meaning. The responsibility of Catholic schools is to educate the entire child, not only in religion class, but also throughout the entire day. The person of Christ and his gospels are there to inspire and guide the Catholic school in every dimension of its life and activity. Every Catholic school and community needs to claim its identity in Jesus's name. As Catholic educators, we need to use specific language and draw attention to our good works and mutual respect.

In order to permeate the Gospel values into school life, Catholic educators need to have a change of heart and a way of acting that are in

accordance with our faith. Gospel values, according to Groome (2001), are fundamental behaviours we value because they help us to be who we were meant to be. Human beings all have the ability to live contrary to their God-given nature, but choosing Christian values and living them allows us to fulfill human nature the way God intended. Christian values are behaviours we value because they are ways to live virtuous lives (p 43).

Jesus's unconditional love for us stems from God Himself. Catholic educators are called to love one another by imitating God's love. "As the Father has loved me, so I have I loved you" (John 15:9). The Gospel values begin and derive from Jesus's law of love. He is the primary way in which God reaches out to Catholics and how we respond to God together (Groome 2001, 177). God created human beings out of love, and we are called to love one another through the life, love and teachings of Jesus Christ. Catholic educators share a common belief that we are all created in the image and likeness of God and are called to share our love, our gifts, and the Gospel values and message with others. With God's help, we can all be faithful to our covenant with Jesus and try to live as best we can as people of God, allowing our faith to permeate our daily lives. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (1997) states

Jesus was the first and supreme evangelizer. He proclaimed the Kingdom of God, as the urgent and definitive intervention of God in history, and defined this proclamation "*the gospel*," that is, the Good News. To this Gospel, Jesus devoted his entire life; he made known the joy of belonging to the Kingdom, its demands,

its *magna carta*, the mysteries which it embraces, the life of fraternal charity to those who enter it and its future fulfillment. (p 37)

Students in Catholic schools need to be taught the Gospel values and encouraged to share their own stories and experience the joy of living out the Gospel values. The following list of Gospel values, obtained from the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (2009, 1), Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Regional Division No 4 (2009, 3), and the National Catholic Association, is not exhaustive, but it will assist the reader in identifying some of the values by name, to give them a fuller meaning:

1. Faith—truth, tradition, prayer, doctrine, revelation, scripture
2. Hope—optimism, joy, confidence
3. Respect—holding the other high in our thoughts
4. Cooperation—working in unity with others
5. Honesty—tell the truth, do not steal or cheat
6. Motivation and initiative—giving my best to everything
7. Community—being able to trust and be trusted, fellowship, caring, belonging
8. Courage—willing do what is right, fortitude, restraint, temperance
9. Service—commitment, almsgiving, empathy, concern

10. Integrity—acting on what is known to be true
11. Stewardship—making wise use of God’s creation
12. Reconciliation—forgiving because God forgave, showing compassion and mercy
13. Praise and celebration—rejoicing at the beauty of God’s creation
14. Servant leader—putting other’s needs, interests and well-being at the forefront
15. Justice—acting in the best interest of human rights and equality
16. Love—for God, others and ourselves

In Figure 1 below, I have outlined the connection of Dunlap’s traits (2004) to the above-mentioned gospel values. This connection is imperative, because the community traits in Catholic schools and the Gospel values are interdependent of one another. As Catholic educators live their faith through gospel values they are in turn building their school communities and vice versa.

Although Jesus was referred to in many ways, the most commonly mentioned in the Gospels—more than 50 times—is *teacher*; He himself often described his work as teaching (Groome 2001, 38). Catholic schoolteachers have one of the greatest responsibilities on earth: the future of students is in teachers’ hands and hearts. Catholic educators’ lives should be marked by the exercise of a personal vocation to the Church (Baum

