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**Enhancing the effectiveness of
Religion and Values Education
within ISNZ Schools:
Rationale, Purpose and Practice**

Catherine Syms, Diocesan School for Girls, Auckland

'Dear teacher,

*I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw
what no man should witness:
gas chambers built by learned engineers
children poisoned by educated physicians
infants killed by trained nurses
women and babies shot and burned by high school and
college graduates:
so, I am suspicious of education.
My request is: help your students become human.
Your efforts must never produce learned monsters,
skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.
Reading, writing and arithmetic are important only if
they serve to make our children more human. (1)*

Richard Pring. 1991

Preface

The overarching premise of this document is to assert categorically that the only truly effective way to deliver the critical subjects of RE and Values Education within our ISNZ schools is through the endorsement and adoption of a holistic curriculum which must be delivered by appropriately trained and qualified teachers – and that they are essential components of a modern, progressive and robust educational system: **“making our children more human”** in today’s global environment safeguards tomorrow’s society.

It is fair to say that there has been considerable confusion, misunderstanding, and indeed suspicion surrounding the teaching of Religion and Values Education; it is therefore most encouraging to see that, through sponsorship of this research project, the HISST have recognised the importance and potential of the subject area. Our schools undertake an awesome responsibility. Richard Pring, in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Educational Studies at Oxford (8 May 1991) argued the significance of the teacher’s role. He summed this up in the example of a letter sent by a Head of a large high School in Boston, US, to all her new teaching staff. The words of this letter introduce my theme.

Study Scope. This study evolved from its original aim of assessing the need for well trained RS teaching staff in ISNZ faith schools into a broader review of Religious and Values Education, highlighting some major international initiatives, and their implications for ISNZ schools in general.

It is hoped that the concepts and recommendations outlined in this research will help all ISNZ schools to engage seriously with this critical and exciting area of the curriculum, and exploit the potential we have as a network towards global leadership of its development and implementation.

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Research Summary Outline

Part One of this study seeks to provide a context and rationale for the teaching of a combined Religion and Values Education curriculum within the ISNZ schools today. A consideration of NZ's unique historical perspective pertaining to these areas was explored together with an examination of developments taking place in the broader international environment.

Part Two explores the potential for developing a specific training course to support Chaplains involved in the delivery of Religious Education within ISNZ special character schools; this was the initial premise of this research study. Questionnaires (see Appendix 2) and follow up interviews with a sample group of Chaplains across the network were carried out as part of an initial inquiry study to determine specific training requirements. Subsequent analysis of this material (contained within this document) revealed significant gaps in opportunities for both formal training and reflection in preparation for a formal teaching role. Indeed, in almost all cases, at the commencement of their initial classroom experience most Chaplains felt ill-prepared for working with young people within an academic environment.

Part Three summarises and evaluates the implementation of a 4-day pilot course which took place in conjunction with St John's Theological College and Diocesan School for Girls during April 2011. This programme was specifically devised in direct response to the findings gathered through the Chaplain's questionnaire and interview responses outlined in Part Two.

Part Four is, in effect, an extension of the original study premise, and addresses the current situation of Values Education implementation across all ISNZ schools through a second questionnaire. It identifies that this area – whilst acknowledged to be widely accepted – lacks a robust overarching framework. This points to the potential need within ISNZ to develop a broad, flexible solution implementable within both special character faith schools and non-faith schools.

Part Five draws together aspects arising from both survey results and the pilot training course into a broader picture across the ISNZ network as a whole, and makes recommendations to the organisation urging **all** schools to consider support for the expansion of this initiative to enhance and further develop the teaching of Religion and Values Education right across the network. The advantage of such a programme is self evident – well qualified teachers, functioning within a well structured Religion and Values Education curriculum, would play a vital - and unique - role in preparing all our young people to find a personal sense of meaning and purpose, and to live a fulfilled human life. The search for truth and justice should be integral to a holistic education.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the support of St John's Theological College, Auckland in development and trialling of the pilot training course, and the encouragement of Diocesan School for Girls who have given unswerving support for the development of a highly effective Religion and Values programme within the current School curriculum.

Part One

Religion and Values Education in New Zealand: Context and Rationale

Although the 1877 Education Act in New Zealand established a secular system of education in Primary schools, Values Education still played a part in the curriculum. Interestingly, Secondary schools were not bound by the same clause and for the most part, adopted a token approach to the teaching of 'Religion and Values' Education until the middle of the 20th century. By contrast, 'Faith' Schools were approved to retain their special character and in so doing gave specific emphasis to a form of 'Religious Education' which ensured students were 'properly inculcated' into the particular religious faith value system or tradition. Those who chose to send their child to a 'faith school' expected that the school would provide an authoritative form of RE which would uphold their own beliefs and values and reinforce the idea that religious belief was important *per se* for the good of society. Over the course of the 20th century, however, the religious affiliation of the parent and student communities of many of these schools has changed considerably. Growth in secularism and the perceived threat of religious extremism now challenges the once held 'traditional' religious ideals of faith schools. Many now regard themselves as either 'not religious' or increasingly there is a notable growth in the diversity of the religious groups that make up these school communities. All faith-based schools are increasingly challenged with new demands and issues developing out of altered societal and political expectations.

Schools within the state system have also suffered with 'the impact of widespread social and economic changes ...(which) provoked intense debate about how to deal with Values issues' (2). The formation of the Johnson committee on Health and Social Education in 1977 was established to consider such issues and the subsequent findings were published in a document entitled 'Growing, Sharing, Learning.' The following summary is précised from Paul Keown's extensive research document 'Values in the NZ curriculum, July 2005 (3). The committee concluded that for values education to be effective;

- *It should be carried out in partnership between home and school,*
- *Schools and teachers should be encouraged to foster basic values and provide an opportunity to explore controversial issues,*
- *Schools might appoint a senior teacher as coordinator of values education within schools,*
- *It should provide opportunity to address philosophical and spiritual dimensions and include a discussion on questions of meaning and purpose without becoming enmeshed in particular religious viewpoints or dogmas,*
- *It must take particular care to respect and understand differences between people in a pluralistic and multi-cultural society.*

According to Keown, '*While some of the committee's recommendations led to significant developments in health education and outdoor education, their recommendations regarding moral, values and spiritual education became bogged down in controversy and were not adopted. "The proposals were strongly opposed by many (but not all) churches, by business people (such as the Employers' Federation) and by groups (like the Concerned Parents Association) which claimed to speak for parents," (Snook, 2000). On the other hand, some*

aspects of values education in the curriculum were taken up by the Form One to Four social studies syllabus published in 1978 and in the health education syllabus published in 1985 (New Zealand Department of Education, 1985)'.(4)

This interest in Values Education continues today, as Emeritus Professor of Education at Massey University Ivan Snook explains, '*calls from various groups in recent years have led to increased government interest in Values education*'. In his view the Ministry has been '*cautiously... encouraging 'debate' about values education, pointed to programmes available and given some minimal financial support to pilot programmes.*' (5) Courses of particular note include '*the Virtues project*' and '*Living Values*' (the latter emerging out of the ISNZ in Partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Fletcher Challenge Trust). In addition, with attention from other interested parties, the New Zealand Principals' Federation commissioned an extensive report entitled '*Values Education in New Zealand Schools*' lead by Gail Thomson in 2006, which explored successful Values programmes in operation in schools across the country. To date, Government drives to develop a standardised and wholly secular approach to Values Education have culminated in the Values Education framework as outlined in the 2010 NZC document (based on P. Keown's recommendations). All State schools are currently required to demonstrate how these secular 'Values' have been incorporated within their teaching programmes.

Thus it is that, at present, some form of Religion and/or Values Education (in part exemplified through the NZ concept of "taha wairua" – spiritual well-being) has been integrated into most schools curricula and practice. Yet, over time, an augmented divergence in philosophical thinking towards the approach of teaching Religion **and** Values in education has emerged. Increasingly it seems there is perceived concern by many that teaching RE means promoting one faith or value system over above another whilst secular Values Education should, by definition, ignore the question of religion (in totality).

It would not be unreasonable to state that, at the present time, schools within the ISNZ appear somewhat polarised in their position towards RE and Values Education at both Primary and Secondary level. For the most part, specific teaching time is allocated to RE in the majority of Presbyterian and Anglican Schools with particular teaching resources and curricula material variously provided through the Anglican Schools Office, the NZ Association of RE Teachers and Chaplains (NZARETC) and the Dialogue Australasia Network (DAN). Annual conferences held by these organisations are available for interested parties. A wide variety of speakers of national and international repute regularly share their expertise with those involved in the teaching of RE. Feedback provided by chaplains and teachers during the course of this study verified that these organisations were significantly valued by most members of the ISNZ RE community as the fundamental source of training and support. From the (admittedly limited) research (Appendix 3) carried out by this study into the situation pervading non-faith schools within the ISNZ organisation, it might appear that there is a preference to see 'Values Education' as something integral to the curriculum as a whole and embedded within the day to day functioning of the school, rather than a standalone curriculum course. It seems that the inspiration and resources used to support 'Values' delivery vary from school to school and would principally not be of a religious nature.

