THE USE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

IN VICTORIAN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Submitted by

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In loving memory of

KEVIN JAMES GRACE
(1924 – 2001)

STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

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ABSTRACT

Aims

This thesis examines the use of scripture by religious education teachers with their students in Victorian Catholic secondary schools in late 1999.

The aims of the research were: to present a picture of the incorporation of scripture into the religious education program of Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999, and in particular the incorporation of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship (focus will also be placed on the purpose for which scripture is used, the extent to which it is used and the methods employed in its use); to investigate how and to what extent VCE *Texts and Traditions*[1] Units 1 to 4 have been adopted by senior Victorian Catholic secondary students and its influence on Years Seven to Ten religious education curriculum; and to extend the work of Stead (1996b) into the use of scripture in Victorian Catholic primary schools.

Scope

This study is built on an understanding of religious education based on an educational rationale, and it examines the use of scripture in the light of modern critical biblical scholarship, particularly the historical-critical method. Religious Education Co-ordinators from 67 of the 99 Victorian Catholic secondary schools and 61 teachers of Years Seven to Ten religious education in these same schools completed self administering questionnaires in this area.

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[1] *Texts and Traditions* is a Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) study which has the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship as its method for the study of passages from the bible.

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Conclusions

The research demonstrated that while there is an extensive range of good modern biblical scholarship material present in these schools, there is no policy concerning how scripture is to be used in the curriculum, questionable translations of the bible are used, and there is a limited use of many sections of the bible. A key finding of the research is that a thematic, proof-texting use of scripture is prevalent in these schools. This thematic use can lead to a literal, fundamentalist use of scripture within Catholic secondary religious education. This approach is linked with many religious education teachers' predominantly catechetical understanding of the nature of religious education.

The self administering questionnaires asked for an indication of the personal practice of respondents in their own religious education classrooms. The data indicated the presence of the historical-critical method in the classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools, however there was an over-reliance on the student text and the predominance of a thematic, literal, non-critical use of scripture. This thesis indicates that this misuse of scripture comes about from teachers' catechetical understanding of the nature of religious education. In particular the study of scripture in Years 11 and 12 is an area of concern. Except for a small percentage of students studying Texts and Traditions (13%), the use of the historical-critical method of biblical studies is almost non-existent.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ex	The book of Exodus
Gen	The book of Genesis
Good News	The Holy Bible: Todays English Version
Guidelines	Guidelines for Religious Education for Secondary Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne
NRSV	The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version
PBC	Pontifical Biblical Commission
R & S	Religion and Society, VCE studies
RE	Religious Education
RECs	Religious Education Co-ordinators
REF	The Renewal of the Education of Faith
RETs	Classroom teachers of Years 7 to 10 Religious Education
RSV	The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version
SPSS	Statistical Program for Social Sciences, Version 9 for Windows 97
T & T	Texts and Traditions, VCE studies
VBOS	Victorian Board of Studies
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education

INTRODUCTION

In 1992 and 1993 Stead (1996b) pioneered research into the issue of critical biblical study and religious education. Her research was focused on Catholic primary schools in the Australian state of Victoria. Her research was important, since it was an attempt to gather empirical data on classroom teaching practice in religious education, and sought to bring together the disciplines of theology and education. At the same time, 1993, the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) mandated the use of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis.

Within Catholic secondary education in Victoria new guidelines for religious education were published in 1995, *The Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne*. The use of scripture within these *Guidelines* was criticised for not fostering a critical approach to biblical study and for being fundamentalist in nature (Collins, 1995). As well as this, the prevailing understanding of the nature of religious education had undergone a change from a catechetical understanding to an educational understanding based on students' critical intellectual skills, and on the multi-faith nature of the Catholic classroom.

This study seeks to investigate the use of the bible within Catholic secondary schools in Victoria, particularly in relation to the use of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis and in relation to the prevalent understanding of the nature of religious education among teachers. No such study of religious education classroom practice in Victorian Catholic secondary schools has been undertaken.

The aims of this study as outlined in Chapter Four are:

- To present a picture of the incorporation of scripture into the religious education program of Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999, and in particular the incorporation of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. Focus will also be placed on the purpose for which scripture is used, the extent to which it is used and the methods employed in its use.

- To investigate how and to what extent VCE *Texts and Traditions* Units 1 to 4 have been adopted by senior Victorian Catholic secondary students, and its influence on Years Seven to Ten religious education curriculum, and

- To extend the work of Stead (1996b) into the use of scripture in Victorian Catholic primary schools.

In order for these aims to be addressed it was necessary in Chapter One of this thesis to present a clear understanding of the term, "Religious Education" within the context of the Victorian Catholic secondary education system. This chapter demonstrates that there has been a shift in understanding of religious education, from predominantly catechetical in nature, to an understanding that has as its focus the development of critical knowledge and skills based on cognitive and affective outcomes.

