

Embrace the Spirit

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**Newsjournal of the
Religious and Moral Education Council**
The Alberta Teachers' Association



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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 electronically, in Microsoft Word format. 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, 1 McRae Street, Box 1318, Okotoks, AB T1S 1B3; 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.

Visit our website at <http://rmec.teachers.ab.ca>



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The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Specialist councils' role in promoting diversity, equity and human rights

Alberta's rapidly changing demographics are creating an exciting cultural diversity that is reflected in the province's urban and rural classrooms. The new landscape of the school provides an ideal context in which to teach students that strength lies in diversity. The challenge that teachers face is to capitalize on the energy of today's intercultural classroom mix to lay the groundwork for all students to succeed. To support teachers in their critical roles as leaders in inclusive education, in 2000 the Alberta Teachers' Association established the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee (DEHRC).

DEHRC aims to assist educators in their legal, professional and ethical responsibilities to protect all students and to maintain safe, caring and inclusive learning environments. Topics of focus for DEHRC include intercultural education, inclusive learning communities, gender equity, UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, sexual orientation and gender variance.

Here are some activities the DEHR committee undertakes:

- Studying, advising and making recommendations on policies that reflect respect for diversity, equity and human rights
- Offering annual Inclusive Learning Communities Grants (up to \$2,000) to support activities that support inclusion
- Producing *Just in Time*, an electronic newsletter that can be found at www.teachers.ab.ca; Teaching in Alberta; Diversity, Equity and Human Rights.
- Providing and creating print and web-based teacher resources
- Creating a list of presenters on DEHR topics
- Supporting the Association instructor workshops on diversity

Specialist councils are uniquely situated to learn about diversity issues directly from teachers in the field who see how diversity issues play out in subject areas. Specialist council members are encouraged to share the challenges they may be facing in terms of diversity in their own classrooms and to incorporate these discussions into specialist council activities, publications and conferences.

Diversity, equity and human rights affect the work of all members. What are you doing to make a difference?

Further information about the work of the DEHR committee can be found on the Association's website at www.teachers.ab.ca under Teaching in Alberta, Diversity, Equity and Human Rights.

Alternatively, contact Andrea Berg, executive staff officer, Professional Development, at andrea.berg@ata.ab.ca for more information.



Embrace the Spirit



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A Note from the Editor

The theme of our fall conference was “World Religions in Dialogue: The New Frontier.” We had two excellent speakers: Father Stefano Penna and Dr Suzanne Bremault-Phillips. It was also a pleasure to hear the perspectives of our brothers and sisters in other faith traditions and visit their sacred spaces (see the article on the conference for more details). One thing that I took away from the conference is the necessity of asking good questions to get to the heart of matters. This is a thread that seems to run through some of our articles this time around.

As moral and religious educators we should be considering many questions. What should we be teaching and how should we be teaching it? Who decides what is important to teach? How do we know that what we are doing is actually making a difference? These are some of the questions to keep in mind when reading the scholarly article by Burns and Burns (no relation), which explores “what the empirical facts one learns from educational research have to do with the normative values of moral education.” This article underlines the importance of not accepting at face value what the experts say we should be doing. Even researchers bring a set of presuppositions to their work. How do we respectfully discuss their work with them? It is important that religious and moral educators strive to base their work on solid research.

Tim Cusack interviewed Dr Thomas Groome, an internationally renowned religious educator. What a privilege for Tim, and for us as well! Dr Groome has had a major influence on the methodology and praxis of religious education, particularly in the Catholic tradition, for many decades. His shared-praxis method underlies the religion curriculum used in Catholic schools in Alberta. This does not mean that his is the only method to which we should subscribe. Over the past few years, Dr Groome’s work has been critiqued by some very thoughtful people. Hopefully, in a future issue of the journal we can shed some light on this discussion. In the meantime, I refer you to some articles that will clarify some of the issues in contention: www.satsonline.org/userfiles/Woodbridge_ReviewGroome.pdf and www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=6515.

Just a few words now about this issue of *Embrace the Spirit*.

Due to his many other commitments, Tim Cusack will not be continuing as coeditor of *Embrace the Spirit*, but will continue to make contributions to the journal.

As always, Michael Marien provides some practical wisdom for us to consider in making what we do relevant and meaningful for students.

Mission trips have an impact on students; the anecdotal evidence is clear, as we can see in the article by Lea Foy.

Even as I put this issue to print I am thinking about the spring issue of *Embrace the Spirit*. If there is anything happening in your district or school that you would like us to know about, please send information. Pictures and articles are always welcome too, as are book and resource reviews and practical teaching ideas.

Until next time.

Dorothy Burns

Editor’s note: both websites noted above were accessed on November 10, 2011.



the people want; when the lights go out in a storm, I’m grateful that I have light; and when teachers give lectures, I’m glad that I am able to go to school. I am much more conscious of the luxuries and what we would call necessities that I have and I do

my best to never complain or say something isn’t fair, because after what I experienced with CCIDD it doesn’t compare. I would like to thank everyone who organized, planned and approved the mission trip with all my heart because it was an

experience that taught me lessons I will always remember.”

If you would like more information on our mission trip, contact Lea Foy at Lakeland Catholic School District by e-mail at lfloy@lcsd150.ab.ca or by phone at 780-813-0105.



Lakeland Catholic Mission Trip Opens Our Hearts to Our Brothers and Sisters in Mexico

Lea Foy

Lea Foy is religious education coordinator for Lakeland Roman Catholic School District No 150, in Bonnyville, Alberta.

In April 2011, a group of twelve students from Notre Dame High and Assumption schools, two staff members and two parents travelled to Cuernavaca, Mexico, to live out our call to love and serve others. This was the fourth such mission trip that Lakeland Catholic high school students have experienced. During our stay, the students developed a deeper sense of justice and service through the activities planned by the staff of the Cuernavaca Centre for Inter-cultural Dialogue on Development (CCIDD). The program began shortly after our arrival, with the Cuernavaca Quest, when students got a taste of the realities of living in poverty as they shopped for groceries with 50 pesos, a typical day's wage for the people they were to meet. The second excursion took us to the homes of families in La Estación, an impoverished squatters' settlement in the city of Cuernavaca. This was a turning point for many of the students and the supervisors—

they reported that most of their learning came from the Mexican people they encountered, especially the families of La Estación. This was a time to visit the homes of people who work every day, yet live in poverty. There was also time for working alongside two of these families—cleaning, moving, repairing and rebuilding, and mixing concrete by hand to build stone walls to improve their homes. The 10 days were filled with such experiences as well as with cultural excursions and listening to speakers who addressed topics from politics to religion. There was also time to pray, debrief and reflect, which helped us absorb and make sense of the learning.