Religion and Values Education on the World Stage

A. Religion and Values Education in the UK

Unlike NZ, where the 1877 Education Act established a secular system of education, RE (by definition incorporating Values Education) developed as a foundational and holistic component of the state curriculum in England, Wales and Scotland. This had come about as a consequence of the close links Christian Churches had formed with educational authorities: indeed in the early nineteenth century extensive impetus for setting up schools and teacher-training establishments and extending schooling to children had come from the churches. In the UK the teaching of RE was a compulsory feature of the curriculum until 1988 and even today, parents are required to provide a specific rationale for the withdrawal of their child from this subject. Yet in spite of this, as Watson and Thompson point out, *“until the late 1990’s, the subject itself was accorded Cinderella status”* and by the late 1990s *“many in the RE profession were seriously worried about the retention of the subject within the curriculum”*. (6) A lack of specialist teachers and inconsistency in the approach being taken towards the teaching of the subject were in the main the cause of this situation.

Yet in recent years the status of RE has grown exponentially, principally with enhanced provision of specific training for RE specialists and the adoption of a broader academic curriculum which includes the study of World Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. The situation is well articulated in G. Haig’s recent UK Guardian newspaper article, *“More than half of secondary school pupils now choose Religious Education as a GCSE subject, and for two consecutive years it’s been the fastest growing subject at AS level. The supply of specialist teachers, though, lags behind...”* (7)

Nick McKemey, the Church of England’s Head of School Improvement, further comments; *“The relentless growth of Religious Education as a choice for GCSE students underlines the importance of investing adequate resources and time in its teaching. Young people are clamouring for a deeper understanding of religious perspectives on issues of the day and how moral and ethical questions are considered by the major faiths...Twelve years of organic growth in student numbers cannot be ignored. **This is a phenomenon that indicates students’ appreciation that exploring faith and belief helps them to understand the world and become better global citizens.**”*(8)

Needless to say, with the considerable growth in students opting to study RE at examination level in recent years, a consequential improvement in government investment in the training of specialist teachers now ensures that RE in today’s UK educational environment (a professional and educational process of learning about and from religion) plays a pivotal role within the national curriculum. Within most schools, even many Anglican and other faith based schools, RE is presently regarded as an academic, open, plural and inclusive discipline, and often referred to as Religious Studies.

B. Religion and Values Education in the rest of Europe

There is widespread provision of Religion and Values as a school curriculum subject in most European countries, although the content and compulsory status of these areas within each state system varies considerably. Individual countries, with their own local, regional or national context

have diverse approaches and these vary from: 1. Education into a particular religion/values system (the kind of RE taught within the Catholic system); 2. Education about religion and values (religious and secular knowledge or Religious Studies); 3. Education from religion (aiming to provide pupils with the opportunity to consider different answers from major religious and secular traditions and to assist in developing a reflective response.(2 and 3 being the common approaches adopted by RE practitioners in the UK state system).

In many countries – for example Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the UK – there has largely been a development away from a (church led) “confessional-oriented” approach to a “non-confessional” one. *“Nowadays RE as a subject in schools in these countries is generally taught in line with the criteria of general education. It is understood as learning about religion (knowledge based) and learning from religion (based on the experience and existential questions of the students)”*. (9)

It is also interesting to note that even in France, with the prohibition on RE in the curriculum of state schools, teaching about religion is making some kind of comeback following the Regis Debray report of 2002 which recommended an increase of knowledge about religions to help raise standards in philosophy, literature and history as well as dealing with social issues.

C. Religion and Values Education across the Western World

It would be reasonable to argue, however, that - like France - many countries in the Western World do not hold an holistic approach to RE and Values education, but instead, as in New Zealand, adopt a more secular approach to the teaching of ‘Values’. As Ian Jamison asserts in his article ‘The Face to Faith Project: Grasping the ‘nettle’ of Religion’, *“Many countries start from the point of view that there is a perceived tension inherent in the relationship between religious faith and education and the easiest way of solving this is to adhere rigorously to secular principles in education. This is accompanied by an assumption that religion is an entirely private and frequently divisive matter that should be entirely left outside the classroom.”* (10) In particular this appears to largely represent the philosophical ideology adopted within the public school system of the US, Canada, Australia and indeed NZ amongst others.

This situation is further highlighted by international Values expert, Dr Peter Vardy (Heythrop College, London) in a recent article focusing on the issue of teaching about religion in schools in Australia. Vardy states, *‘Islam is the world’s second- largest religion and the fastest growing... but in Australia (like NZ)... educators tend to shy away from it. In the UK there is a highly academic approach to Religious and Values education involving philosophy, analysing argument, and it is wonderful training for becoming a barrister and other professions; it is not about indoctrination.’* Vardy goes on to say, *‘This is hard to get across to Australians because as soon as they see the word religion the hackles go up and they think this is a covert attempt to convert people to some faith or other. The idea that you can have an academic approach to these issues is somewhat alien.’* (11)

By contrast, however, and through his work with the Tony Blair Foundation, RE facilitator Jamison argues that *“In many countries... there is a growing recognition that ignoring the question of religious faith is not the best answer, in that it tends to produce individuals who are not only ignorant about religious faith, but who lack the specialised language or understandings which would enable them to engage with people of faith in the future. In the absence of this, their opinions will be formed by the vagaries of the media, or by extremist groups.”* (12)

Perhaps it would not be too premature to suggest that there begins to emerge an apparent shift in the thinking of some western educationalists about the role of a more comprehensive and holistic approach to RE and Values education which in some way incorporates a non-confessional approach to the teaching of religious and secular ideals, particularly in light of the increasing diversity of communities across the globe. This interesting phenomenon will be elaborated upon in the next section.

Human Rights and the Toledo Report

The issue of human rights, it can be argued, has become both a 'battle cry' and a pillar of Western society over the last half century. The 1948 UN 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', and in particular Article 18 which states *"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion..."*, has been held up as the definitive 20th Century Moral Standard around the world. It, or numerous derivatives and variants, have underpinned conflict resolution at international, national and local levels, and provided the reference for arbitration processes across all areas of society. As mass global migration has increased in pace over past decades, with its almost unavoidable racial, cultural and religious complexities and misconceptions, the need for ever greater understanding and tolerance increasingly pervades our everyday lives. Cultural and religious differences now closely co-exist at all levels of society, here in New Zealand as in other countries. They can only be successfully addressed within the educational process; understanding the 'human rights' of others dictates an understanding of the 'culture and religion' of others – **a largely secular requirement demands knowledge about and from religion.**

Against this background, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) requested in 2006 that its member states address the development of *"comprehensive domestic educational policies and strategies"* as a matter of urgency. The resultant 'Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools' Report (Toledo, Spain, 2007), more commonly known as the '**Toledo Report**' represents an important contribution in the correlation of human rights with the critical importance of religious education in the achievement of peaceful global co-existence. It recognises, as a fundamental tenet, that if young people are given the opportunity to learn more about different religions and belief systems which co-exist in today's pluralistic societies then the potential for clearer understanding and consequential mutual respect and tolerance is greatly enhanced. *"There is positive value in teaching that emphasises respect for everyone's rights to freedom of religion and belief, and that teaching about religions and beliefs can reduce harmful misunderstandings and stereotypes"*.

In today's media, religions are frequently portrayed in a way that does not adequately reflect their diverse, complex and dynamic nature. Circumstances dictate that different religious communities, and their individual members, interact more closely than ever before, increasingly in day to day activities. The Toledo Report stresses that whilst the achievement of a deeper understanding of religions does not necessarily guarantee tolerance and understanding, the alternative is destined to result in further misconception and possible conflict: ***"no educational system can afford to ignore the role of religions and beliefs in its history and culture"***. (13)

The ten Key Guiding Principles contained within the Report promote a practical level of human rights based direction and support for teaching about (not "of") religions and beliefs. They address

procedures for achieving a fair and balanced curriculum, but do not address any specific teaching approaches nor do they offer any curriculum content. The Report is intended for wide dissemination across the OSCE member states as assistance to educational ministries, legislators and teachers. It has also been promulgated on the basis of the universality of human rights to other international organisations for use as appropriate within national educational systems worldwide.

The Key Guiding Principles are abbreviated here as:

1. Teaching about religions and beliefs must be provided in ways that are fair, accurate and based on sound scholarship. Students should learn about religions and beliefs in an environment respectful of human rights, fundamental freedoms and civic values.
2. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should have a commitment to religious freedom that contributes to a school environment and practices that foster protection of the rights of others in a spirit of mutual respect.....
3. Teaching about religions and beliefs is a major responsibility of schools, but the manner in which this teaching takes place should not undermine or ignore the role of families and religious or belief organisations in transmitting values to successive generations.
4. Efforts should be made to establish advisory bodies at different levels that take an inclusive approach to involving different stakeholders.....
5. Where a compulsory programme involving teaching about religions and beliefs is not sufficiently objective, efforts should be made to revise it to make it more balanced and impartial.....recognising opt-out rights may be a satisfactory solution for parents and pupils.....
6. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should be adequately educated to do so. Such teachers need to have the knowledge, attitude and skills to teach about religions and beliefs in a fair and balanced way.
7. Preparation of curricula, textbooks and educational materials for teaching about religions and beliefs should take into account religious and non-religious views in a way that is inclusive, fair and respectful.
8. Curricula should be developed in accordance with recognised professional standards in order to ensure a balanced approach to study about religions and beliefs.
9. Quality curricula in the area of teaching about religions and beliefs can only contribute effectively to the educational aims of the Toledo Guiding Principles if teachers are professionally trained to use the curricula and receive ongoing training to further develop their knowledge and competencies.....