1982, 24). Educators teach in a Catholic school because God has called them to that place to serve the students, staff members and families in every way possible. It is, then, the responsibility of the teacher to adapt and make sense of the message of Jesus Christ in order that they may pass it along to students. “Teachers in a Catholic school see themselves as a part of a community of adult believers participating in the ministry of doing Catholic education with young people” (Mulligan 2005, 112). This opportunity is a precious gift that should not be taken lightly, nor is it for the faint of heart. “Not many should become teachers because you will be judged more strictly” (James 3:1). Although Jesus was not an official teacher, in the way that we think of teachers today, his “authority came from the integrity of his own life” (Groome 2001, 39). Educators in Catholic schools must “consciously inspire their activity, [and that of our students], with the Christian concept of the person grounded in the Gospel and Church teachings” (A M Miller, March 7, 2009, personal communication). This perspective attributes to the human person the dignity of God, which is the basis of the Gospel values. “Lay Catholics in Schools” (Baum 1982) contains concise words used to describe the important role that Catholics who work in education are called to exhibit. “Conduct

Figure 1: Traits of Catholic School Communities + Gospel Values

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Welcoming <i>community</i> <i>respect</i> <i>integrity</i> | Celebrating <i>praise and celebration</i> <i>honesty</i> | Learning <i>motivation and initiative</i> <i>courage</i> |
| Reconciling <i>justice</i> <i>servant leadership</i> <i>reconciliation</i> | Serving <i>cooperating</i> <i>service</i> <i>stewardship</i> | Prayer <i>faith</i> <i>hope</i> <i>love</i> |

is always much more important than speech; ... the more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model and ideal person [of Jesus Christ], ... the more this ideal will be achieved" (p 24). Teachers are called to be living witnesses to their Catholic faith and to the students, parents and staff they serve. Staff members, parents and students observe interactions with one another. Lay Catholics must never forget that our students are always watching us, and we must never underestimate the power of our example. In the words of St Francis of Assisi, "Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words" (Dunlap 2004, 7). All people reflect the image of God and are created in his image (Ephesians 4:22-24), and that is something educators must not forget. Our inherent Catholic faith tells us this. Catholic teachers have a positive understanding of the human person, and we believe that the person is essentially good, ever more graced than sinful (Groome 2001, 384). Our challenge is to communicate this understanding in a meaningful way to our students, staff and school community. One way to accomplish this is through daily prayer, asking that the spirit of Jesus open our hearts to welcome His living word. Although this may seem like a daunting task, staff members can act as models for one another because scripture, tradition and the lives of people who bear witness to our faith in action nourish us. "May they always abound in the works of God, knowing that they will not labour in vain when their labour is for Him" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Simply put, Catholic schools need to be places where any visitors who enter our schools meet Jesus. Children attending Catholic schools need to have a personal encounter with

Jesus and get to know Him through scripture and action; "... teachers are the first importance to impart a distinctive character to a Catholic school" (Garrone 1977, 14).

The idea of permeation of Gospel values assumes a common core of faith in Christ that needs to be purposefully integrated by teachers and administrators involved in Catholic education. As they do this, they are incidentally, inherently and intentionally building up our Catholic school communities of faith through the permeation of Jesus's Gospel values. God did not create us to live in isolation, but in community with one another, bound by our faith. Teachers and administrators who manifest an integrated approach to learning and living their Catholic faith with their students and to one another can achieve this vital challenge only through action and relationship with God. These actions and words in turn build fruitful communities of hope, faith and love imbued with the Gospel values.

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Leadership Without Title: Now and Then

Tim Cusack

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The title *leader* means many things to many people. In a general sense, the word *leader* evokes a sense of deference and respect owed to someone because of rank or position. From historical class strata, such as the feudal system or European aristocracy, to the modern military rank sequence, we live in a world conditioned by the old adage that rank has its privileges—that is, that title and position demand a certain level of respect and admiration. Whether prime minister, mayor, vice-president of operations or chairperson of the board, titles and corporate rank structures evoke various responses in those connected to a given organization. Many leaders appreciate that with their mantle come great responsibilities. These responsibilities, no matter how large or small, must be discharged in a manner that achieves the goals of the organization. This is not a simple feat. In fact, as many leadership theories reveal, the art of successfully guiding and influencing one's team to realize their goals is essential to leadership. How a

leader achieves this dynamic is largely determined by how he or she employs the strengths and talents of the team and resources at hand. The success of the employment and deployment of personnel and resources can be largely attributed to how the leader earns respect, in contrast to demanding respect based on a title or position.