Chapter Two, explores the key approaches adopted today in modern biblical scholarship and outlines the Catholic Church's gradual acceptance of critical biblical study. It notes the Pontifical Biblical Commissions' exhortation to use the historical-critical method of biblical study and the concerns of this Commission about fundamentalism. Chapter Three reviews literature concerning scripture and the adolescent, taking particular note of secondary students' psychological readiness to

critically study scripture and the need for an educational rationale for biblical study. This research is then placed in the context of similar Australian research. The issue of fundamentalism is again raised as a concern.

Chapter Four, situates this research in social research and identifies the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study. The research aims are specified, survey questions identified, methods of analysis explained and a description of the research participants given. Chapter Five presents the data, while Chapters Six and Seven discuss and analyse the findings in the context of the first three chapters of this thesis. Chapter Eight summarises the findings, makes recommendations, identifies the delimitations of the research and makes suggestions for future research.

Some decisions have been necessary with regard to terminology and presentation:

- The bible and scripture have been used interchangeably as names for the sacred text.

- Hebrew Scriptures is the name give in this thesis to the texts sacred to Judaism and Christian Scriptures is the name give in this thesis for the texts concerning the ministry of Jesus and the early Church. Where other authors or texts identify the scriptures as Old Testament and/or New Testament, they are cited as in the original.

- Capitalisation of names such as bible, scripture, gospel and god are only used when they are a citation of another author's text.

- In order to preserve the tables and figures, it has been necessary to insert page breaks before the presentation of some tables and figures leaving unavoidable spaces in some chapters.

CHAPTER 1: THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CATHOLIC

SCHOOLS

Introduction

The research reported in this thesis is concerned with the religious education classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools in late 1999, so it is important to have a clear understanding of the term, "religious education", and in particular an understanding that is generally accepted in the context in which this research took place, that is, Victorian Catholic secondary schools.   Thus the research may be presented and analysed within this context.

Through most of the twentieth century religious education in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne had been understood solely as catechesis (Engebretson, 1990, p. 21). Speaking of religious education Kelly said:

> Catechetics in its full sense is the living communication of God's message through his Son, and through the Church to his children at all levels from childhood to old age. (1985, p. 153)

It assumed that students were believers in the Catholic faith and that religious education's sole purpose was to build on that faith and nurture it.   Through the nineteenth century and up until the 1960's, the approach was centred on the use of the "catechism" to teach students doctrine through sacraments, history and some bible passages. By the 1960's a kerygmatic approach was being used, which saw Christ as saviour as the centre of religious education.   This was supplemented by the life-centred approach in the 1970's which emphasised the human condition and personal experience (Treston, 1993, p. 27). It allowed for the personal witness of the teacher and student (Engebretson, 1990, p. 24) and encouraged students to find the revelation of God in the events of daily life.

This chapter outlines the development of Australian Catholic education's understanding of religious education (RE). It outlines the kerygmatic and life-centred methods of catechesis, and examines Church documents on catechesis, religious education and Catholic schools. As this chapter shows, various social and educational factors have challenged an exclusively catechetical approach to religious education in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Since the 1980's the approach taken to religious education in Melbourne's Catholic schools can better be described as "educational" (Ryan & Malone, 1996, p. 58).

The Kerygmatic Method of Catechesis (1960's)

The narrow, prescriptive approach of the Catechism (1963, a text containing the doctrines or teachings of the Catholic Church - see *Catholic Catechism, book one and two*) was no longer considered appropriate by many in the Church even as early as the 1920's (Ryan, 1997, p. 35). A kerygmatic (coming from the Greek word *kerygma* for herald or messenger) approach to catechesis arose from the work of Jungmann (1965). This involved a proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. Jungmann encouraged a salvation history method:

> …every effort must be made to reinforce the understanding of the basic facts of Christianity. A presentation of a history of redemption, which reaches its culmination in Christ, makes it abundantly clear that he is the chief element of Christian doctrine.

> …we can treat only of the most outstanding events of redemption: paradise, the fall, the promise of the Redeemer, the election of Abraham and Israel, the guidance of the Chosen People, the prophetic messages, and finally the coming of the Saviour, his work for the whole of mankind which is continued in and through the Church. (1965, p. 106)

Jungmann saw the bible as a tool to be used in catechesis. He acknowledged that bible history should be a servant of the catechism, and be a history of redemption (p. 105). He also linked the use of the bible to the liturgy:

> An important principle of selection, which may be employed for the narrative, as well as for the instructional parts of Sacred Scripture, is the liturgical use of biblical excerpts, of biblical ideas and thoughts. (1965, p. 108)

A student of Jungmann and also a champion of the kerygmatic method was Hofinger (1966). He espoused a similar understanding of the bible:

> In order that we may really guide the student to Christ by means of Bible history, it is necessary above all that Christ, and even more, the *Mystery of Christ*, be the radiant centre of this history. (1966, p. 26)

> Bible history, even in the very first grades, is far more than a series of beautiful stories about Christ, far more than the life of Christ told in a childlike way. It is the introduction into the Christian religion by way of bible history. (1966, p. 28)

In Melbourne, this method was championed by Archbishop Knox and Monsignor Kelly (Ryan, 1997, p. 39), who produced a series of texts called, *My Way to God* (1964), which were used in Australian Catholic schools up until the end of the 1960's.