What did the students bring back to Canada? These are some of their comments: "We learned so much from them." "I realized that they are families just like us; they have the same hopes for their children—they were just born in different circumstances." "We laugh at the same things, listen to the same music, and even though there was a language barrier, we could work together, play and understand one another." "I will appreciate the things I have back

home and not take for granted things like running water and a bathroom of my own." "I will not take anything I have for granted, especially my family and the relationships that I have."

The following is one participant's reflection several months after the trip.

The thing that I remember the most and found the most inspiring from our mission trip was the attitudes and outlooks of all the people. Despite being at the very bottom and ignored by most of their society, they were so welcoming, caring and just happy to live. It made me realize just how much money has nothing to do with happiness because these people were some of the poorest, yet they were probably happier than most of the people I know that have fancy cars, big TVs and exotic vacations. It's one thing to hear about poverty and see it on the news; it's an entirely different thing to walk among it. Going to Mexico has made me count my blessings and appreciate all the things in life that used to be annoying. For example, when Parliament squabbles I'm grateful that they squabble over what



The most important factor in student achievement is the quality of instruction in the classroom. The best teachers, like all great leaders, have a clear sense of what they want to accomplish. They are great communicators, help others believe in their ability to be successful, and persist until they accomplish their goals.

—Richard DuFour and Robert J Marzano, in *Leaders of Learning*, 2011, Solution Tree



As we journey through this school year, try to remember this quote. A wise woman, Carol Koran, sent this to the staff at the school where I have the privilege of teaching. Our students have been entrusted to our care by their parents and guardians. As a teacher you have the ability to shape these children. You will give them the best education that you can because you are a caring teacher. Elementary teachers wipe noses, help with coats and guide little ones. Junior high teachers deal with hormones and teenagers. High school teachers guide their students to careers and education placements. All teachers strive to have their students become the best that they can become.

Whether you teach pre-K or Physics 30, you have a sense of what you want to accomplish that day. The rewards are sometimes nebulous, but you will know that you have been a servant teacher. Enjoy the laughter with your students.

Seven Days of Inspiration

Take one a day and feel great all week!

Day 1—You are 100 per cent wonderful.

Day 2—Count the steps you take, not the mistakes you make.

Day 3—Today will bring you a new reason to smile.

Day 4—Positivity is the best fuel.

Day 5—There are angels among us. You're one of them.

Day 6—Things can turn out better than you expect.

Day 7—Your dreams are close.

Special Acknowledgements

This year there are two people leaving our executive to whom we would like to give special thanks:

- Bob Gleeson, who served as webmaster from 1999 to 2007 and has been treasurer since 2003, and
- Michael Marien, who was conference codirector in 2000, conference director for 2009 and 2010 and secretary this past year.

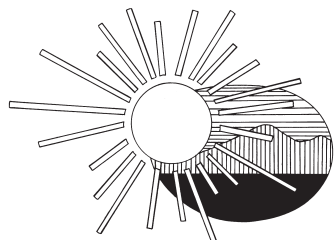
Thank you both for your service, and all best wishes.

Sharon Malec



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Lea Foy, Lakeland Catholic RCSSD No 150, Bonnyville
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Sharon Malec, St Francis Junior High School, Lethbridge
Michael Marien, St Thomas Aquinas RCRD No 38, Leduc
Sandy Talarico, Newman Theological College and Edmonton Catholic Schools



Religious and Moral Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association

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.

year. Make sure that the staff is just as engaged as the students.

4. Appropriate Time and Length

Consideration for the time of year really depends on the retreat theme. If the focus is on team building and school leadership, then plan for the fall. I like the fall retreats rather than late spring or end of year—there seems to be a more reflective mood earlier in the year.

While there may be a long-standing tradition of providing overnight retreats for students in your school, consider the retreat's purpose. You might plan some amazing experiences for your students' two-day retreat, only to find that no one wants to participate in the day two activities because of lack of sleep. Ask yourself if what you are planning really needs more than one day and whether your students will benefit.

5. Provide for Multiple Intelligences

Some of the best-planned student retreats I have seen are those in which students get a wide variety of experiences. For example, one school in my district divides its Grades 7 and 8 students into groups of 10 to 12. The students then rotate through teacher-led events, each with a different focus—art, cooking, music, Scripture reading, drama—but all connected to the same theme. Students come away from the retreat having been challenged but also affirmed by the variety of

intelligences that were engaged by the activities.

6. Self-Reflection and Silence

The retreat should incorporate opportunities for self-reflection. If there are a variety of activities, provide some time at end of each for some journal writing or verbal debriefing. Journal writing is particularly effective, because everyone has a chance to “speak” and a chance for silent time with God. Besides being nature deprived, we are also silence deprived. This is why the natural setting is so important. We all need to get away from the hubbub of modern life. Perhaps a retreat activity could be to contemplate Psalm 46:10 “Be still and know that I am God.”

7. Home Work

Let's say you have your retreat on a Friday before a long weekend. What happens on Tuesday? Is there some follow-up? In some instances, the retreat could be a cornerstone for a religious studies unit. Referring to the event in class on a continuous basis will keep the experience vibrant in the students. Depending on the theme, it could also change the whole classroom dynamic. But it won't happen unless it becomes part of future planning. Bring it home to the students by keeping the experience uppermost in their minds.

8. Assessment

Don't leave the final step in a successful retreat—assessment—to the end. Start thinking about

assessment both of and for learning when you start planning for the retreat. Start with the question “How will we know that the retreat has been a success?” Once you have established the criteria for success, the rest of the planning becomes easier and more focused. Collect data and responses from the participants so that you have something to work with the following year.

Another important question: What are your summative assessment expectations? For some high school retreats, summative assessment may play a significant role. On a related note, it is important for religious studies programs in Alberta to follow the current regulations for locally developed courses. Hours of face-to-face instruction need to be accurately determined—time spent eating and sleeping on the retreat doesn't count for credit! If a credit is to be awarded, there must be a formal summative assessment included.

Whatever you choose to do, assessment of the experience will be essential.

A Memory Maker

A successful retreat can be one of the most powerful memories that students will take with them into their adult lives. With thoughtful planning, a retreat can bring students to a deeper understanding of themselves, their peers and their teachers. Most important, it can be a time for them to be still and know their God.

The Student Retreat as Memory Maker

Michael Marien

Michael Marien is the faith life and curriculum coordinator for St Thomas Aquinas CSRD No 38. He is also a sessional lecturer at Newman Theological College. Check out his blog at <http://faithlife.staratholic.ab.ca>.

In faith-based schools across the province, many teachers and students attend some type of faith experience that is as old as religion itself—the retreat. In fact, it is not uncommon in the secular domain to hear of staff and executives going to visioning or team-building retreats. In this article, let’s look at the retreat as a LIFE experience by exploring eight key features of a successful student retreat. If we think about it, most of the same elements that make for an excellent classroom experience also make for an excellent retreat.