In his book *The Leader Who Had No Title*, Robin Sharma employs the power of fable to reveal insights about how those who lead without title can earn respect and, in doing so, gain the trust and support needed to achieve great results. Sharma outlines this concept very clearly: "The old model of leadership ... was very much about the power you get from the authority of your position and the influence you'd have from a title" (pp 74–75). In this book, Sharma's protagonist, Blake, seeks sage advice from an array of leadership mentors. Through the discussions and examples, which draw upon a rich assortment of classic and contemporary views of leadership, Sharma poses intriguing thoughts on the benefits of leading without title. For example: "Your ability to have an impact and make a contribution comes more from who you are as a

person than from the authority you receive by your placement on some org chart. It's never been so important to be trustworthy. It's never been so important to be someone others respect ... it's never been so essential to be authentic" (p 75). The concept of authenticity reminds me of my high school alma mater: *esse quam videri*, which means "to be rather than seem to be."

Authenticity is the attribute (there are five) that Sharma explains in the first conversation of his "Lead Without Title" philosophy. He uses the acronym *IMAGE* to effectively share the concepts. Below are one-line summaries of his key idea for each attribute:

- **Innovation:** always trumps repeating what might have worked in the past
- **Mastery:** nothing less than your very best in all that you do
- **Authenticity:** staying true to your mission and values; speaking honestly
- **Guts:** be unrealistically persistent and wildly courageous
- **Ethics:** be exquisitely honest; be ferociously humble

Essentially, Sharma stresses the idea that all people have the potential to become better leaders.

As leaders without title we are challenged to take small steps each day. Sharma says that “daily ripples of excellence—over time—become a tsunami of success” (p 73). The small steps are daily goals that centre us on achieving successful results. He challenges us to set five tiny, daily goals. They might be something simple, like saying hello to that grumpy peer, or more difficult, like making the effort to have more face-to-face interactions on a given day rather than relying on the impersonal ease of e-mail. Over a year, one will become more confident, with the realization that nearly 2,000 little goals have been achieved. Anyone can do this, regardless of who you are or what you do. This is the power of leading without title.

We know from scripture that Jesus was not one to use his title or his authority to command respect or attention from his followers. Matthew’s gospel tells us, “Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was

asking His disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’” (Matthew 16:13–15 NRSV). Here Jesus leads without earthly title. He is not concerned about what title or label is ascribed to him. Whether called teacher, master or rabbi, Jesus led through his lived example and through the power of teaching others through personal narrative and parable. Upon his arrest and trial, he did not accept the title “king of the Jews” when confronted by his accusers. He led others with the same passion and conviction with which he followed God’s will. He empowered others to realize that they have the power of the spirit within themselves—a power that seeks to serve the greater good for all. In exploring this example of leading without title we are able to say with conviction, along with Peter, that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living

God” (Matthew 16:16 NRSV), a title we ascribe to him not because of the position he holds, but because of our encounter with him.

If others refer to us as honest, hardworking, fair, proactive, caring, compassionate or kind, instead of using titles such as parent, teacher, principal or CEO, then we are well on our way to leading without title. This might be a result of how we empower others to play a meaningful role in the daily interactions and dynamics of a team, learning community or business place. Sharma states that “real leadership involves breaking through the limits of your mind so you can step into the highest strength of your spirit” (pp 73–74). His book is a worthwhile read that challenges us to examine our leadership practice and our daily interactions with others as we continue our journey along the narrow way.

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Technology and Student Engagement in the Religion Classroom

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Twitter. Wiki. Blog. SMART-Board. Facebook. If you had read these words ten years ago, you might have thought you were reading science fiction. Now they have become a part of our everyday language, both in and out of the classroom. But are they a regular part of your religion classroom? I have been pondering the whole area of technology for the 21st-century learner, and I have come to the same conclusion that you will have read in previous articles in this column—namely, that what is best practice in today's classroom should find its way into religious instruction. With this in mind, I recently presented a workshop entitled "If the Archbishop Has a Blog ... Technology and Student Engagement in the Religion Classroom." In this article I'll discuss some key principles for using technology for religious instruction, coming at it first from

my Catholic Christian tradition, and then focusing on four questions that need to be answered when using technology in *any* classroom.