The Life-centred Method of Catechesis

Revelation

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1966) marked a turning point not only in the Catholic Church but in Christianity in general (Lovat, 2002, p. 5). Prior to the Council a ground swell of theological and liturgical renewal had been developing. In 1958 the newly elected Pope John XXIII called for an ecumenical Council to renew the Church (Ryan, 1997, p. 44). In particular the Church moved from a defensive position in relation to the world to one of openness and dialogue. This can be seen in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), particularly the *Declaration On Religious Freedom:*

> This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men (sic) are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups

and of any human power, in such wise that in matters religious no one
is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his (sic) own beliefs.
(para. 2)

The *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*

states:

The Church…has this exhortation for her sons (sic): prudently and
lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of
other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge,
preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among
these men (sic), as well as the values in their society and culture. (para.
2)

For catechesis and religious education the work of the Council on revelation

was most important. The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*

brought a new understanding of revelation. There was only one source of revelation,

God: "In His (sic) goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal Himself (sic) and to

make known to us the hidden purpose of His (sic) will…" (para. 2). Jesus Christ is

the perfection of God's revelation:

…Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through His (sic) whole
work of making Himself (sic) present and manifesting Himself (sic);
through His (sic) words and deeds, His (sic) signs and wonders, but
especially through His (sic) death and glorious resurrection from the
dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth. (para. 4)

Scripture and tradition are linked:

…there exists a close connection and communication between sacred
tradition and sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the
same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend
toward the same end. (para. 9)

Further, *Dei Verbum* acknowledged that God speaks to people in their lives and in the

world around them:

God, who through the Word creates all things (cf. Jn. 1:3) and keeps
them in existence, gives men (sic) an enduring witness to Himself (sic)
in created realities (cf. Rom. 1:19-20). (para. 3)

This stress on revelation through human realities led to a new preoccupation with experience as the starting point of catechesis.

The Renewal of the Education of Faith

Also of significance for religious education in Melbourne was the publication in 1970 of *The Renewal of the Education of Faith* (REF). This was a translation of a document of the Italian Episcopal Conference with an Australian supplement added. The Forward contained letters from Cardinal Gilroy (July, 1971), Archbishop of Sydney and The Archbishop of Melbourne John Knox (July, 1971) which clearly stated that this publication was for teachers of religious education in Australia.

The REF understood catechesis as based on life experience, with the believer on a journey of faith (para. 17-18; 30-35). Catechesis based on life experience was further explained:

> If the education of faith is to succeed in leading men (sic) to such a mentality of faith as will allow them to live as true sons of God, it must reach them in the context of the place and time of their activities, that is in the concrete situations of their everyday lives. (para. 128)

This type of catechesis was designed to give the believer guidelines for dealing with everyday situations:

> The education of faith concerns itself especially with everyday situations which the Christian is likely to encounter during his (sic) life, in order to offer him (sic) some guidelines that will enable him to interpret these in the light of Christ's Gospel and to live them in the spirit of this same Christian wisdom. (para. 130)

Commenting on the adolescent, *The Renewal of the Education of Faith* said:

> The adolescent is ultimately searching for the meaning of his (sic) own existence. He (sic) has a real need for certainty, even though he (sic) tends to question everything. He (sic) likes to show that he (sic) can think for himself (sic).
> It is largely through activities and personal relationships that the adolescent discovers and fulfils himself in life. He (sic) will approach anyone who, without being patronising, offers him (sic) real friendship as a person. (para. 137)

In Chapter Six of REF on "The Sources of the Church's Teaching" it is stated, "Scripture is the most important text to be used in the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation ... The Church returns again and again to the Scriptures in her teaching, in her life, and in her worship" (par. 105). *The Renewal of the Education of Faith* said of the educator that he or she:

> Must try to glean the religious meaning of God's deeds as they are set out in Scripture ... The figures and symbols must be interpreted in the light of accepted exegesis of the Church so as not to misrepresent what God was revealing through them, and to avoid the risk of seeing them where they do not exist. The same thing applies to the different literary forms. (para. 108)

The General Catechetical Directory of 1971 and Amalorpavadass

The launching of the *General Catechetical Directory* (*The Directory*) in Rome at the World Congress of Catechetics in 1971 can be considered the beginning of the life-centred approached to catechetics. Within Catholicism *The Directory* was issued with the aim of providing order and direction to catechesis. Ryan (1997, p. 167) considered it to have been one of the "most influential documents" since Vatican II because of its location of catechesis in the pastoral ministry of the Church rather than in the educational realm.

The Directory distinguished between evangelization and used the term *catechesis* rather than *catechetics*. *The Directory* defined the purpose of evangelization as, "the arousing of the beginnings of Faith, so that men (sic) will adhere to the word of God" (para. 17) while catechesis is intended, "to make men's (sic) Faith become living, conscious, and active, through the light of instruction" (para. 17).

Religious education in schools was considered a form of catechesis:

In regions which have been Christian from of old, catechesis often takes the form of religious instruction given to children and adolescents in schools or outside a school atmosphere. (para. 19)

Of significance to the life-centred approach was *The Directory's* explanation of the importance of experience to the catechetical method. *The Directory* made four points (para. 74):

1. Catechesis should place people's experience under the light of the gospel.
2. Experience can help make the Christian message more intelligible.
3. Experience must be illuminated by the light of revelation.
4. Experience as an object to be interpreted and illuminated by the catechist must not be overlooked.