Eight Key Features

1. A Retreat Environment

One of the first decisions a classroom teacher makes at the beginning of the school year is the way the classroom is set up. This should also be the first decision when planning a retreat. Although theme and facilitators are critical, I believe that the retreat setting will last the longest in student memories. Consider where most spiritual

retreats are set—in quiet isolated areas surrounded by nature. Despite this, though, many of our decisions on where to go are limited by school finances, so a local church basement becomes a ready space, free of the cost of transportation. This is a huge disservice to the retreat’s effectiveness. There is a growing body of evidence that our children are suffering from nature deficit disorder (see www.childrenandnature.org). If finances make it impossible to get to a natural setting, then make sure that part of the experience includes a walk in the park.

2. Learner Input into Planning

In the many years that I have facilitated retreats or worked with staffs to coordinate them, I can’t think of a time when there was direct student input into the nature of the retreat. Perhaps this is just a reflection of my personal experience, as I would imagine that a Grade 12 graduation retreat committee would involve the participants in planning. But why not have student input at every grade level? If we want this to be an engaging learning experience, there must be some process for student involvement in the planning. Our students in faith-based schools come with all kinds of

experiences, particularly from summer camps. Students will share everything from songs to boredom busters to team games, if given the chance. At the very least, give them some choice on the food to be eaten!

3. Staff Engagement

There are tremendous retreat programs that schools can access. In the Catholic milieu to which I am accustomed, groups like the National Evangelization Team do incredible work. Young and energetic, they provide another faith voice for students.

There is a danger here, however. Because the work of facilitating the retreat is done for them, school staffs can take a secondary role, or no role at all. So if it is a *school* retreat, shouldn’t the staff be the retreat leaders? If one of the primary reasons for having a faith-based school is for students to see witnesses, shouldn’t the retreat be the best venue for staff members to be witnesses? Staff engagement in the student retreat should be maximized, not minimized. There is, of course, the notion that “a prophet is not without honour except in his hometown and in his own household” (Matt 13:57). If retreats are done on an annual basis, bring in the outside facilitator every second

Conference 2011—“World Religions in Dialogue: The New Frontier”

Dorothy Burns

This year the council experimented with a new format for the conference to take advantage of the presence of different faith traditions in the city of Edmonton. Over the course of an evening and a full day, we toured temples of three eastern religions and heard two speakers, Father Stefano Penna and Dr Suzette Bremault-Phillips.

At each of the sites we visited we were graciously received and heard an explanation of the beliefs and spiritual practices of its tradition:

- Chin Yin Buddhist Temple—host Mr Robert Rosinski
- Hindu Temple—hosts Mr Sushil Kalia and Mrs Renu Narang
- Sikh Temple—host Dr Randy Randhawa

In his opening remarks, Father Penna set the parameters for dialogue with other faith traditions, noting that in an increasingly secular culture such as ours we can find common cause with fellow seekers who are open to the transcendent.

Dr Suzette Bremault-Phillips enlightened us on the pilgrim way and spoke of the spiritual journey having a starting point, a path and

an endpoint. It is the path that is similar among traditions. For Christians, the path and endpoint are not *what*, but *who*. Dr Bremault-Phillips gave us a series of questions that we should ask in seeking to understand other faith traditions:

- How are person, path and potential understood?
- What spiritual practices are employed?
- What is the goal of the spiritual practices?
- What symbols and rituals are part of the tradition?
- What texts are seen as sacred/authoritative?
- Is the tradition monotheistic?
- What is its understanding of death and life?
- What are the basic tenets of the tradition?
- What or who do adherents follow?
- What is the same and different among Christian traditions?
- What is common between Christian and other traditions? What is different?



- Do words (for example, *love*) mean the same thing in different traditions?
- What is syncretism? How do we caution against it?

Father Penna noted how non-Christian eastern religions have influenced pop culture: today, a majority of people are consequentialists with a strong sense of karma. Non-Christian eastern religions are deeply rooted in mysticism. In today’s culture there is an emphasis on feelings rather than thinking, which makes it



difficult to engage in dialogue. The rituals are all the same but the beliefs are radically different. This is why the oft-used story of the blind men

and the elephant is a poor analogy.

Father Penna discussed the Catholic Christian perspective of commitment to the truth as a relational decision, primarily an encounter. Marriage is a stronger analogy: “I give thee my troth.”

- There is a *confidence* that my spouse is presenting herself to me.

- There is a demand that I *respond* to and have a passion for the truth of my spouse.
- There is a recognition that one never has the full truth of the other—there is always a *mystery* waiting.

These are just some of the highlights of the many insights we received.

The conference concluded with a wine and cheese and awards ceremony. This year three people were recognized.

- The **Award of Merit** recognizes exemplary classroom teaching, leadership, and/or service in the field of religious studies and moral education. There were two recipients:

- Kathleen Macridis, Grade 3 teacher, St Gregory Catholic Elementary School, Hinton. Her nomination was supported by Tim Zarski, principal of St Gregory.

Miss Macridis is an extremely devoted professional teacher who recognizes the importance that each child plays in society and clearly understands the relevance of Catholic teaching to each child. She is very passionate about Catholic education and displays her enthusiasm both in and outside of her classroom. Her passion is evident in her willingness to act as a coach for Smart Boards in our school and to accept new initiatives with excitement and dedication. Kathleen is an active member of our Liturgy Committee and always offers valuable advice and suggestions to staff during meetings. She plays a musical instrument at all of our liturgies and at staff masses and acts as a lead singer for these occasions as



Kathleen Macridis and Sharon Malec

- well. She was responsible for the organization of our annual Grade 4 Blessing Ceremony and has performed the re-enactment of the Last Supper with her students. In addition, Kathleen has her students involved in drama—they perform parables and act out New Testament stories. Morning prayers, daily intentions, traditional prayers and a fun grace are evident in her classroom.
- Steven Dempsey, principal of Holy Spirit Catholic School, Devon, was nominated by Michael Hauptman, deputy superintendent of Evergreen Catholic Schools. Mr Dempsey was unable to attend the conference.

As principal, Steve Dempsey understands his role as Catholic leader, teacher and partner in faith. At the opening mass, at St Maria Goretti Parish in Devon, Steve explained to the students some of the behaviour expectations for mass and gave a little talk about how we don't *take* communion but rather *receive* it, thereby emphasizing the significance of the consecration. His own

faith shines through especially brightly in moments such as these. He welcomes the clergy into his school, where they play an important role. Our division youth minister, who works in all of our schools, says that he feels most welcome at Holy Spirit because of its welcoming environment and the strong Catholic presence evident as soon as one enters the foyer. Steve is directly responsible for many of the attributes that have contributed to this culture of a Christ-centred school. He sets the standard for Catholic leadership and faith permeation.