Church Teaching on the Use of Technology

For the last 45 years, the Catholic Church has celebrated a World Communications Day on the second Sunday in May. Part of the celebration is an address from the Pope, and so it should come as no surprise to us that the most recent addresses deal with the media, technology and the Internet. In 2002, John Paul II expressed the Church's position on the Internet succinctly:

Like other communications media, it is a means, not an end in itself. The Internet can offer magnificent opportunities for evangelization if used with competence and a clear awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. Above all, by providing information and stirring interest it makes possible an initial encounter with the Christian message, especially among the young who increasingly turn to

the world of cyberspace as a window on the world.¹

Like his predecessor, Benedict XVI sees the new technologies as a vehicle for evangelization and urges priests to use it for the Church's mission:

The development of the new technologies and the larger digital world represents a great resource for humanity as a whole and for every individual, and it can act as a stimulus to encounter and dialogue. But this development likewise represents a great opportunity for believers. No door can or should be closed to those who, in the name of the risen Christ, are committed to drawing near to others. To priests in particular the new media offer ever new and far-reaching pastoral possibilities, encouraging them to embody the universality of the Church's mission.²

We would do well to have a thorough read of the World Communications Day addresses, because they highlight the need to evangelize the world using, with prudence and right judgment, the gift of technology.

Four Key Questions

As religious educators, we recognize that we instruct, catechize and evangelize, but how do we integrate technology into our mission? I believe the key is to keep in mind key questions that would apply to any educational use of technology, be it using an interactive whiteboard or watching a YouTube clip.

Question 1: Will the technology enhance the lesson and engage the learner?

The answer to this question must be uppermost in our minds as educators. Take the use of the interactive whiteboard (SMART-Board, Promethean, etc). How exactly is it being used? If the teacher is merely putting up notes from a computer so that students can copy them down, we have merely changed the technology—from the chalkboard to the overhead to the projected PowerPoint. The resulting learning experience is no different from that of the classroom of a hundred years ago. The lesson has not been enhanced and the learner has not been engaged. If, however, a real-time discussion is happening in the class, and other students are texting onto the whiteboard at the same time, there is a better chance of a wider and deeper engagement in the classroom. Add a blog on the Internet to further the discussion, and learning is enhanced.

Question 2: Will the learner be the primary user of the technology?

“OK, class, I found another really neat YouTube clip that shows the parable of the mustard seed ...” Nothing wrong here, except that we are forgetting that

engaging students is about *their* ownership of their learning. This is a very challenging question, especially for those of us who are really enamoured (dare I say seduced) by the technology. We want to be the key players and show all the cool stuff we find, rather than letting the students find it for themselves. Let’s take this YouTube example a step further. Rather than having students search for parables on YouTube, have them *create* parables and post them on YouTube. Which brings us to the next question ...

Question 3: Will it bring down the walls of the classroom?

One of the keys of 21st-century learning is to have students make meaningful connections to their world and apply their learning to change their world *now*, not “when they get out into the real world.” The best example of this is the use of video conferencing. Most schools in Alberta are now equipped with a least one video suite, and every classroom with Internet can connect to people around the globe using Skype. Now, more than ever, we can teach about justice and peace in ways that we never imagined 20 years ago. Classroom discussions can be turned into podcasts. Guest speakers can come from the other side of the world. Twinning with another classroom becomes a real-time experience. The world becomes the classroom.

Question 4: Will it help to deepen their faith?

As you can see, the first three questions need to be addressed by every classroom teacher in the 21st century. As religious educators, we have a fourth question.

Whether we are providing religious instruction or permeating faith in other subject areas, we need to have an awareness of the power of technology to awaken and deepen faith. How? I think the opportunities are endless if we seriously address the first three questions. Through creative use of technology, we can hear the voice of the introvert who never participates in classroom discussions. Students can have a voice and be empowered when they can start using technology in the classroom that they use all the time at home. Students can connect with the global village and be moved to compassion and, ultimately, justice. If properly integrated, technology in the religion classroom can be the “great opportunity” that the Church envisions. Next time, we’ll look at some Web 2.0 tools that will bring LIFE to the religion classroom.

Notes

1. Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 36th World Communications Day. “Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel.” May 12, 2002. Available at www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20020122_world-communications-day_en.html (accessed December 2, 2010).

2. Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 44th World Communications Day. “The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word.” May 16, 2010. Available at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20100124_44th-world-communications-day_en.html (accessed December 2, 2010).



Pray Me a Story Series 1

Chicago, Ill: Loyola Press, 2010
ISBN-13: 978-0-8294-3260-2
(Kit)

Reviewed by
Dorothy Burns

One of the principal forms of prayer in the spiritual exercises of Ignatian spirituality is imaginative reflection of scenes from the gospels. The participant is to notice the feelings and desires inspired by an encounter with Jesus. These imaginative prayer encounters with God stir the emotions.

Faithful to the spirit of this form of prayer, Loyola Press has created the Pray Me a Story series, which puts a modern twist on this Ignatian tradition—and uses

well-known children's literature as the starting point for prayer. The stories contain themes and life lessons that touch children's experience and are an innovative way to simultaneously promote literacy and build faith.

"Pray Me a Story is designed for use by catechists, religion teachers, parents, grandparents—anyone who prays with children of any age and wants to lead them into a closer relationship with God" (Loyola Press).

The titles in the series include the following:

- *The Gift of Nothing*
- *Chicken Sunday*
- *On the Day You Were Born*
- *You Are Special*
- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*
- *Grandad's Prayers of the Earth*
- *A Quiet Place*

- *The Three Questions*
- *The Rainbow Fish*

Each title can be purchased separately and comes with a reflection guide, or you can buy the entire series as a kit. Information is available at www.loyola-press.com.

Each reflection guide includes a "Background for the Adult" and tips to guide the prayer experience:

- "Set the Stage"
- "Read and Discuss the Story" (includes a summary of the story and discussion questions)
- "Get Ready for Prayer"
- "Lead the Meditation" (includes a script for a guided meditation)
- "Close"

Once you become familiar with the pattern for this type of prayer, you may find yourself praying other beloved stories with your children.

**Help Children learn to pray with
stories they know and love!**

\$3,000 Project Grants Available

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. The Trust awards a number of grants of up to \$3,000 to help Alberta teachers or others involved in education and teaching to develop innovative resources that support curriculum, teaching or learning. Individuals or groups planning to undertake a project or conduct research must submit a detailed proposal on or before May 1, 2011.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



The ATA Educational Trust

AR-ETF-25 2010 09

\$300 ATA Specialist Council Grants

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. For this grant program, interested teachers may enter their name into a draw for \$300 towards the cost of an ATA specialist council conference.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. The deadline for conference grants is September 30, 2011. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



The ATA Educational Trust

AR-ETF-23 2010 09

\$500 Bursaries to Improve Knowledge and Skills

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. The Trust encourages Alberta teachers to improve their knowledge and skills through formal education. The names of 40 (or more) eligible teachers who apply for this bursary will be entered into a draw for up to \$500 to be applied toward tuition.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. The deadline for bursary applications is May 1, 2011. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



The ATA Educational Trust

AR-ETF-24 2010 09



Guidelines

The RMEC newsjournal *Embrace the Spirit* is published to

- promote professional development of educators in the areas of religious and moral education and
- provide a forum for contributors to share ideas related to religious and moral education.

Submissions are requested that will provide material for personal reflection, theoretical consideration and practical application. Where appropriate, graphics and photographs are welcome.

The following areas will be addressed in the newsjournal:

- Classroom and school projects
- Upcoming events
- Book reviews
- Reflections
- Feature articles and interviews
- Humour in religion
- Liturgies

Manuscripts should be submitted on disk (preferably) with an accompanying hard copy or in duplicate. The manuscript should include a title page that states the author's name, professional position, address and phone number(s). Submissions should be typed and double-spaced and may be any length to a maximum of 5,000 words. References must appear in full in a list at the end of the article.

Send contributions or enquiries to the editor: Dorothy Burns, PO Bag 3, 46 Elma Street West, Okotoks, AB T1S 2A2; phone 403-938-6051 (res) or 403-938-4265 (bus); fax 403-938-4575; e-mail dburns@redeemer.ab.ca.

The editorial board, which reserves the right to edit for clarity and space, reviews all submissions.