This emphasis on experience was highlighted by the keynote address given by Amalorpavadass (1973) at the launch of *The Directory*. He defined catechesis' aims as to:

…awakening, nourishing and developing the faith, while renewing, deepening and perfecting the initial conversion making it even more personal and actual. (1973, p. 13)

As the same time Amalorpavadass commented that the aim of catechesis does not consist in imparting religious knowledge…but in,

initiating and educating one to a life of personal and community relationship with the Father through the Son in the Spirit, and with one another in the world today. (1973, p. 13)

This for Amalorpavadass meant that,

For this catechesis must take into account the whole of man's (sic) life, secular and religious, make regular references to the actual living conditions of the charges which include not only the social, economic and political facts but also cultural and religious realities and groups. (1973, p. 13)

More explicitly he stated that,

…human experience is the medium by which God's word is addressed to man (sic) and human experience is the milieu in which it is received by him (sic). (1973, p. 24)

Amalorpavadass outlined a pedagogy for youth which would become a model

for religious education in Melbourne:

1)   Evocation of a human experience, reflection on it and interpretation of its significance at the human level.
2)   Interpretation and discovery of its fuller meaning and ultimate fulfilment in the light of God's Word proclaimed.
3)   With the discovery of the relevance of the World to life, reviewing and re-living the human experience in full consonance with faith. (1973, p. 33)

Faith was seen as a, "personal and vital encounter with the living God" (p. 19),

and religious education was viewed exclusively in terms of catechesis (pp. 15, 28).

Evangelii Nuntiandi

In 1976 Paul VI issued the encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* which although not

directly connected with scripture in catechesis or religious education, did, when

defining evangelization, put catechesis clearly in the realm of evangelization:

It is possible to define evangelization in terms of proclaiming Christ to those who do not know him, of preaching, of catechesis, of conferring Baptism and the other Sacraments. (para. 17)

This understanding of catechesis as a form of evangelization included

catechetical instruction in schools. This catechesis was considered synonymous with

religious education:

The intelligence, especially that of children and young people, needs to learn through systematic religious instruction the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us…Truly the effort for evangelization will profit greatly— at the level of catechetical instruction given at Church, in the schools… (para. 44)

The Melbourne Religious Education Guidelines

Life-centred catechesis had a significant impact on religious education in

Melbourne. This was evidenced in the first production of the *Guidelines for Religious*

Education for Primary Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne (*The Guidelines*) in

1973 (Engebretson, 1997, p. 26). These first 1973 *Guidelines* used Amalorpavadass's catechetical pedagogy.

The 1978 *Guidelines* drew heavily from Church documents such as the *General Catechetical Directory*, *The Renewal of the Education of Faith* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. The foreward by Archbishop Little used the terms catechesis and religious education interchangeably, while the introduction clearly stated that *The Guidelines* were, "offered in the service of religious education" (p. 2), and, "offered as a help to Catechesis. They are offered in the service of the Church's contribution to a person's growth in faith" (p. 6).

The impact of Amalorpavadass and the 1971 *General Catechetical Directory* on these *Guidelines* can be seen in Part 1 – Overview, Section B – Curriculum Overview where aspects of the learning process used are discussed (1978, pp. 13-16). Here are described the use of the student's past and present experience, the extension or deepening of the student's experience, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values and finally the encouragement of a lived faith response. By 1994, Amalorpavadass's catechetical pedagogy was expressly used in both the primary and secondary editions of the *Guidelines*.

Catechesi Tradendae

In 1979 Pope John Paul II issued his apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* which was the product of a 1977 synod of Bishops held in Rome considering the theme of catechesis. It defined catechesis as:

> An education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life. (para. 18)

It explained the objectives of catechesis as twofold:

(the) maturing (of) the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ. (para. 19)

These aims of catechesis are further expanded: "to develop, with God's help, an as yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful, young and old" (para. 20). Catechesis also has as its aim, "to be the teaching and maturation stage", to know better Jesus (para. 20). *Catechesi Tradendae* was also reacting to the problems of the time, which included life-centred religious education. It said: "It is also quite useless to campaign for the abandonment of serious and orderly study of the message of Christ in the name of a method concentrating on life experience" (para. 22).

Catechesi Tradendae drawing on *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Dei Verbum* considered catechesis as an aspect of evangelization (para. 26) and as having tradition and scripture as its source: "catechesis must be impregnated and penetrated by the thought, the spirit and the outlook of the Bible and the Gospels through assiduous contact with the texts themselves" and be read with the "intelligence and the heart of the Church" (para. 27). In dealing further with the issue of scripture in catechesis Pope John Paul II in *Catechesi Tradendae* alluded to critical biblical scholarship when he said:

On the one hand the Gospel message cannot be purely and simply isolated from the cultures in which it was first inserted (the Biblical world or, more concretely, the cultural milieu in which Jesus of Nazareth lived), nor, without serious loss, from the cultures in which it has already been expressed down the centuries. (para. 53)

This would appear to encourage the use of critical biblical scholarship in catechesis.