- The **Dr Peter Craigie Award** is presented to an individual or organization for service that has contributed to the professional growth of RMEC members. This year's recipient was Sharon Malec, nominated by Dr Mark A Nixon. They are colleagues at Catholic Central High School, in Lethbridge.

As a classroom teacher, Sharon Malec has developed and maintained an excellent standard of teaching combined with an attitude of compassion. She never stops learning to improve her teaching skills,



Hindu Temple

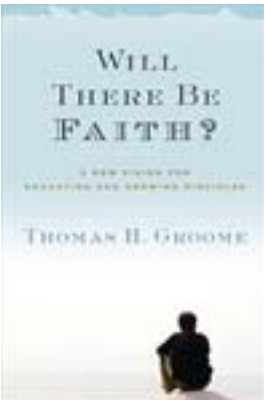
1. A positive understanding of the human person and the great potential of every student
2. A sacramental outlook on life in the world, seeing "the more than meets the eye"
3. A commitment to community that is all for one and one for all
4. A participative and holistic way of knowing that is likely to lead people to wisdom and responsibility
5. An appreciation and reclamation of the "funded capital of civilization" bequeathed from our foreparents, with emphasis on accessing the spiritual wisdom of scripture and tradition
6. A politics that is deeply committed to justice for all
7. A spirituality that puts faith to work every day
8. A catholicity that has no borders to its welcome and outreach (pp 255–56)

Groome reminds us that "many of these commitments overlap, and none can stand alone. When woven together, however, they amount to a Catholic philosophy and spirituality of education" (p 256).

I hope I have managed to pique your interest in this exciting new book. Focused on stressing the importance of the centrality of Christ in all that we do—as simplistic as that seems—*Will There Be Faith?* is an essential read for all stakeholders and partners in religious education. It is a text that will serve the common good of all society for many years to come. It is a text that requires a great amount of unpacking, sorting and deliberation, and it will cause you to think and respond on numerous levels. Groome states that "religious education is a vital responsibility for every community of faith ... For the Christian faith in particular, the last great mandate that the Risen Christ gave to the little remnant community on a hillside in Galilee was [that] they should 'make disciples of all nations ... teaching them' what he had taught (Matt 28:16–19)" (p 10). As was the case in explaining the parable of the persistent widow, Jesus gives us the strength of heart and the courage of mind to go forth and teach as he taught. In seeking to inform, form and

transform, we need to examine justice, community and the master teacher at work. This is precisely what Thomas Groome achieves in *Will There Be Faith?* It is a most fulfilling and rewarding read that will challenge you to examine your life-to-faith-to-life journey along the narrow way.

Groome, T H. 2011. *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*. New York: HarperCollins.



reader to create a personal context in coming to understand his ideas. He states “the overarching approach I propose invites people to ‘bring their lives to their Faith, and their Faith to their lives’” (p 13). On the surface, this sounds straightforward. Upon closer inspection, however, we come to the realization that our faith and our lives, as intertwined as they should be, are often kept apart. Groome revisits several topics he raised in his 1998 book, *Educating for Life*, in particular the pressures and demands of our countercultural society on the individual. He reminds us that many distractions make it difficult to bring our faith and lives into harmony. Throughout his new book’s nine chapters, we gain rich insights into how Groome’s new approach can affect both our faith and our lives.

His approach challenges the reader to

- educate people to know, understand, and embrace with personal conviction Christianity’s core beliefs and values (inform);
- develop people’s identity through a formative pedagogy and the intentional socialization of Christian family and community (form); and
- open people to a lifelong journey of conversation toward holiness and fullness of life for themselves and “for the life of the world” (John 6:51) (transform) (pp 12–13).

Groome supports this model with the reassertion that “effective religious education demands the intentional participation of three key agents—the home, the parish, and the school or formal program of instruction. All three stakeholders in education must work in coalition” (pp 13–14). So that the efforts of these integral partners

can be calibrated, Groome provides an inventory of guiding ideas that all three agents need to explore to the point of clarity. Specifically, parents, parishes and schools need to be clear about

- *who* they are teaching and those learners’ potential as persons and disciples of Jesus Christ;
- *the nature* of Christian faith that they want to pass on—how holistic it is (engaging head, heart and hands), its salvific and liberating possibilities and social responsibilities, its potential to comfort the disturbed and to disturb the comfortable, and its great truths and spiritual wisdom for life;
- *the purpose* of educating in faith—the educators’ task of enabling people to flourish through Christian commitment, know their faith in ways that inform, form, and transform their identity, and commit to the positive difference for life for all that Christian faith can effect in society;
- *the context* of Christian religious education—the family, parish and school/program, and the imperative that the three be intentionally crafted to work together to socialize people into Christian identity and faith; and
- *how to go about it*—how to develop a consistent pedagogy of religious education that constantly invites people, both learners and teachers (who are also learners), to “bring their lives to their Faith and their Faith to their lives” (pp 14–15).

In his introduction, Groome clearly establishes the foundational issues upon which his text is built. The subsequent chapters expand, in wonderful detail, upon these premises, drawing upon a life-to-faith-to-life pedagogy. Through his

renowned welcoming tone and rich sense of humour, Groome invites the reader into the conversation and, at various checkpoints along the way, poses reflective questions that deepen the experience of his text. Groome comments that “the times are most challenging, and we need a new vision and approach for effective religious education in this postmodern age” (p 15). In response to the challenge of the times, Groome reminds us that

The first responsibility of religious educators is to inform and form people in their own particular tradition, giving them a sense of belonging to a spiritual home. We must ground them in the particular, however, in a way that diligently discourages sectarianism and bitterness towards “others.” Let us enable people, instead, to embrace the universality of God’s love for all humankind and to respect and appreciate all life-giving religious traditions. (p 11)

From exploring such topics as theological anthropology and the power of community, to understanding and emulating the pedagogy of Jesus, *Will There Be Faith?* informs, forms and transforms the reader towards a fuller awareness of the challenges and responsibilities of religious education. The book discusses a praxis for realizing the new vision of Catholic education: “commitment to a humanizing education for persons and serving the common good of society. Catholic educators are called to stretch into this vision by implementing the following values throughout the whole school curriculum” (p 255). The commitments Groome establishes are listed below:

always focusing on what will work best for her students. Sharon has the spiritual insight to accept students as they are. She is open, authentic and considerate. She is a positive role model for her peers and for all she serves. Sharon’s witness of faith is demonstrated in her teaching style. She models Christian values to her students in all courses and activities.

As an executive member of RMEC, Sharon has guided our executive to a place of stability and provided a solid

foundation from which our members will be better able to “nurture the moral, ethical and spiritual lives of students.” Her involvement in many conferences, at which she provides liturgies, music and reflections, has not only enriched the moment but given us samples to take back to our classrooms for our students and for our own spiritual development.