10. Curricula focusing on teaching about religions and beliefs should give attention to key historical and contemporary developments pertaining to religion and belief, and reflect global and local issues. They should be sensitive to different local manifestations of religious and secular plurality found in the schools and communities they serve.

Citing a number of UN and other international initiatives in this field over the past three decades, the Toledo Report emphasises the common threads of the past in forming the present day lives of individuals and communities, stating that **“Much history, literature and culture is unintelligible without knowledge of religions and beliefs”**. This theme is progressed into promoting the importance of achieving an understanding of both self and the views of others. In its supporting chapters to the Guiding Principles, it outlines a human rights framework as a basis for the promotion of teaching about religions and beliefs, curriculum preparation considerations, teacher education requirements and considerations, and the formulation of inclusive approaches.

Religion, Education, Dialogue and Conflict (REDCo) Project

The REDCo Project was sponsored by the European Commission over the period 2006-9, in part as follow-on from the Toledo Report, to gain insight from adolescents in eight European countries on their views of teaching and learning about religious diversity in schools. The project’s full name is: “Religion in Education: a Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in Transforming Societies of European Countries?”. Research work was conducted in Norway, England, France, Estonia, Germany, Spain, the Russian Federation and the Netherlands. In summary, project outcomes included the following findings:

1. Students wish for peaceful coexistence across differences, and believe this to be possible;
2. For students, peaceful coexistence depends on knowledge about each other’s religions and worldviews, and sharing common interests;
3. Students who learn about religious diversity in schools are more willing to have conversations about religions/beliefs with students of other backgrounds than those who do not;
4. Students wish to avoid conflict: some of the religiously committed students feel vulnerable;
5. Students want learning to take place in a safe classroom environment where there are agreed procedures for expression and discussion;
6. Most students would like the state-funded schools to be a place for learning *about* different religions/worldviews, rather than for instruction *into* a particular religion/worldview.

Much of the context for REDCo derives from a decade and more of international and societal concern about the highly visible increase in ‘politicised’ religious views, extremism, confrontation and disharmony amongst – in particular – European nations, where the aims of multiculturalism have been espoused for many years. Whilst secularism has been the assumed norm in these societies for a considerable time, much recent attention has been focused on their increasingly diverse cultural and religious issues and problems – and whether and how these can be reconciled.

The multicultural/multi-religious social environment is here to stay, and will clearly increase with time and migration patterns. The summary findings of REDCo above clearly illustrate a desire, on the

part of students who took part, regarding the role which can potentially be played through the establishment of a programme to explore religious and worldviews, and provide the educational platform from which social harmony might be enhanced. **To ignore the need and role which education ‘from and about’ religion can and must play in our societies is to ignore a brute fact of 21st Century existence.**

Toledo, RE and the NZ Context

In some contrast to the initiatives of the Toledo Report and REDCo Project, it is of note that New Zealand academic and former University lecturer Jean Holm, who taught World Religions in Cambridge, UK for many years, recently stated unequivocally that there is ‘a dearth of teachers of religious studies and a profound lack of knowledge about religion’ in New Zealand (13). This sentiment was further corroborated by the remarks of Professor Paul Morris who after drafting a National Statement on Religious Diversity made the observation that *“many were confused about what religious education actually is.”* (15)

At the same time, however, concern about religious ignorance has been raised at many levels in NZ society. Recent noteworthy headline media examples include a young Sikh boy seriously attacked in Nelson by two teenagers because they thought he was Muslim and believed he deserved punishment for September 11th; a devout Jewish tourist triggered a bomb alert on a New Zealand ferry when crew members mistook his Jewish prayer items for possible explosives. Armed police reportedly forced the man and a companion to the floor after the ferry docked at Picton on South Island. (16)

Calls for addressing such issues have been met with support from the New Zealand Interfaith Forum and a subsequent National Statement on Religious Diversity formulated by Professor Paul Morris in 2007 reads: ***“Schools should teach an understanding of different religious and spiritual traditions in a manner that reflects the diversity of their national community”.***

The Waitangi Declaration (issued by the third Asia-Pacific Regional Inter Faith Dialogue at Waitangi, In May 2007) declares that:

- ‘We support education about religions in the public curricula of all schools, including religious schools’
- ‘We request interested governments to implement pilot projects in religious education to be trialled in more than one country.’
- ‘We encourage religious leaders, education policy makers, and civic organisations to work together to develop consensus guidelines for teaching about religions’.

In a not-dissimilar culture, and with characteristic perception, the Chief Rabbi of the UK, Dr Jonathan Sacks has observed: ***“If religion is not part of the solution, it will be part of the problem”.***

Western Societal Values: A New Zealand Context

In parallel, many social commentators and academics would suggest there has been a significant moral decline in the western world during the last 50 years. Philosopher Stephen Law (London University) sees this phenomenon as principally stemming from the philosophy of Kant and the enlightenment through to the 1960's where individuals *'dared to question authority and think for themselves.'* (17). To illustrate the point Law utilises the pronouncement of US neoconservative D'Souza who is quoted as saying, *'Before the sixties, most Americans believed in a universal moral order that is external to us, that makes demands on us. Our obligation was to conform to that moral order. Earlier generations, right up to the 'greatest generation' of WW11, took for granted this moral order and its commandments. (..) But, beginning in the sixties, several factions – the anti-war movement, and so on – attacked that moral consensus as narrow and oppressive. They fought for a new ethic that would be based not on external authority but on the sovereignty of the inner self.'* (18) What D'Souza identifies as one moral truth or law, has in effect, been done away with in preference to a post-modern, secular, moral relativist approach to ethical behaviour. Indeed, relativism is now widely considered the primary philosophy of the West. Quoting American academic Bloom (1988:25) Law states '(t)here is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of: almost every student entering university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative.' (19)

Whether or not all sociologists would agree with the 'radical' thinking of D'Souza, Law believes *'there's an emerging consensus that, morally speaking, something has gone very wrong indeed.'* (20) Certainly statistics on crime, underage sex and unwanted pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, self-harm, divorce, single-parents in New Zealand (as in the rest of the western world) have all increased significantly and undeniably had a detrimental effect on society's well-being. Regular comments made in the media highlight increasing concern relating to these issues. In addition the exploding information wave coupled with fast-paced development in technology presents this generation with hugely significant ethical dilemmas - and it would seem our young people are ill-equipped to respond. Of note, Tapu Misa's 6 Sept 2010 NZ Herald article entitled *'Ethics too important to leave to chance'* calls for schools to prepare young people for living morally in the modern world.

Correspondingly, with the break-down of traditional values in western society there has emerged an interesting counter-reaction as we see a rise in fundamentalism across the globe. Absolute certainty can provide comfort and security, and the growth of radicalised religious groups whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish or Hindu bears testimony to this. Inculcation of values, from this authoritarian perspective, is about indoctrinating the young into certainties of their own truth. Frequently the impact of such indoctrination is either a frighteningly unhealthy fanaticism, rebellion or a later complete rejection of certainty. Research in New South Wales, Australia, for example according to Dr Jeremy Hall, shows that *'children educated at Catholic schools who continue to attend mass once they leave school is less than 5 %.'* (21) And as Jennifer Buckingham recently reported *'rising enrolments in religious schools (in Australia) has not been accompanied by an increased affinity with religion in the general population... (this) suggests that religious schools are not a strong indoctrinating force. Although good data is scarce, there is no evidence that attending a religious school increases religious commitment among students.'* (22)

Where does this leave RE and Values Education in New Zealand?

It could be argued that the integrated Roman Catholic schools have been most successful in developing distinct programmes for the implementation of Religion and Values Education in schools and the promotion of a distinctive special character. It is interesting to note that significant curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of RE in most RC schools. In fact RE teachers are themselves held in high regard by schools; university courses exist to train teachers and the continued professional development of staff is highly desired. Whilst this is highly commendable and perhaps a model from which we in the ISNZ have much to learn, it must be said that the Catholic schools' approach taken to RE and Values is largely not in line with the Toledo principles as outlined above. In fact, the basic premise of RE and Values in Catholic schools is catechetical, that is, it exists to develop special character through '*religious instruction*' and furthermore, specialist RE teachers are required to '*give witness*' (23) to the faith of the church.

Furthermore, the thesis presented here is that, although much good work has been done in varying guises over the years towards RE and Values in NZ, little real headway has been made in terms of establishing a consistent and rigorous programme which properly addresses values issues of a combined religious and secular nature in the form suggested by Toledo within either of the ISNZ or national school curricula.