Schools are closely linked to catechesis by *Catechesi Tradendae*. The special character of a Catholic school is to be found in its religious instruction:

> The special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils...they still have a grave duty to offer a religious training suited to the often widely varying religious situations of the pupils. (para. 69)

However, there was still no distinction made between catechesis and religious education in schools. At this point, and up to the third edition of the *Guidelines* in 1994, Religions Education was equated with catechesis.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses in Faith published by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in 1982, continued this understanding of Catholic education and religious instruction. Education in faith was seen as, "part of the finality of a Catholic school" (para. 43), religious instruction was appropriate in every school and was in fact a right (para. 56). However, there was the beginning of a distinction between catechesis and religious education alluded to in the statement:

> The teaching of the Catholic religion, distinct from and at the same time complementary to catechesis properly so-called, ought to form a part of the curriculum of every school. (para. 56)

Here for the first time religious education was acknowledged as being different and distinct from catechesis. The distinction is seen in religious education's nature as a subject within the normal curriculum of the school.

The 1984 Melbourne Religious Education Guidelines

Despite the concerns about a life-centred approach to religious education raised by *Catechesi Tradendae*, the 1984 *Guidelines* continued this approach. In its introductory pages the 1984 *Guidelines* drew on Amalorpavadass, REF, the 1971

General Catechetical Directory and *Catechesi Tradendae* (pp. 8-12). With only minor structural and content changes, the four aspects of the learning process from the 1978 *Guidelines* were reproduced (pp. 14-16). The life-centred approach was to continue.

Religious education was still defined in the context of catechesis:

When it is initiated by the church, Religious Education is one form of this ecclesial action which aims at leading communities and individual members of the faithful to maturity of faith. (1984, p. 9)

However, in outlining the role of the Catholic secondary school in the context of faith development the *Guidelines* did acknowledge the difficulties of this task:

There is need to avoid the dangers of placing unrealistic expectations upon the Secondary School. The faith values presented in a Catholic school are likely to be ineffective unless supported in the home, and reinforced by the young person's experience in seeing, hearing, touching and feeling what goes on in life. (1984, p. 9)

The use of critical biblical scholarship was more developed than the 1978 *Guidelines*. Concepts 2.1 and 2.2 on revelation had similar learning objectives to those in the 1978 version. However the sections titled "Some Learning Approaches and Resources" suggested material more easily identifiable as critical biblical scholarship. This included reference to literary forms and interpretations of the bible using resources such as, "The Bible: An Owner's Manual" and "Understanding the Bible" (pp. 97-98).

On the whole, however, the 1984 *Guidelines* continued the thematic approach to the use of scripture that had been evident in the earlier editions. For example, references from the gospel of John, the letter to the Hebrews and St. Pauls first letter to the Corinthians are given for a study on the Trinity (p. 63), the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians are given for roles played by women in

ministry (p. 131) and a series of references are given from the gospels, Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul's letter to the Romans and St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians for the topic of Church (p. 144).

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School

The distinction between religious instruction and catechesis was made clear in the 1988 document from the Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*. While the mission of the Church and the school are to evangelise (para. 66) a distinction was made between religious instruction and catechesis:

> There is a close connection, and at the same time a clear distinction, between religious instruction and catechesis, or the handing on of the Gospel message...The distinction comes from the fact that, unlike religious instruction, catechesis presupposes that the hearer is receiving the Christian message as a salvific reality. Moreover, catechesis takes place within a community living out its faith at a level of space and time not available to a school: a whole lifetime. (para. 68)

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School thus indicated that catechesis had two clear dimensions that religious education may not: firstly, that hearers are believers and secondly, that they hear the message in a faith community. This distinction was further clarified with the aim of catechesis being explained as maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic whereas the aim of a school is knowledge. It was acknowledged that religious instruction cannot but strengthen faith and that a school has a specific role in catechesis (para. 69). The specific nature of religious instruction was then made clear:

> Religious instruction, therefore, should be integrated into the objectives and criteria which characterise a modern school...It should have a place in the weekly order alongside the other classes, for example; it should have its own syllabus, approved by those in authority...it should make use of the best educational methods available to schools today...(para. 70)

It was expected that the Christian message would be presented by the teacher in a Catholic school and depending on the level, "This should be preceded by a presentation of some basic ideas about Sacred Scripture, especially those having to do with the Gospels, Divine Revelation, and the Tradition that is alive in the Church" (para. 74).

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School made clear the need for a properly constructed religious education curriculum similar to other areas of the school. This was designed to bring together the life experience emphasis of the 1970s with general curriculum structures (Ryan, 1997, p. 175).

The 1995 Melbourne Religious Education Guidelines

The *Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* for secondary students that were in place at the time of this research in 1999 were published in 1995 as a three volume set: Junior, Middle and Senior Secondary.