Congratulations and thanks to these award-winning teachers.



Sikh Temple

Moral Education’s Normative and Empirical Dimensions: A Reflection Through Examples

David P Burns and Amy M N Burns

There is an important tension in teaching between empirical arguments and normative arguments. Empirical arguments relate (in loose terms) to claims being made about how something *is*. It is an empirical claim to say, for example, that a certain approach to guided reading improves student literacy outcomes. Empirical arguments are fundamentally distinct from normative arguments, which relate instead to claims about how something *should be*. It is a normative claim to say, for example, that teachers *should* use a particular form of guided reading. These two forms of argument are related. One could, for example, decide what form of guided reading *should* be used in a classroom by consulting studies about the effectiveness of various alternatives. This relation-

ship is complicated, however, nowhere more so than in the field of moral education. Put simply, it is not always clear what our empirical knowledge has to do with our normative goals for moral learning. This is why, in this paper, we ask what the empirical facts one learns from educational research have to do with the normative values of moral education. How does what we think we know inform our decisions about how we should teach about morality?

This is a complex and ancient question, so rather than attempting to resolve it, we will instead content ourselves with simply drawing some of the theoretical conversation about this question into a more practical arena. We will begin by discussing the philosophical background to this

question, using an example that might be familiar to many educators—the work of Lawrence Kohlberg. Then we will introduce a contemporary example drawn from a recent empirical study conducted in Alberta high schools (Burns 2009). Once we have introduced this example we will use it to explain a series of concerns that moral educators should keep in mind when thinking about the relevance of educational research to moral educational practice.

The Kohlbergian Example

Lawrence Kohlberg’s work on moral development is some of the most famous in 20th-century educational thought. Kohlberg (1966) argued that teachers in liberal societies (like Canada) are



The Narrow Way: Issues at the Heart of Religious Educational Leadership

Will There Be Faith? Thomas Has No Doubt

Tim Cusack

Tim Cusack serves with Edmonton Catholic Schools in the St Jerome learning community.

One day, on the way to Jerusalem, Jesus was passing through the region between Samaria and Galilee. Along the way, he was discussing parables and giving examples of the faith and strength of heart that his followers would need for the difficult times ahead:

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ²He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ ⁴For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’” ⁶And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸I

tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Luke 18:1–8 NRSV).

While serving as an excellent example of perseverance and tenacity, particularly on the part of the widow, this passage reminds us that God listens, God hears and God acts. We are reminded of the need for prayer and the need to take courage in times of difficulty. We are reminded that, despite the great injustices that exist in this world, God is just and acts with compassion and mercy for his beloved. The last verse of this passage, however, depicts Jesus in a very introspective moment. Jesus is contemplating God’s profound mercy and unconditional love for humanity, yet, in the same instant, he wonders, despite everything—all the signs, miracles, and his eventual death and resurrection—when the Son of Man comes, “Will there be faith?”

Jesus raises a question that reminds us of our proclivity to turn away from God. In one sense the question appears to be a lament. Like Moses, who showed God’s presence through signs and miracles, Jesus proclaimed the coming of God’s kingdom but, despite the many times people saw God’s

power and love made manifest, they turned away from God.

Like Thomas, who needed to see the wounds on Christ’s hands and feet, human faith can be fleeting. Peter thrice denied even knowing Jesus, yet Jesus, in the scripture cited above, tells his followers not to lose heart. The question “Will there be faith?” challenges us to look deeply into the human condition and realize that in our frailty, our weakness and our sinfulness, there is hope. There is a way to better understand God’s dream for us and a better way to understand what kind of faith Jesus wants us to have. The way to arrive at this renewed awareness of faith that Jesus hopes to find is at the very heart of a new book by Thomas Groome, which is aptly titled *Will There Be Faith?*

Groome “suggests an approach to religious education that can maximize the life-giving potential of Christian faith for persons, communities and societies” (p 12). In a “contemporary, natural, holistic and flexible” manner (p 5), “it offers parents and teachers a comprehensive and user-friendly approach that can *inform, form and transform* in Christian faith and identity” (p 12). Additionally, in setting the foundation for his approach, Groome challenges the

Table 1: Kohlberg’s Stage Theory

Stage	Form of reasoning employed within stage
1	Obedience and punishment orientation. Persons in this stage defer to prestige and power.
2	Naïvely egoistic orientation. Persons in this stage view action as instrumental to the meeting of personal needs. There is some awareness of the needs of others and the concept of reciprocity
3	Good-boy orientation. Persons in this stage focus on seeking approval and conforming to behavioural norms.
4	Authority and social-order-maintaining orientation. Persons in this stage focus on doing their perceived duty and respecting social order and authority.
5	Contractual legalistic orientation. Persons in this stage recognize that rules and expectations have arbitrary starting points and that duty involves contract, respect for others and majority opinion.
6	Conscience or principle orientation. Persons in this stage focus on principles of universal and consistent applicability.

Note: Adapted from *Moral Education and the Schools: A Developmental View*, by L Kohlberg, 1966, p 7.

Thomas: Catholic schools should not be indoctrinating people, that’s for sure. The Catholic schools in Pakistan are a good example of how it is very possible to give students a good Catholic education without proselytizing. If people send their children to Catholic schools, the Catholic faith indeed should be represented there. We can expose students to Catholic Christian faith in ways that students can learn from it for their lives, being enriched spiritually and morally with their encounter with this great and rich tradition of faith, even if they don’t decide to embrace Catholicism as their own identity in faith. And if non-Catholic parents want their child to opt out of religious instruction in our Catholic schools they should have this option. I often say that evangelizing is not telling people what they should believe, but what I believe. We offer this kind of education not because all of our students are Catholic but because we are Catholic.

I taught an undergraduate course at Boston College for 27 years, simply called Catholicism: Catholicism I first semester and Catholicism II second semester. I had Jewish kids, Baptist kids, Muslim kids, all kinds of young people take that course, and I would tell all of them the same thing: “I want you to be a better Muslim, a better Jew, a better Christian, a better Baptist at the end of this course. I do want you to learn from this rich tradition of being human, spiritual and Christian that we call Catholicism.” To teach the Christian faith thoroughly and to represent it fairly is enriching, enhancing and enabling of anybody’s life.