Moreover, the NZC, whilst encouraging a focus on values education, fails to specifically address important socio-religious issues. In fact it would be fair to conclude that NZ is falling well behind other similar western, multi-cultural countries in respect to these areas. And it is only within a minority of faith-based schools that any attempt is being made to adequately address Religious **and** Values issues, as understood by the Toledo Report, to be a fundamental component of a holistic educational curriculum.

At the same time significant lack of formal NZ government training and support for educators involved in these increasingly sensitive and challenging curriculum areas have left individual schools ill-equipped to properly engage in rigorous and meaningful programmes. For the most part, faith-schools have looked to the church for support, and more particularly, the 'expertise' of the school chaplain. In parallel, the goodwill of associated faith based groups who are willing to engage in supporting Christian education, e.g. Bible in Schools, have helped maintained a 'Christian religious' presence across the education sector. Whilst this is admirable, (though some might argue counter-productive) in my view it does little to properly address the serious issues with which we are increasingly confronted as a society, and does not provide our young people with the support they need to 'live well' in a highly complex, post-modern, multicultural and increasingly technological age.

A Proposed Way Forward for RE and Values Education in ISNZ Schools:

So the scene is set. Few would disagree with the premise that there is an urgent need to consistently and rigorously address issues relating to Religion and Values in the school curriculum; however the way to proceed is certainly not at all straightforward. Sensitivities must not be ignored. It is recognised that specific concerns relating to these areas are very real. For example, faith schools within the ISNZ network may feel any formal requirement imposed on schools in these matters may threaten the very nature of special character on which the school is founded. Likewise, secular

schools may have significant concerns about the introduction of 'religion' into an intentional non-faith setting.

Such suspicion, when countered through an open, rounded and more holistic educational perspective, is largely unfounded and – to a significant degree - counterproductive.

Whilst these concerns are definitely acknowledged, it is nevertheless reassuring that through the experience of other similar education systems (e.g. UK, Norway, Sweden, Denmark) and the Toledo report findings, we can find direction in the development of a uniquely NZ curriculum which would successfully combine the teaching of Religion **and** Values for all ISNZ schools. By way of illustration, there is considerable familiarity (particularly amongst those in faith schools affiliated to the Dialogue Australasia network) with the five strands approach to Religion and Values Education promoted by Dr Peter Vardy. This model takes the view of education as not simply an acquisition of knowledge but a holistic exercise encompassing mind, body and spirit aiming to address the fundamental question of what it means to be human; thus providing a robust platform for the development of a training programme and curriculum which properly addresses these areas (see Appendix One summary).

The ensuing sections outline the implementation and outcomes of a small scale teacher training pilot study (undertaken within the context of this research study), trialled and tested with potential RE and Values teachers at St John's Theological College (April 2011); the aim of which is best characterised as – student focused, inquiry-based, multi-faith and national.

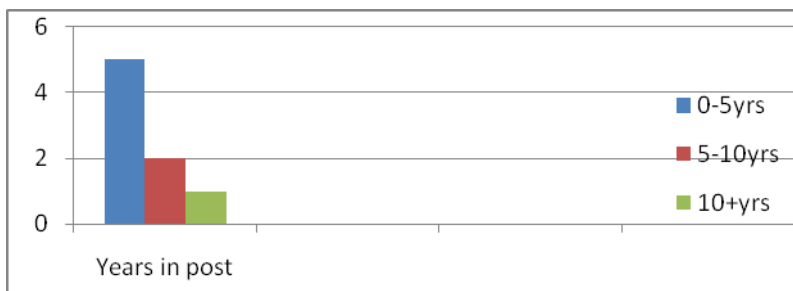
Part Two: Survey of Training Requirements for Chaplains

'Education is not about skills and jobs; it is part of a quest for truth...It seems glaringly evident that what competes with the open search for knowledge is not the perspective of committed belief, but the closed mind of boredom.' (24)

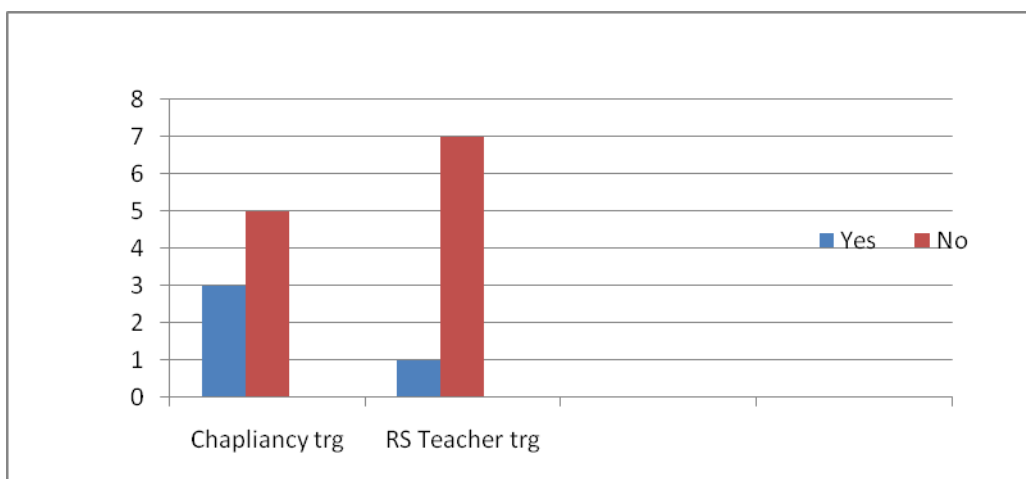
Survey Results

A limited scope survey (see Appendix 2) was carried out during November 2010 as the initial mechanism to gather data from Chaplains currently serving in ISNZ schools where Religious Studies is taught as a specific subject within the curriculum. 12 survey forms were sent out, resulting in a response from 8 participants. All respondents have some responsibility for the teaching of Religious Studies, either as HOD or as a member of the RS Department. Additional, more detailed, data was obtained from some respondents in post-survey interviews.

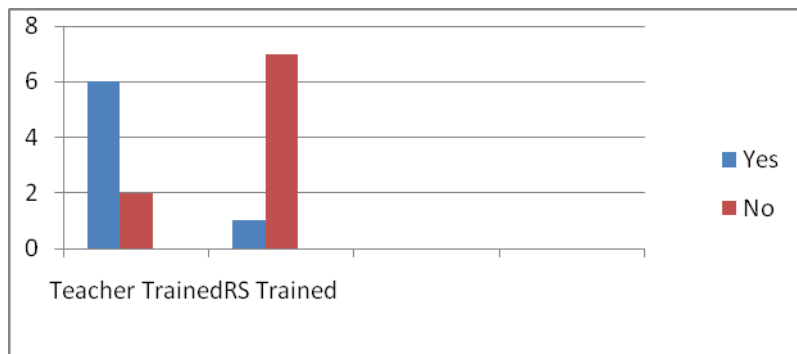
Teaching experience of Chaplains surveyed:



Pre-appointment Training received in (a) Chaplaincy, (b) RS teaching:



Formal Training Qualifications in (a) Teaching, (b) Specific RS teaching:



On-going Professional Development opportunities in RS identified

The only Religious Studies PD opportunities identified by the survey respondents related to the Annual Conference of the NZARETSC (New Zealand Association of RE Teachers and School Chaplains) and any regional Association meetings which might be organised. Most Chaplains also attend the Anglican Schools Annual Conference. Some respondents have attended the annual lecture day run by Dr Peter Vardy on specific topics. No other opportunities were identified. All respondents expressed the view that they would have wanted, and have benefitted greatly from, specific RS training prior to taking up their posts; as the second and third tables show, this is not currently the case – neither do most have any formal qualification in the subject.

Respondents' perception of students to the studying Religious Studies

Overall, student perception of RS seems to vary considerably from school to school. Whilst the survey sample size is acknowledged to be limited, a few possible conclusions may be drawn: encouragement for exploratory critical thinking amongst students and the avoidance of 'being told' generally meets with enthusiasm; broad discussion engages the majority of students; comparative evaluation and posing challenging religious /cultural scenarios has been found to work well. There is some (limited, and acknowledged as subjective) evidence that, particularly at the senior (years 12 and 13) level, there is marked resistance to more traditional 'faith-based' approaches.

Senior Management support for Religious Studies

In general, respondents considered that, where senior management were made aware of the role and relevance of RS within both the curriculum and the overall school's ethos, the support received was of a high standard. It was generally observed however that such awareness had to be initiated (and continually followed-up) by the RS Department staff.

Perceived aims of teaching RS

This was unanimously viewed as a unique (within the curriculum) and critically important opportunity to introduce students to the concepts of philosophy, world religions and ethics – educational aspirations which can underpin 'whole school' objectives. All survey respondents considered RS as a curriculum area focused on developing enquiring minds and providing essential opportunities for discussion and philosophical/ethical observation.

Summary of Survey Data and Results

With only 8 respondents, this is of course only a small survey sample. However it clearly illustrates that (a) when school chaplains take up their posts they are - in the main - poorly equipped and trained to deal with the requirements of a modern RS curriculum (should they be required to teach – which is a likely scenario), and (b) that, when in post, they clearly see and understand the (real and potential) benefits of RS to the overall school curriculum.