This edition of the *Guidelines* had a more developed understanding and definition of religious education. However, while distinguishing religious education from evangelisation and catechesis the definition of religious education given was still catechetical:

> …the goals of Religious Education are concerned with the development of faith…these guidelines for Religious Education are concerned for the development of faith, situated in the life of the Church, and based on the following foundational beliefs.
> - Religious Education is concerned primarily with the Good News of Jesus Christ…(p. 13)

Of the place of a Catholic school the *Guidelines* quoting *The Catholic School* stated:

> The Catholic school aims at the proclamation of the faith (CS 8), the development of the whole person in Christ who gives meaning to human life (CS 35), and the integration of culture and faith, and faith and life (CS 37). (p. 17)

Under the heading of Revelation and faith, the *Guidelines* said of the source and substance of religious education that: "In order that Religious Education may work satisfactorily towards its ends, the following sources and contexts are constantly referred to and utilised" (1995, p. 5). The following were then indicated in diagram form (1995, p. 5): "The lives of people, The Scriptures, Liturgy & Sacraments, Tradition, The World around us, and The Church". Commenting further on sacred scripture the *Guidelines* (1995, p. 8) quoting from *The Renewal of the Education of Faith* said: "The Scriptures are the inspired word of God, 'the most important text to be used in the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation' (REF 105)".

The 1995 *Guidelines* (p. 35) saw scripture as central to religious education, as students need to become familiar with the story of God's people. It recommended a range of teaching and learning strategies including audio-visual, role play, songs and hymns and suggested that scripture can be used for prayer and meditation, to enrich teaching and learning and as a study of text as literature.

Each unit of work was built around doctrinal content drawn from the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, various Vatican II documents and other post-conciliar documents such as REF, *Catechesi Tradendae*, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and the 1971 *General Catechetical Directory*. These units of work were further enhanced by a curriculum schema set around some forty-three insights from theology, psychology, sociology, religion in society and education (1995, pp. 93-96). This was further developed into fourteen educational goals (1995, p. 99) from which were developed

key learnings which were then linked in each unit of work to the core objectives of that unit.

The 1995 *Guidelines* clearly indicated that the catechetical process was one of life experience. This had four interactive elements: Experience Shared, Reflection Deepened, Faith Expressed and Insights Reinforced (pp. 27-29). This was the explicit and full implementation of Amalorpavadass's catechetical pedagogy into the Melbourne *Guidelines* . In each unit of work this catechetical process was spelled out with suggestions for each of the four areas.

From this examination of *The Guidelines* three issues become apparent. Firstly, despite the developed understanding of religious education as separate and distinct from catechesis or education in faith, the 1995 *Guidelines* have not reflected this development. Church documents such as *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses in Faith* and *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* as well as Australian writers in this area such as Rossiter (1981 & 1982), Ryan (1999) and Engebretson et al. (1999) appear to have been ignored.

The second issue is that while there is some use of current biblical scholarship in a number of the units required to be studied at all three levels, Junior, Middle and Senior Secondary, Collins (1995, p. 23) claims that in the main this is a prooftexting use of the bible. Research is needed to quantify and describe the actual teaching of biblical scholarship in the religious education classrooms of Victoria. It is the intention of the research reported in this thesis to provide data in this area.

Thirdly, and related to the second point, is the need to take up Collins' (1995) claim regarding the predominant use of the bible for prooftexting. Prooftexting is the

linking of particular bible passages to themes used in the religious education classroom. For example, *The Guidelines* link and recommend particular passages of scripture to themes such as "Relationships" and "Justice". Research is needed into this question and in particular to see if there is any distortion of the theological message contained in scripture by this practice, or if this method allows for adequate contextual study of scripture.

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Summary

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The life-centred approach offered opportunities for a new direction in religious education and new relationships between students and teachers. However, it did not distinguish between catechesis and religious education. There was concern at the lack of assessment and the possibility of the emotional exploitation of students by the teachers (Ryan, 1997, pp. 63-64). Further concerns were raised that it relied too much on discussion and rarely moved beyond this to any serious academic study (Lovat, 2002, p. 16). As Greer (1982) says of discussion in British schools in the 1970's and early 1980's:

> …discussion has not been as central or of as high a quality as we intended. Classroom observation has shown that much discussion was teacher dominated and often restricted to question and answer…many teachers have much to learn about the organization of discussion, the provision of resources for discussion, and the control of discussion. (p. 8)

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The General Catechetical Directory of 1997

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In 1997 the Congregation for the Clergy issued a new *General Directory for Catechesis*. It is important to note the distinction between the *Directory* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The *Catechism* is a document of faith whereas the *Directory* is a document for catechesis. As Rosier says:

> …a catechetical directory offers pedagogical criteria to actualise the deposit of faith contained in a catechism (*Catechism*11; GDC 120).