I had a course in world religions when I was doing my doctoral

work at Columbia University. The professor, Philip Phenix, was an amazing educator. However, what I remember most was that on the day he taught Buddhism, you would swear he was a Buddhist because he had such a deep appreciation of Buddhism. Likewise, the day he taught Hinduism you would think he was a Hindu; the day he taught Judaism you would swear he was a Jew. I say this in the sense that he laid out these rich spiritual traditions in ways that anyone could readily see how intelligent people could embrace this religion. In fact, he was an ordained Presbyterian minister. Yet, Phil Phenix had such a love of these traditions that he raised up the best and the most life-giving aspects of them and all his students were enriched by our encounter with these traditions of faith. Phil Phenix had no intention of trying to make me a Muslim and buy a prayer mat. Yet, he taught and I learned from the spiritual wisdom in the Muslim tradition of turning to God five times a day. Whose life wouldn’t be enriched or confronted or inspired by such a practice of prayer throughout the day if it is properly presented? Of course, we all know that there’s a way to teach so that people simply learn about religious traditions; I think, however, that is a bit of a waste of time. On the other hand, there’s a way to teach a religious tradition so that people *become* it—they take it on as their identity. They embrace it as their life commitment. Of course, for Catholic students in our schools, this intent can be perfectly appropriate. However, in a kind of middle ground, there is a way to teach so that students learn from it for their lives regardless of what path they

take home to God. That’s how we should teach religion in our Catholic high schools and, pedagogically, it is very possible. Of course, much depends on the pedagogy.

Tim: You have raised many powerful ideas and certainly challenge us to, as you say, “lead students to new places where even the educator has never been.” My final question—your new book, *Will There Be Faith?*, will be published soon. What seeds are you hoping to sow in the rich soil that is Catholic education through your new work?

Thomas: Well, I want to propose a new vision for education in Catholic faith for our time. Some of my proposals will sound alarmingly obvious, like placing Jesus at the centre of our Catholic faith and recentring the Bible. I suppose what I am really saying is that it’s our faith in God and our faith in Jesus that should define us. Church is important but so often we think of Catholic education as simply being an arm of the Church, representing first and foremost all of Church teaching. The truth, however, is that our mandate as Catholic educators is to represent what Jesus taught and maybe, to echo a fine pastoral letter of our US Catholic bishops, not only to teach Jesus, but to teach as Jesus taught. Jesus is still the best thing we’ve got!

Tim: Amen. Thank you so much for taking time from your busy schedule to invite me into the conversation. I very much enjoyed your sessions at the RE Congress and cherish this time that we had to talk today.

Thomas: Tim, thank you. Blessings on your own good work. You know, there are plenty of Cusacks where I come from in Ireland ...

afraid of teaching clear moral lessons because of the danger of indoctrination. The result, he argued, is that moral lessons end up being confined to whatever the teacher needs to keep control in the classroom (“Don’t steal from your classmates!”), rather being than a comprehensive attempt to help students become truly moral persons. Since the dominant approach to moral education at the time was character education (which is again dominant today), Kohlberg strongly rejected character education as an approach to moral learning.

Kohlberg built his alternative to this approach on the belief that “there appears to be considerable regularity of sequence and direction in development in various cultures” and “because of this regularity, it is possible to define the maturity of a child’s moral judgment without considering its content (the particular action judged)” (Kohlberg 1966, 20). In plain terms, he argued that people around the world tend to move through similar ways of reasoning about moral problems. It is consequently possible, according to Kohlberg, to identify six stages leading to fully mature judgment. This mature judgment was focused on justice and was meant to be “universal, inclusive, consistent, and ... grounded on objective, impersonal or ideal grounds” (p 21). This definition, Kohlberg claimed, was largely agreed upon by philosophers.

This theoretical focus is clear in the empirical work that Kohlberg conducted to support his theory. This work involved posing dilemmas to young boys and questioning them to determine what kind of reasoning they used to reach their decision. In one famous formulation, Kohlberg would ask

what should be done if a dying spouse required a drug that was not affordable (Kohlberg 1966, 8). Student responses would be used to classify the subject into one of six stages defined by the characteristics of the given reasoning (these stages are reproduced in Table 1).

Kohlberg was clearly working at the intersection of the empirical and the normative. To begin with, his argument against character education involved citing studies, such as the famous Hartshorne and May research (1928–30), which he believed demonstrated that character education simply did not work (see Kohlberg 1966). He argued that the Hartshorne and May study indicated that moral behaviour is essentially situational and not dictated by virtues or character traits. In other words, Kohlberg believed that this research refuted the *normative* argument for character education by *empirically* undermining the very idea of character.

The philosophical substance of this argument is built upon this significant jump between an empirical claim and a supposedly consequent normative claim. In this element of Kohlberg’s argument, the empirical case serves not to support his proposals but to undermine the proposals of character educators. We should not pursue character education, he argued, because the empirical research fails to prove the existence of character traits.

Kohlberg also, however, used empirical research to support his own proposals. He argued that judgment is a relevant and consistent element of moral behaviour. Here the empirical data serves as a foundation, underpinning his normative arguments. Since judgment, unlike character traits, *is* a consistent part of moral behav-

iour, moral educators should teach judgment.

So it seems clear that Kohlberg viewed empirical research as playing two important guiding roles in moral education. First, he used empirical research to refute the normative arguments of others. Since character traits have little empirical basis, moral educators should not seek to inculcate character traits. Second, he used empirical research to build a foundation for his own normative arguments. Since development of justice reasoning is empirically supported, moral education should be about justice reasoning.

The Problem

The depth of the controversy regarding arguments like these is significant. Carr (2007) summarizes this controversy in saying that “the claim that ethics should start from the facts is not *itself* a fact, it is not the sort of claim that could itself be *empirically* decided in any non-question-begging way” (Carr 2007, 399). Carr argues that empirical investigation (both historically, as in Kohlberg, and today) merely reproduces the divisions already found in comparable philosophical work.

The reason for this reproduction is rooted, Carr argues, in the way in which empirical research is conducted. “What we regard as a matter for moral empirical investigation must obviously depend on what we count ... as morally significant rather than vice versa” (Carr 2007, 398). The significance of this observation to the question at hand cannot be overstated. The act of seeking evidence for the development of justice reasoning (as in Kohlberg’s case) *is itself a normative act*. That is, the fact that Kohlberg described what he found

as *justice* at all, combined with the fact that he was looking for evidence of this sort of thought, is a function of the normative assumptions with which he began his work. To search for evidence of justice reasoning is to privilege justice as a moral concept.

As a result of the way in which normative choices like these become manifest through the process of empirical research, it has been argued that these sorts of supposedly empirical investigations are, in actuality, normative “all the way down” (Carr 2007, 400). While it is not always immediately clear where one begins and the other ends, clear evidence of both presents itself. All of this is philosophical history, though, and we can now move on to a more contemporary discussion through our modern-day moral-psychological example.