Part Three: Preliminary Training Course and Evaluation

Introduction

The principle - and original - aim of this research project was to provide a strategy and implementation plan for specific RE and Values teacher training to potential (and current, where appropriate) School Chaplains, and to improve the quality and delivery of an effective Religion and Values programme within our Independent Schools network.

It was initially suggested that a number of direct benefits would be gained from this work:

- Future Chaplains to ISNZ schools will arrive in post significantly better equipped to undertake their RE and Values teaching responsibilities;
- An effectively delivered holistic RE and Values programme will specifically enhance students' appreciation of other curriculum areas including The Arts, Humanities and English
- Students would therefore be provided with opportunities to consider critically issues of profound ethical, religious and philosophical importance; thereby equipping them with the necessary skills and values to become active citizens as they move into adulthood.

This pilot study training course has been devised in order to address specific issues emerging from the findings of the Toledo Report (Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools – Toledo, Spain, March 2007) through the implementation of a five strands approach to Religion and Values Education. The needs identified (above) through a questionnaire response by Chaplains currently teaching RE/Values education in faith-based secondary schools within the ISNZ form the basis of the specific course components outlined below. Some consideration of findings from an extensive UK survey carried out with RE and Values teachers during 2008 has also provided insight into the areas teachers felt were most critical for developing their professional practise. (23)

Methodology

Practical Requirements for Course Implementation

Following regular dialogue with the Dean of St John's College, Rev Jim White, during 2010, the following principles were agreed upon for course implementation;

- The focus to be secondary based due to the experience of the experts (below) involved
- Participants will be enrolled through the College and, for the purposes of the trial, numbers limited to a maximum of 12
- Publicity material advertising the course to be distributed to students in February/March 2011
- A basic entry requirement consists of some practical classroom/youth work experience

- The course to run over a 4 day period during April/early May 2011, comprising 3 days allocated to theoretical study followed by a further one day practicum work based at Diocesan School for Girls.

Experts invited to participate in the delivery of the course

- Dr Vanya Kovach(PhD) The University of Auckland, Senior Tutor in the Department of Philosophy and principle trainer in Philosophy for Children
- Mrs Deborah Stevens (MBioethics, BSc (psychology) and Dip Teaching) currently undertaking Doctoral research in Bioethics Education through the University of Waikato
- Mr. Ray Coats (LLB and DiPTch), recently retired School Chaplain and RS teacher
- Mrs. Catherine Syms (BD Hons, MTh, PGCE in Religious and Moral Education) currently Religious Studies Director, Diocesan School for Girls

Specialist teacher practicum mentors at Diocesan School for Girls

- Ms Nicola Storey (BA Hons in Religious Studies) currently Religious Studies teacher
- Rev Sandy Robertson (BA in Education, BTH) currently Associate Chaplain and Religious Studies teacher
- Mrs Catherine Syms (BD Hons, MTh, PGCE in Religious and Moral Education) currently Religious Studies Director

All these professionals were selected on the basis of their credentials and extensive experience of working in the specialised areas of Religion/Values Education.

Course Content

The following programme summarises the content of the training course delivered:

1. Pedagogy for teaching Religion and Values Education: the Purpose and Challenges: Ray Coats

Specific issues which require introductory attention are those of exploring ways of approaching Religion and Values Education, particularly in the role of school Chaplain. What makes an effective RS teacher and what are some of the challenges? Feedback in the questionnaires indicated significant interest in addressing these aspects to allow for self-reflection in the formation of a distinctive personal and effective approach. Consideration of the following approaches to the teaching of Religion and Values education was felt to be relevant as an introductory exercise:

- as a descriptive examination of religions and their phenomena, e.g. largely the approach advocated by the Toledo Report
- as a vehicle to promote personal search e.g. Rob Kirkwood
- as the critical examination of religion and values truth claims e.g. Dr Andrew Wright
- as a post-modern vehicle for constructing your own meaning of life e.g. Erricker
- as confessional and catechetical, to teach about the truths and values of your own religion e.g. Roman Catholic model

2. Developing a holistic Religion and Values programme:

Catherine Syms

A necessary aspect of the course was to conduct a review of the existing resources/documentation relating to Religion and Values Education, thus providing participants with a broad appreciation of current literature, methodology and practise to support possible unit planning. This included a study of:

- *'The Religious Education Curriculum'* produced by the NZ Anglican Schools Office (a document currently used by many faith schools within the ISNZ network)
- The *National Curriculum of Religious Education in Catholic secondary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand Years 9-13* entitled *Understanding Faith*.
- Various Values based Education programmes e.g. *The Virtues Project* and *Living Values*
- Locally Agreed RE Syllabi produced by specialists working in specific communities within the UK; in addition, examination curriculum materials aimed at students in years 10-13
- Dialogue Australasia Network resource materials based on the 5 strands approach (Dr Peter Vardy) to Religion and Values Education
- The Toledo Report

3. Philosophy through Religion and Values: the Community of Enquiry

Dr Vanya Kovach

The ability to explore philosophical issues of truth and meaning relating to all aspects of Religion and Values Education requires skill and training. This session exposed participants to some of the basic principles of the Philosophy for Children education programme (an international course taught widely in many countries) which encourages a pedagogical approach that:

- develops community inquiry e.g. critical, creative, collaborative and caring
- relates to common, central and contestable concepts that underpin our experience of human life and all academic disciplines. Examples of such concepts are: Truth, reality, knowledge, evidence, freedom, justice, goodness, rights, mind, identity, love, friendship, rules, responsibility, action, logic, language, fairness, reason, existence, possibility, beauty, meaning, self, time, God, infinity, human nature, thought.

4. Ethics through Religion and Values

Deborah Stevens

The term Values Education is often synonymous with the ideals referred to in the NZC such as community and participation, ecological sustainability, respect, equality. In this session a far broader academic perspective on the term Values Education was explored which considers the following areas:

- Issues facing young people today – the social challenges of Gen Y
- Consideration of theoretical ethical theory linked to applied ethics
- The place and purpose of Ethics education
- Critical thinking about applied ethics
- Practical strategies for classroom implementation

5. Multi-faith Religion and Values

Catherine Syms

The Toledo report recognises, as a fundamental tenet, that if young people are given the opportunity to learn more about different religions and belief systems which co-exist in today's pluralistic societies then the potential for clearer understanding and consequential mutual respect and tolerance is greatly enhanced. Teaching about religions other than Christianity in a Christian-based school environment requires skill, understanding and sensitivity. The challenge here is that any exploration focuses on the complexities and intellectual depth of various religious thought rather than a superficial consideration of religions practices, festivals and processes. In this session participants reviewed the following questions and ideas:

- What are the challenges of teaching Christianity in a secular, multi-cultural classroom and how might these be addressed?
- Will my personal faith be a barrier to teaching about 'other religions'?
- How can I do justice to teaching about 'other faiths'?
- Why should all schools address multi-faith issues?
- How do we avoid the relativist lair?

6. Practical Religion and Values Education: Methodology through a Cross Curricular Approach

Deborah Stevens & Catherine Syms

During this interactive session participants were introduced to a range of effective tools in which to support the delivery of an interactive and challenging cross-curriculum programme based on a 5 strands approach to Religion and Values Education. These practical and creative strategies are embedded in educational theory and predominantly related to Bloom's taxonomy and designed to be a springboard from which participants could develop their own teaching and learning programmes, with specific focus on values and critical thinking. Ideas to be explored include the use of:

- Role play
- Music and art
- Group work
- Debate
- Stillness and silence

Evaluation of the Introduction to Religion and Values Training Course held 13th – 15th April 2011

Background

As previously stated this 4 day pilot course was developed following feedback from a number of Chaplains working in the area of Religion and Values education (see chapter 2). Its principle aim was to improve the quality and delivery of an effective Religion and Values Programme within the Independent Schools network, particularly across faith schools.

It was anticipated that a number of direct benefits would be gained from this course:

- Future Chaplains to ISNZ schools would arrive in post significantly better equipped to undertake their RE and Values teaching responsibilities;
- An effectively delivered holistic RE and Values programme would specifically enhance students' appreciation of other curriculum areas including The Arts, Humanities and English;
- Students would therefore be provided with opportunities to consider critically a number of issues of profound ethical, religious and philosophical importance; thereby equipping them with the necessary skills and values to become active citizens as they move into adulthood.