The *Directory* therefore provides the proper context for the reception of the universal *Catechism* … The GDC (9) proposes to facilitate a better understanding and use of the *Catechism*. (1998, p. 7)

In the preface of this document, Church documents such as *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Catechesi Tradendae*, *Dei Verbum*, the 1971 *General Directory for Catechesis*, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (1972), and the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are mentioned among others as making catechesis, "one of the enduring concerns of the Church's missionary mandate for our times" (p. 13). Reflecting Church documents such as *The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic school*, the 1997 *General Directory for Catechesis* distinguished between catechesis and religious instruction, and explained that, "religious instruction in schools sows the dynamic seed of the Gospel" (p. 73). Echoing *Dei Verbum* and the Pontifical Biblical Commission's *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* the 1997 *General Directory for Catechesis* emphasised the importance of scripture: "The Church desires that in the ministry of the word, Sacred Scripture should have a pre-eminent position" (p. 136).

Commenting on the *Directory's* distinction between catechesis and religious instruction, Ryan said:

> …the *Directory* makes it clear that the basis or orientation of the classroom program is not catechetical. The "absolute necessity" to separate catechesis from the religion program means that the classroom religion program does not and cannot share the nature, aims and purposes which are described for catechesis. (1998, p. 3)

Ryan also noted the difficulty this distinction had caused for religious educators with his comment that,

> The need for this clear distinction is one which has been steadfastly resisted by many Australian Catholic religious educators who continue to argue for a unity between catechesis and the classroom program. (1998, p. 3)

The purpose of this distinction is seen in the *Directory's* recognition of student's various levels of faith. It says of believing students that religious instruction,

> assists them to understand better the Christian message, by relating it to the great existential concerns common to all religions and to every human being, to the various visions of life particularly evident in culture and to those major moral questions which confront humanity today. (p. 76)

Searching and doubting students,

> can also find in religious instruction the possibility of discovering what exactly faith in Jesus Christ is, what response the Church makes to their questions, and gives them the opportunity to examine their own choice more deeply. (p. 76)

For non-believers,

> Religious instruction assumes the character of a missionary proclamation of the Gospel and is ordered to a decision of faith, which catechesis, in its turn, will nurture and mature. (p. 76)

This acknowledgement of the range of faith and readiness for religious instruction of students within the classroom implies that, "not all students in Catholic schools are ready, willing and able to participate in faith forming, catechetical activities in the religion classroom" (Ryan, 1998, p. 4). As Ryan says (1998, p. 4) catechesis is about the nurturing, sustaining and bringing to maturity of Christian faith whereas religious instruction is about enhancing understanding, the "discovery of Christian possibilities and to be a point of access to the Christian heritage".

At the same time the *Directory* acknowledged the changing nature of the Catholic school's clientele:

> When students and their families become associated with Catholic schools because of the quality of education offered in the school, or for other reasons, catechetical activity is necessarily limited and even religious education–when possible-accentuates its cultural character. (p. 263)

This poses a challenge to the role of the Catholic school, which becomes much broader than a narrow ecclesiology (Brennan, 1999, p. 20).

However, the *Directory* does acknowledge a place for catechetical activity in Catholic schools:

> When given in the context of the catholic school, religious instruction is part of and completed by other forms of the ministry of the word (catechesis, homilies, liturgical celebrations, etc.). It is indispensable to their pedagogical function and the basis for their existence. (p. 75)

This is an explicit encouragement to Catholic schools to engage in activities such as social service and justice groups as well as liturgical celebrations and retreats. In fact the work of the religious education teacher in the classroom should allow students to participate in these activities in a, "fuller and more meaningful way" (Ryan, 1998, p. 6).

This is not to say that according to the *Directory* religious instruction does not have any catechetical activity. On the contary, the *Directory* says of religious instruction that it,

> sows the dynamic seed of the Gospel and seeks to "keep in touch with the other elements of the student's knowledge and education; thus the Gospel will impregnate the mentality of the students in the field of their learning, and the harmonization of their culture will be achieved in the light of faith". (p. 73)

British influences on Australian religious education

In 1944 in Britain, the Butler Act made religious education compulsory for all county schools. The "agreed syllabi" that followed were at first Christian in content and method. By 1975, however, in multicultural Britain, this was no longer appropriate.

Religious education in England, and Wales, according to legislation, was to be given in schools according to, "an agreed syllabus adopted by the school" (Hull, 1984b, p. 73). Until the 1960s this meant a study of the bible, the history of Israel, the life and teachings of Jesus, the growth of the Church and the history of Christianity with the purpose of nurturing the religious lives of students (Hull, 1984b, p. 75). Agreed syllabi were ecumenical agreements by the Churches, agreeing to teach what they held in common and was seen by many as, "a direct application of Christian faith in the classroom" (Hull, 1984b, p. 29).

With the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus of 1975, this approach was challenged. In this agreed syllabus, study of religion was in the context of "secular ideologies" and included humanism and communism. Any formal or necessary link with the faith of the teacher was severed. The purpose of religious studies was seen as furthering the:

> pupil's understanding of religion by contrast and comparison with their non-religious alternatives, the attitude of the Syllabus and Handbook is equally descriptive and objective when presenting the secular ways of life as it is when dealing with the religions. (Hull, 1984b, p. 30)

The influence of phenomenology

The Birmingham Agreed Syllabus of 1975 was deeply influenced by phenomenology. This approach involved the study of religion as a phenomena, and it involved a detached observation or study aimed at the development of the skills of understanding and critical analysis:

> …the main aim of which is to develop in pupils the ability to understand religious phenomena and critically discuss them, without necessarily becoming converts. (Meakin, 1979, p. 53)

Meakin (1979, pp. 53-54) argued for phenomenology from the view of personal autonomy. This was to counter the potential problem in the education in

faith approach, of abuse of students' religious freedom. Meakin considered that personal autonomy was concerned with the ability of an individual to be self-governed. This autonomy is part of what it means to be a person and includes the ability to think critically.