The Example

The study we will discuss was conducted in 2008 and was designed to measure the effectiveness of an educational intervention (Burns 2009). Specifically, it sought to “evaluate whether [an] ... educational presentation was effective in ... increasing adolescents’ knowledge about the signs and symptoms of schizophrenia and decreasing negative attributions and social distance” (p 9). In short, it sought to measure the extent to which an educational intervention reduced stigmatization of people suffering from schizophrenia. The presentation, provided by the Edmonton Early Psychosis Intervention Clinic (EEPIC), “focuses on major myths, early warning signs, and the role of stigma and discrimination as obstacles to care and recovery” (Burns 2009, 2).

This study used a combination of education, in the form of a presentation given by two nurses to high school students, and indirect contact, in the form of a 20-minute video about people with schizophrenia. The fundamental reasoning, in both the presentation and in this study about it, is that stigma is a consequence of ignorance (see Brockington et al 1993; Corrigan et al 2001) and that addressing public ignorance is a worthwhile educational activity.

The study itself was conducted by applying two assessments: the Attribution Questionnaire (AQ-27) (Corrigan et al 2003), which measures attitudes towards people with mental illness, and the World Psychiatric Association’s (WPA) stigma questionnaire (WPA 2005), which measures knowledge, distance and prior exposure to persons with mental illness. Both instruments were administered one week prior to and immediately following the educational intervention, which itself lasted approximately 80 minutes. Overall, 98 preintervention questionnaires and 154 postintervention questionnaires were received; a total of 78 respondents provided the necessary consent forms. These numbers resulted in a response rate of 36.4 per cent.

The results of the study were modest but encouraging. The data from the AQ-27 assessment indicate statistically significant positive changes in “pity,” “fear” and “dangerousness.” That is, students taking part in the educational intervention reported less fear and pity towards persons with schizophrenia and viewed such persons as less dangerous after the intervention. No statistically significant positive changes occurred, however, in “responsibility,” “anger,” “help,” “coercion,” “segregation,” or “avoidance.”

The WPA assessment yielded similarly modest results. A statistically significant improvement was found in respondent knowledge of schizophrenia. Curiously, though, many of the specific indicators of knowledge were unchanged or indicated an increase in false beliefs. The false belief that persons with schizophrenia suffer from split-personality disorder was roughly equally rated in both assessments. After the intervention, respondents reported being more likely to marry someone with schizophrenia and less disturbed about rooming with someone with schizophrenia. They also reported, however, feeling less likely to maintain a friendship with such a person.

Overall, the study indicates that this particular educational intervention increased knowledge about psychosis and schizophrenia and reduced some, though not all, aspects of reported social distance. But what does this mean? What might a moral educator make of this sort of information? What normative conclusions can be drawn once this empirical information is understood?

A Difficult Balance

The first difficulty one encounters when trying to interpret work like this for a moral educational audience is the qualified nature of the claims being made. Empirical research like this rarely results in straightforward claims about what does or does not work in a classroom. It is tempting, for instance, to read the above summary and conclude that teaching students about mental illness makes them more tolerant of their fellow students who suffer from such illness. This sort of claim, however, is badly overstated. In actuality, a

being put to work throughout a school curriculum. This philosophy/spirituality can sustain any educator in a very life-giving vocation. I feel blessed that some of my work has contributed a little to articulating what might be a truly Catholic spirituality of education, one that could be shared by any person of good will.

Some years ago I did some extensive work with the Catholic schools in Pakistan. There I found an amazing Catholic school system, about 500 schools throughout the country, all of them with predominantly Muslim students, teachers and staff. I began to ask “How are these schools Catholic?” I should add that they are strictly forbidden to proselytize; in fact, it would be dangerous for them to try to convert their students to Christian faith. People could be killed if they became Christian. In 200 years, Jesus and Mary Convent School [in Karachi] has never had a convert to Christianity, nor are they interested in converts, and yet there they are doing good Catholic education. That experience convinced me that Catholic faith can ground a tremendously life-giving philosophy of education that can be embraced by any person of good will; Catholic education is really based on universal values. That experience in Pakistan set me off to ask anew “What makes me Catholic? What makes a school a Catholic school? Indeed, what makes anyone a Catholic educator?”

Meanwhile, the challenge, at least in the USA and maybe in Canada as well, is increasingly related to funding. The US Catholic school system could be five times its size if it had public funding, providing a good education, often where it is most needed, in our inner cities and poor rural

neighbourhoods. In many of our inner-city schools, learning has all but ceased. Whereas the Catholic schools in the same neighbourhoods are doing a heck of a job giving young disadvantaged children a great and humanizing education. Sadly, many of our inner-city schools are barely able to survive at this stage. So, while the finance issue has become more urgent, the identity issue for our Catholic schools has become more defined.

Tim: One of the issues in Alberta is talk about the duplication of education systems: public and separate. Some argue that to have two is redundant and that perhaps reverting to one, secular system is in the best interest of taxpayers. How would you respond to an argument like that?

Thomas: Well, for sure, Alberta society would be all the poorer. The common good would not be well served by cutting off public funding to Catholic schools. In the United States, the federal and state governments refuse to give Catholic schools funding because they

say it would not serve the common good. But, on the contrary, a lot of research makes the same point: namely, that the US Catholic schools are turning out tremendous citizens, well educated in the basics and also with a good moral compass; you could hire them to work in a bank or business and they’d be less likely to cheat on you. In other words, the US Catholic schools have done a tremendous service to the common good of this nation. So, the irony of ironies is the claim that US Catholic schools should not get funding because it wouldn’t serve the common good. In fact, the US public school system most often doesn’t even come close to serving the common good as effectively as the Catholic school system does—and, most often, at one-third of the cost.

Tim: One of the criticisms of Catholic education in general pertains to the issue of teaching *the truth*. At what point does teaching our truth, our lived reality, cross the line into indoctrination? What are your thoughts on this?



Tim Cusack and Dr Thomas H Groome



In Conversation with Thomas Groome

Tim Cusack

Dr Thomas H Groome was born in County Kildare, Ireland. Professor Groome holds the equivalent of an MDiv from St Patrick's Seminary in Carlow, Ireland, an MA from Fordham University and a doctoral degree in religious education from Union Theological Seminary/Columbia University. Professor Groome's publications include *What Makes Us Catholic: Eight Gifts for Life* (Harper San Francisco), *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent* (Crossroads), *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (Jossey-Bass), *Language for a "Catholic" Church* (Sheed and Ward) and *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (Wipf and Stock). Professor Groome is the primary author of various religion textbook series from W H Sadlier, most recently the *Coming to Faith* series. He is currently authoring a religion curriculum for adolescents entitled the *Credo Series* (Veritas USA). His most recent text, *Will There Be Faith?* (HarperCollins), was published in summer 2011.

Biographical details courtesy of Boston College website, www.bc.edu/schools/stm/faculty/groome.html.

Tim: I am thankful for this opportunity to meet with you. As an introductory question, I am wondering if you could touch upon what have been the significant changes in Catholic education in the time that has passed since you wrote *Educating for Life*. In particular, what have been some of the successes and what have been some of the ongoing challenges?