Marketing the Course

Advertising material was developed and the course marketed during 1st Quarter 2011 through various networks including St John's College, 'The Anglican' magazine, Anglican church websites and the Anglican Schools Office. A total of 13 participants enrolled for the course:

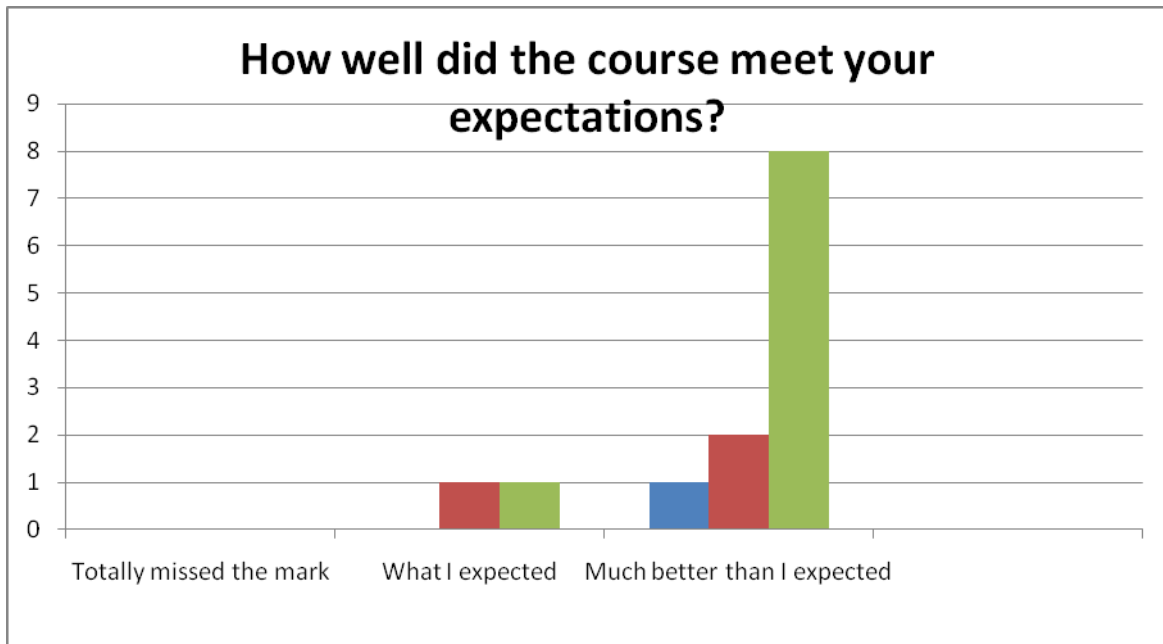
- 4 theological students at St John's College
- 2 recently appointed RE teachers working within ISNZ schools
- A Head of an Independent school responsible for RE and Chaplaincy
- A minister of a Presbyterian church considering School Chaplaincy (trained primary teacher)
- 2 Church based youth workers (one primary trained)
- 2 non-ordained chaplains working within an ISNZ and recently been given responsibility for leading the secondary RE programme in their school
- The recently appointed Presbyterian Schools officer

It is of note that the course was oversubscribed. The initial programme enrolment figure was set at 10. Due to demand this was increased to 12, however there were still several (potentially a further 10+ individuals) who were unsuccessful in gaining a place on the course and who expressed interest in participating on a future occasion.

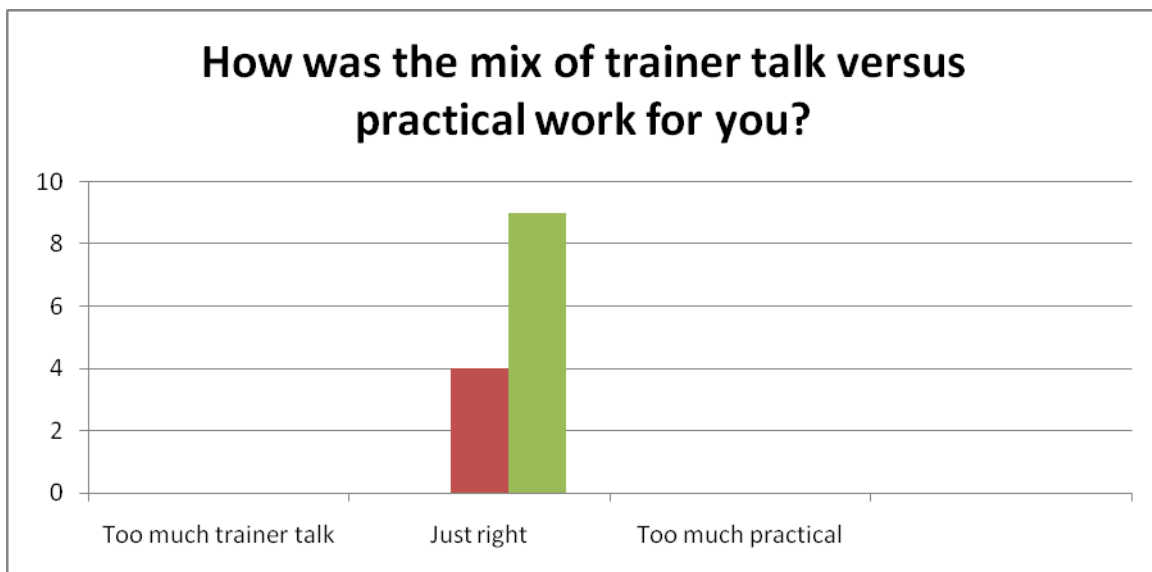
Evaluation of Participant Feedback

On completion of the course, participants were asked to complete a feedback questionnaire; the following summarizes this data (responses are categorized into 3 groups, each further subdivided into 3):

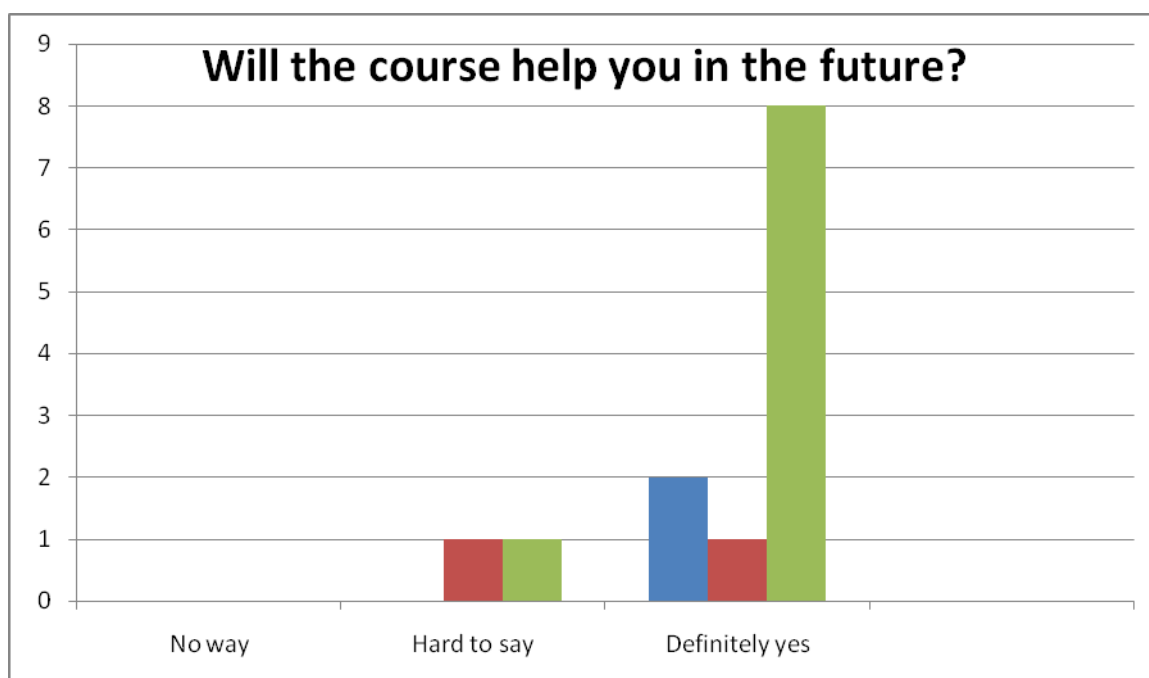
A. How well did the course meet your expectations?



B. How was the mix of trainer talk versus practical work for you?



C. Will the course help you in the future?



In assessing the various additional comments submitted by attendees, the following observations relate to the original course design criteria and objectives outlined at the beginning of this report.

- The feedback suggests that all course participants emerged with a much clearer understanding of what an effective RE and Values programme might look like; the theoretical and practical ideas having helped stimulate thought and praxis. Most felt the balance between theory and practical was appropriate. Those already working with young people in teaching posts or youth work positions appreciated the many critical thinking strategies addressed for classroom implementation (6 participants). It is clear that those considering a vocation in RE teaching/ and or Chaplaincy (potentially 6 participants) have a more developed appreciation of what this might entail. In fact, in at least 3 cases, a vocation in RE teaching became a serious consideration as an alternative to ordained ministry.
- Several participants commented on the brevity of the course, suggesting that 3 days is inadequate to address the scope of the subject and volume of data presented, and that - whilst they had appreciated what had been covered - they would value a more comprehensive programme over a longer period of time, where several issues relating to specific areas of Chaplaincy/RE could be addressed in more depth.
- It is of note that most participants recognised the need for specific training in relation to teaching about World Religions other than Christianity (this relates specifically to the requirements addressed in the Toledo report). A more comprehensive focus and provision of opportunities for ongoing Professional Development are considered vital for this to be properly addressed.

- Three participants suggested the need to run two independent courses – one for trained teachers new to or considering RE teaching, the other for those exploring teaching as a future vocation.
- One participant saw a need to explore more comprehensively the place and purpose of RE and Values Education within a specific faith school /denominational context.

Would this course improve delivery of the RE and Values in the Independent Schools?

Undoubtedly, yes. It has become clearly evident that those participants with responsibility for RE in the Independent Schools who attended this (of necessity, brief) course are in a stronger position to appreciate and portray the many facets relating to this complex subject. They have appreciated the many tools they have been given to support them in the development of their own programmes particularly in relation to critical thinking and enquiry.

There is, however, a clear need to develop this further. Many (9 in total) talked enthusiastically about their belief in this subject area, but felt strongly that they required further considerable support and training to feel confident and effective as RE professionals.

Evaluation of Trainer feedback

In addition to the formal feedback provided by each of the course participants, I received some very helpful suggestions from Dr Vanya Kovach (one of the course teachers, who attended the course in its totality) regarding the detail of the course structure for consideration. These can be précised as follows;

- ‘It would be helpful to revisit the different models of RE that were introduced on Day 1 - and in particular, to discuss which ones are compatible. Perhaps a bit more detailed clarification on day one about these the various competing models, and their pros and cons, would have been useful’.
- ‘Deborah Stevens introduced some fabulous strategies for stimulating questions, and it seems obvious that she requires more time to model how the discussion might lead from this. I think it might be better for me to do my community of enquiry at the beginning of the last day, and to concentrate more on pathways for inquiry and critical skills (as well as facilitating some discussions at length, but leaving out reflections on how the community of inquiry might fit with RE - which would be best raised in the final session). My thinking is that many participants need pointers on how to make discussion of questions as fruitful and rigorous as possible’.
- ‘I am left with the question of ‘to what extent does the course, as it stands, emphasise the philosophical over the religious approach to questions?’ Perhaps some attention could be given to how religious views are to be integrated into philosophical discussion.’

Personal Evaluation

A. Positives:

- Successful in the sense that the 2 teachers new to RE teaching feel better equipped to teach RE
- The 4 St John's students were extremely positive in their feedback and are seriously considering RE as a potential vocation
- 9 participants are calling for further training in relation to this area
- Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and the course has – possibly for the first time - initiated some serious detailed discussion and debate around the complex issues relating to teaching RE and Values in our schools
- There is a growing acknowledgement that not enough has yet been done by the NZ churches or the ISNZ to support those teachers in faith schools required to teach RE and Values

B. Issues for further consideration and areas to develop:

- More comprehensive academic and theological thinking around the variety of approaches to be used when teaching RE in faith schools (accommodating denominational variations) and to incorporate this into any future programme.
- The challenge of encouraging all ISNZ schools to participate in the core components of a course on Religion and Values Education.
- A review of the overall structure of the course – timings and flow in terms of speakers and presentations based on feedback.
- The issue of time verses depth – this was an introductory course and yet felt rushed at times. How can we balance this for future development?
- How better can we cater for teachers and non- teachers?
- How do we follow up this course? What opportunities can we provide to take participants further? What training courses can we provide that will ensure our teachers and Chaplains are fully equipped to teach RE and Values effectively?

Potential Course Development and Way Forward

Three potential options might be considered:

1. Status Quo

Repeat the same (revised/updated) 3 day course next year(annually?) at a similar time in the year. Perhaps consider running during the first or second week of Easter so that more St John's College students (and other ISNZ staff) can participate? Some modifications could be made to the overall structure of the course in relation to discussion around the different approaches to RE and the timing of the Ethics and Philosophy sessions (see Vanya Kovach feedback). This option could be made to be fee-paying, and thus self-funding.

2. Establish a Core Programme across ISNZ schools

Develop an expanded and more comprehensive one (or two) week course comprising of the core components of a professional RE and Values programme, which could be accredited by NZQA. This could be aimed at those who are new to, or seriously considering, RE and Values teaching career options. (All ISNZ schools might be required to send any untrained RE and Values teachers to complete this course). Each of the component sessions could be developed to accommodate more robust discussion and thinking around the different concepts. This option, also fee-paying, would however have cost implications particularly in relation to participant and trainer time.

3. Alignment with Teach First NZ programme

Teach First NZ is a recently established organization (based on a model developed in the UK and also launched in Australia) which aims to fast-track newly qualified graduates into the teaching profession. It is based on an intensive (6 week) initial training programme followed by closely structured in-service experience over a 2 year period. The approach here would be to develop a fully accredited 6 week RE and Values teacher training course in line with Teach First and Government plans, and offering this within both the ISNZ and state school environments. Those who complete the training would gain a formal teaching qualification. This option would require significant funding and support from a variety of sources.

**Commitment. This third option is necessarily evolutionary and requires considerable thought, discussion and commitment across several parties. It could, however, in the long term prove the most effective way of (a) meeting Government aspirations of achieving a comprehensive Values Education Programme across the nation as a whole, (b) establishing the Independent Schools network as the lead developer for this effort, and (c) meeting the aims of the Church and its faith schools in promoting a comprehensive RE and Values educational programme across the entirety of New Zealand.....it would be a bold statement of commitment and faith.*

Some Course Participants' Comments:

"Fantastic – inspiring – I would absolutely love to see this developed into a substantial training course. I see so much potential for it..."
Phoebe Atkinson, Asst Chaplain

"You have enthused and excited me to teach this subject. I feel like I've found direction and vocation. Another way to give. Full of ideas and insights, useful information and inspiration."
Lisa Williams, Primary school teacher/Youth Worker

"Do more and be a louder voice. Invigorating for my teaching and personally. ISNZ cannot say they believe, support and are intrinsically of this nature without supporting such PD as you have offered here."
Grant Hamilton, Headmaster

"I have been to many different courses/classes and seminars, and this one, hands down, has been the most valuable and applicable to my current role. I'm leaving this course feeling refreshed and excited about teaching."
Sarah Diekema, Asst Chaplain/RE teacher

“Thought process excellent. Dynamic and varied sessions within the group made discussions so valuable.”
Hilary Scheffer, RE teacher

“I loved this course! The lectures were energetic and fun. I learnt a lot of things I can see I would definitely want to use one day.”
Amy Houben, St John’s student

“Really enjoyed friendly and honest approach given by the presenters. The sharing of information and energy given I know has inspired many back towards the classroom.”
Doniella Tweddell, RE teacher

“At times too much information in limited time. Would be ideal to spread course over more days. An exciting, thought-provoking three days; loads of useful tools added to my toolkit as I journey on.”
Sonja Schleblisch, Church Family/Children’s Director

“Maybe the next stage could be two courses; one for exploring people and one for actual teachers. I hope the course is the start of more – particularly in raising the standard of RE teaching.”
Brett Johnstone, Minister

Part Four: Survey of Values Education across ISNZ Schools

As a basis from which to understand the scope and depth of implementation of 'Values Education' across the NZ independent schools, a survey was conducted within this study which invited response from individual schools on how this area is currently addressed, whether a specific school-based values programme is in place (e.g. Living Virtues Values Action kit, The Virtues Project material), if a 'values' focus is delivered coherently through elements of philosophy, religion and ethics, and whether Values Education is supported by a dedicated staff member. Approximately one third of schools responded to the survey, which may be considered a statistically valid sample across the independent sector as a whole.

Underpinning the survey responses overall was a common theme that schools implicitly address Values through their whole-school assemblies, behavioural policies, codes of conduct and overall school culture. Within this, however, there was a considerable spread of approaches. A number of schools incorporated Values within a specific curriculum subject area or across diverse departmental boundaries. Some used pro-active pupil dialogue and classroom activity to follow up on aspects of a structured programme (e.g. the Virtues Project); others based their activity primarily on pre-identified school based values. All respondent faith schools used their Chaplain as either the sole, or as a strong contributor to this role. Aspects of philosophy, religion and ethics were variously addressed as a coherent whole or in part, however no respondent claimed to run an integrated programme across these disciplines. Approximately half of the schools reported having a dedicated staff member responsible for Values Education.

Survey Conclusion:

From this limited appraisal it seems that Values Education is a well recognised discipline at (and embedded in) the whole school level, and is considered to be of fundamental importance to cultural aims and aspirations. Considerable variations, however, occur in the implementation process, with some schools having adopted (and adapted) a structured external model, others driving values objectives constructed from within their own codes of practice. Despite the availability of some of these "off the peg" solutions, and their encouragingly enthusiastic implementation, however, there seems to remain a void in the availability of a comprehensive and robust overarching methodological Values framework. This outcome, therefore, underpins the original premise of this study in regard to the need for such a capability within and across the independent school sector.

Part Five: Conclusion and Further Recommendations

'The task of our generation, whether we are religious people or secular people, is to build a global community where people of all persuasions can live together in peace and harmony.' Karen Armstrong (see www.charterforcompassion.com)

'The great faiths provide meaning and purpose for their adherents. The question is: can they make space for those who are not its adherents, who sing a different song, hear a different music, tell a different story? On that question, the fate of the twenty-first century may turn.' Jonathan Sacks (Chief Rabbi, UK); *The Dignity of Difference* (2003)

This research study was commenced on the (limited) basis of investigating whether Chaplains in our ISNZ special character faith schools are adequately trained and prepared to engage in a modern Religious Studies school curriculum, and how this might be addressed through a pilot training course. This aim became extended, during the course of the study, to include an overview of the state of Religion and Values Education across the western world, how New Zealand in general compares in this situation, and potential implications for ISNZ schools. It also looked at two major international initiatives, the OSCE-inspired Toledo Report and the EU-funded REDCo Project.