Thomas: I think Catholic education, with new urgency, is asking the question: What does it mean to offer a Catholic education and what does it mean to have a Catholic education? Back in the 1960s and 70s, we were almost embarrassed by our Catholicism and perhaps for good reason. We made so many exaggerated truth claims as if we have the fullness of all truth—with no more to be learned—and, since we are the one true faith, every other tradition is simply false, defective and incapable of mediating God's salvation. Thank God we came out of Vatican II and backed off from all of that excessive chauvinism we had as Catholics. Likewise for Catholic schools—we tempered our claims and, for example, began to realize that John Dewey, with his experimental education, was not an enemy, as he was com-

monly portrayed among Catholic educators, but an ally and, indeed, an echo of Thomas Aquinas and his "way of knowing."

So we backed off of sectarian Catholicism, in both our faith identity and in our schools. Having been tempered away from a Catholic chauvinism, we yet needed to reclaim our particular story, to cherish our identity as Catholic Christians. Maybe we don't have the metanarrative that explains everything to everybody all the time and everywhere. Yet, we have a great particular story of faith and education. This is what we need to reclaim as our own without allowing it to turn us against other people. Whatever turns me against my neighbour is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As Catholic educators, we simply must claim our own particular narrative, our distinctiveness—which isn't to say that we're better than everybody else, or that nobody else cares about children or is committed to good education except us. Yet, the truth is that this Catholic Christian tradition has the potential of an extraordinarily life-giving and positive philosophy of education, or better still, a spirituality of education, because it reflects deep faith convictions

far more tentative sort of claim is being made that is replete with significant qualifications.

Unfortunately, the methods through which these qualifications are made are necessarily technical. For example, a key section of this study's conclusion reads "Upon completion of the presentation, respondents endorsed less pity for Harry, $Z = -2.95$, $p < 0.01$, $r = -0.24$, and were less fearful of Harry, $Z = -3.10$, $p < 0.01$, $r = -0.25$. In addition, they regarded Harry as less dangerous, $Z = -4.16$, $p < 0.001$, $r = -0.33$ " (Burns 2009, 19). To the trained eye these numbers indicate important qualifications that hold back the strength of the claim being made. They are, in effect, a way of saying how confident the researcher is in what she has found. To the untrained eye, however, it is difficult to understand how such annotations change the conclusion being made.

This disconnect is an important one, and evidence of it presents itself even in formal moral educational scholarship. Take Gilligan's (1982) work on care ethics, for example. Gilligan's psychological research had a significant impact on moral education and, along with the pedagogical elaboration provided by Noddings (1984), her work forms the core of what is today called the care-ethical approach to moral education. Gilligan's work centred on her study of the experience of women during unplanned pregnancy. Her central conclusion was that these women did not progress through stages of *justice* reasoning, as Kohlberg had argued people do, but rather stages of *care* reasoning. This work has been used ever since to critique Kohlberg's arguments.

This debate between justice and care, though it began in the early 1980s, has resulted in extensive

debate ever since. For our purposes, though, the important element of this debate is not who might have been correct. The important element is the confusion regarding what exactly this evidence means for moral educators. In short, understanding of the nature of this debate had become so confused that Walker and Frimer (2009), two psychologists at the University of British Columbia, felt it necessary to summarize the empirical case regarding Gilligan's work, much of which, they argued, had been greatly exaggerated.

A more objective review of the relevant evidence indicates that [certain] empirical claims for Gilligan's model cannot be sustained. The data indicated that individuals are not consistent in their moral orientation, even within the limited context of real-life dilemmas. The claim of gender differences in moral orientations does not accord with the evidence. The allegation of pervasive bias in Kohlberg's model against women and those with a care orientation has no empirical validity. The core assumptions of Gilligan's theory and the scientific legitimacy of her gender critique lack empirical warrant. There is no evidence that Gilligan's model has supplanted Kohlberg's and none of substantive impact on moral/character education programmes. (Walker and Frimer 2009, 65)

Empirical psychologists clearly do not always agree about what the body of research on a particular question means, even in the case of summarized analyses of the sort Walker and Frimer are referencing in their paper. But the fundamental level of disagreement identified by this example does

indicate something more pernicious. Simply put, the disagreement evident in Walker and Frimer's discussion leaves a moral educator with two wholly exclusive arguments about the same empirical work. Because the qualifications made in empirical work often require particular technical training, and because even those with this training appear to fundamentally disagree, what is an overworked educator to make of this sort of research? The answer is unclear.

It is important to note that this disconnect operates in more than one direction, and is not merely a problem for nonpsychologists reading psychology. One of the chief critiques of Kohlberg has always been that he failed to accurately portray the contentious nature of the philosophy built into his psychology. Carr (1991) identifies Kohlberg's failure to account for the affective aspects of ethical life. Kohlberg's myopic focus on justice reasoning has been similarly critiqued. It now appears to be widely held that "justice concerns do not exhaust moral concerns" (Kristjánsson 2003, 187).

Conclusion

There is a clear gap between the sorts of work conducted from a normative perspective (as in moral philosophy) and the sorts of work conducted from an empirical perspective (as in psychology). Important insights from one side do not always translate very well into the other. Kohlberg oversimplified his philosophy, for example, while modern-day moral educationalists sometimes seem to misinterpret Gilligan's psychological work.

For these reasons it is important to understand the interplay

between normative and empirical arguments that takes place in moral educational research. As the Kohlbergian example shows, there are important tests that must be passed in both normative and empirical senses. In order for Kohlberg’s work to be useful in classrooms, it would have to be both empirically rigorous and philosophically compelling. In other words, a teacher would need to be convinced by both the methods of his science and the strength of his ideas about how the world should be. One might object to, say, Kohlberg’s use of only male subjects (an empirical concern) or his assumptions about the centrality of justice to moral education (a normative concern). Precisely these kinds of concerns should be considered when examining the stigma study we use as an example.

The stigma study is an effort to gauge the effectiveness of an intervention designed to reduce vicious behaviour (in this case, stigmatization). It is justified in terms of informing future efforts at moral educational intervention (reducing stigmatization). The fact that the intervention is supplied by health care professionals and evaluated by an empirically minded psychologist means only that the methods of its conduct are discussed in largely empirical terms. It is a fundamentally normative and moral enterprise because it was undertaken for normative and moral reasons. As a result of this reality, one’s use of this study must be tempered by judgments about this normative background and by the strength of the study’s empirical judgments (such as the sample size or method of testing). One might, for example, decide that improving the lives of students with mental

illness is an important element of moral educational practice. This is a normative decision that must be made for philosophical reasons. It is a decision that is important to what this study means to a teacher who reads it.

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