As a result, the study took on a considerably wider remit, and has drawn conclusions which are considered to apply to both faith-based and secular ISNZ schools.

The Study Conclusions are:

1. Globally, religion - and its perception in society internationally - is a topic of increasingly high visibility and impact; this drives the absolute need for appropriate education "from and about" religion, and the provision of suitably trained teachers.
2. NZ, overall, currently falls well short of following or implementing developments in other parts of the world e.g. Toledo, REDCo Project.
3. Effective Religion and Values Education is not happening consistently in our ISNZ schools.
4. As educational professionals, we have a responsibility to prepare our young people for life in a global world. This means addressing Religion, Philosophy and Ethics as academic disciplines. We must, through a pro-active shift in our thinking, engage with the huge social and ethical issues facing us as a society.
5. Appropriate professional training is essential for effective holistic Religion and Values Education.
6. To ignore the need and role which education "from and about" religion can and must play in our societies is to ignore a brute fact of 21st Century existence. Alongside the 'business' and 'results driven' aspects of our schools, we must engage actively with this most critical area of social and educational concern.
7. For ISNZ secular schools there should be no issue about teaching in this way – Philosophy, Religion and Ethics should be covered as academic disciplines in line with the Toledo Report and the REDCo Project recommendations.

8. For ISNZ faith schools – Religion and Values Education (which includes the study of Philosophy, Religion and Ethics) can be supported by the teachings and values demonstrated within that specific faith community.
9. The ISNZ could become the flag bearer for this critical educational initiative in New Zealand and across Australasia.

Recommendations on a Way Forward:

1. It is recommended that the conclusions of this research study should be discussed in depth within the ISNZ Executive and schools representatives, with the aim of determining a coherent way forward in this area for the Organisation. The need for investment in both time and finance should be addressed.
2. Given a “buy in” scenario, the ISNZ organisation should consider initiating a number of activities:
 - Develop and evolve suitable training course material (for both faith-based and secular school environments);
 - Establish opportunities for Professional Learning for all relevant staff;
 - Faith schools to encourage (or preferably mandate) staff/Chaplains to attend training, and appoint only those with suitable educational background and experience;
 - Secular schools to ensure staff attend appropriate training modules;
 - Advocate for this initiative in the broader educational environment and with the Department of Education.

Appendix One

A holistic approach to Religion and Values – a summary of Dr Peter Vardy’s Five Strands Model

Strand One: Ethics and Values

The term ‘Values Education’ is often interpreted as being associated with, for example, bullying, discrimination, tolerance and social justice – but this is too narrow a view. Values education should be theory based (e.g. expanding differences between Natural Law, Situation Ethics, Utilitarianism and Emotive ethics) and issues related.

Young people may be aware of differences between faith groups and even denominations, but not understand why these differences have arisen and from where the ethical standards derive.

Many of today’s issues of (potentially) news-worthy interest are presented by popular culture through a mix of emotive language and superficiality; young people need the intellectual tools to engage with today’s and tomorrow’s problems at a level which transcends such limitations, explores the deeper complexities and evaluates solutions. Specific educational issues can include (for example) racism, crime and punishment, war, bio-ethics, sexuality, business ethics and environmental ethics.

Strand Two: Philosophy of Religion

Issues of truth underpin discussions in Science, History, English (indeed all subject areas) and the curriculum should help to establish and exploit these links, questioning and evaluating ‘whose truth’ is being (pro)claimed (as in the IB TOK model). This includes arguments for and against the existence of God, the philosophical problems of death, evil and suffering, and the whole spectrum of debate concerning the search for Truth.

The curriculum can help students to think through the challenges posed by feminism and postmodernism as well as the broad assumption of ‘meaninglessness’ which props up significant areas of contemporary society.

Strand Three: Biblical Studies and Christian Tradition

New Zealand’s historic roots lie in the Judeo-Christian tradition. This impacts literature, the arts, law and social science, and underpins the traditional values in NZ society. In schools, as with Maths, Science and English, the level of understanding at ages 6, 10 and 17 is markedly different, and if biblical stories are to have any significance to young people their complexity must be progressively explained and evaluated. Metaphors, analogy, symbology and art are important in biblical scholarship, and provide a meaningful historic context. (This links with the NZ key competencies of thinking, using language, symbols and text).

Strand Four: World Religions – Understanding and Tolerance

An exploration into Values should provide students with an understanding of the main world beliefs and an empathy with adherents of other faiths. This aspect draws in such issues as tolerance, human rights (see the recently released OSCE document on Human Rights and rationale for Religious Education in schools), multiculturalism, indigenous peoples (important in the NZ curriculum) and spirituality.

Note: This is focused on understanding the complexities and intellectual depth of various religious thought - not on their practices, festivals and processes.

Strand Five: The Affective Strand - Stillness and Silence

This component seeks to redress the imbalance when education solely stresses the cognitive dimension. It aims to give an alternative perspective to popular materialism, to help young people gain personal confidence and to recognise the values of personal growth and achievement, success, recognition and reputation. It combats the increasingly pervasive media and technologically driven influences of (for example) iPods, cell phones, TVs, movies and computers – all of which compete for attention often leaving little space for reflection, imagination and creation.

Structuring the Five Strand Model across the school for Values Education:

How would it look?

To quote Dr Vardy:

“Spirituality and the drive to help young people to become more fully human should touch all parts of school life and cannot therefore be isolated from the values and ethos of the school. A ‘whole school’ approach to this area is vital as are cross-curricula links. A cross-curricular approach should be encouraged wherever possible and it will be necessary to develop resources within the school to this end. Biology, Physics, Maths, Business Studies, History, English and other areas can all be relevant to issues dealt with by good RS – provided, that is, that the teachers are aware where the links may be made. This emphasises the need for co-operation between departments in a school and for clear leadership by the Head in terms of the desirability of such links.”

b. Teaching RE?

Yes/No

If yes, please outline briefly:

5. As Chaplain are you/were you responsible for your school's Religious Education programme? If no, please explain who is/was.

Yes/ No

6. Do you/did you teach RE as part of your role? If yes, please outline at which level and approx how many hours per week

Yes/ No

Levels taught:

Approx Hours per week:

7. Do you hold any formal teacher training certificate/qualification? Please specify.

Yes/No

Qualification:

8. Do you hold any formal teacher training certification/qualification for teaching RE? Please specify.

Yes/No

Qualification:

9. Do you have other staff members in your school who teach RE? (If yes, as far as you know, do those staff members hold a specific qualification for teaching RE?).

Yes/No

Qualification(s):

Section 2: Please answer the following questions as freely and fully as possible....

- 10. In your view what is/was the perception of students towards RE when compared with other curriculum areas?**
- 11. How do you/did you believe the school management perceive(d) the purpose, place and value of RE in your school?**
- 12. Approximately what %age of curriculum time is/was dedicated to RE lessons at your school and at what level(s)?**
- 13. Does your school offer any RE NCEA unit/achievement standards? If yes, please specify. If no, please say why not.**
- 14. What ongoing specific RE Professional Development do you or your RE staff receive during the course of a year?**
- 15. If you teach or have taught RE, do/did you find PD opportunities enriching for helping you develop as an effective RE teacher?**
- 16. As part of your formal ministry training would you have valued some opportunities for specific training in the teaching of RE?**
- 17. Sum up in a few sentences what you see as the underpinning philosophy and purpose of Religious Education in our church schools today.**
- 18. From your experience and perspective, could you identify your “top two” priorities for inclusion in a training package such as proposed in this study:**

Would you be willing to take part in a follow-up interview at a later date?

Yes/ No

Many thanks for your feedback and time spent on completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 3: Values Education – ISNZ Schools survey

This research study is sponsored by the Independent Schools NZ and is primarily aimed at exploring how schools within the organization are addressing aspects of ‘Values Education.’ Your responses to the following questions would be much appreciated in order to assess the current situation.

School

Your name (Optional)

Current role/position in the School

1. How is the ‘Values’ component of the NZ Curriculum currently addressed within your school? Please circle or highlight
 - a. *Implicitly* (for example through school assemblies, school behaviour policies etc)
 - b. *Generally* throughout the teaching curriculum
 - c. *Explicitly* within a specific curriculum subject area with an allocated time allowance (if yes, please specify subject/subjects)

Please explain briefly:

2. Do you currently have a specific school based values programme/curriculum operating in your school? Yes/No

If yes, please would you indicate what programme(s) you are currently using:

- a. The Living Values Action Kit
- b. The Virtues Project
- c. Any other (please specify)

3. Does your Values focus incorporate any elements of:

- a. Philosophy
- b. Religion
- c. Ethics

Please explain briefly

4. Do you have a dedicated staff member responsible for Values Education? Yes/No

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