Smart (1969, 1973 & 1989) is considered to be the author of the phenomenological approach to religious education (Lovat, 2002, p. 45; Ryan, 1997, p. 102). He argued for the study of many religions and broke down the many aspects of religion into dimensions (1976, pp. 6-12). These included the doctrinal, mythological, ethical, ritual, experiential, social and material dimensions.

One great advantage of phenomenology was its ability to give teachers a clear criteria for assessment in the area of analysis and interpretation of data (Lovat, 2002, 47). As Moore and Habel said:

> He (Smart) has provided the teacher with a methodology which enables assessment of student achievements in the study of religion which does not require intrusion into the area of the student's faith or lack of it. On Smart's approach, it is possible to assess students' skills rather than their level of religious commitment. (1982, p. 15)

The Birmingham Syllabus was well known in Australia, and was the first educational proposal that challenged an exclusively catechetical approach to religious education. However, the uncritical application of University religious studies courses to secondary school programs, and the preferences for the study of Christianity rather than a range of religions did affect the actual application of this approach in Australian secondary schools (Moore & Habel, 1982, p. 71).

Typology

An extension of the phenomenological approach was developed by the Australian scholars Moore and Habel (1982). They advocated the study of components of religion such as beliefs, texts, stories, ethics, rituals, symbols, social structure and experience (Ryan, 1997, p. 105) in a "typological" approach to the teaching of religion.

A major distinction from phenomenology and of great importance to typology was the study of one's "home tradition" (Lovat, 2002, p. 54). Moore and Habel suggested that the primary subject matter should be one's own tradition, where one comes to know religious phenomena through one's own religion's examples. Typology however, should never be used to proselytise. The emphasis was on the objective, critical study of religious "types".

Typology's great advantage is its use of general educational methods, where students learn to describe and detail, list and compare, to locate religious types and to see what the experience means for its adherents. This emphasis on general religious literacy allows for a greater knowledge of the students' own tradition (Lovat, 2002, p. 58).

Victorian Certificate of Education

This typological approach was used in the development of religious studies units in the Victorian Certificate of Education in 1992. Around Australia in the 1980s, state education reports showed the influence of this critical, objective approach to the study of religion, and affirmed its value. In 1992 in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) two religious studies courses appeared. One study was called

Religion and Society, and it had units of study on Religion and Identity, Ethics, Beliefs and Life Perspectives and Religion and Change (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board, 1991). A second study, *Text and Traditions*, was also offered. This contained units of study on Texts and Justice in Society, Narrative Texts and Traditions, Texts and the Development of Traditions and Texts and their Teachings (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board, 1991).

The *Religion and Society* study design clearly indicates its phenomenological and typological roots. The introduction situates religion as a phenomenon within a society:

> In this study religions are those forms of belief and practice through which human beings express their sense of ultimate reality. Such beliefs and practices form an important part of the experience of human beings, and this experience is both individual and collective as religions are formed and understood by individuals within religious communities.
> (Board of Studies, 1999, p. 7)

The study stated that it valued and promoted, "open inquiry without bias towards any one tradition in particular" (Board of Studies, 1999, p. 7). Further it was indicated that religious traditions were to be analysed through eight aspects of traditions:

- beliefs, for example formal statements of belief or creeds
- myths and other stories
- sacred texts and literature
- rituals
- symbols
- social structure
- oral or written codes of behaviour
- religious experience.

(Board of Studies, 1999, p. 7)

At the time of this research the *Religion and Society* study design in use was an earlier edition published in 1994 (Board of Studies, 1994), this was revised in late 1999 (Board of Studies, 1999). However, while there were wording and assessment

changes, the revised study design as discussed above, was still based on a phenomenological and typological approach to the teaching of religious education.

The *Texts and Traditions* study design also clearly indicates its phenomenological and typological roots. The first paragraph of the introduction situates the study within the context of its components:

> Many traditions have a special relationship with a set of writings. These writings have particular authority for the tradition and may act as an important reference and foundation for its social organisation, rituals, beliefs, values and behaviour. The texts of a tradition usually include important stories which shape the tradition, in addition to other types of literature. (Board of Studies, 1999, p. 7)

In unit one: "Narrative texts and traditions" this typology is developed further:

> This unit examines the place of narrative within a religious tradition. Story-telling is one of the major forms of literature in religious traditions. Other common types of sacred literature are codes of law, prophecy, songs of praise, wisdom sayings, apocalyptic writings, and others. (Board of Studies, 1999, p. 12)

The study *Texts and Traditions* is most important for this research into the use of critical biblical scholarship in the religious education classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools. The *Texts and Traditions* study use historical-critical biblical scholarship in its approach to the study of selected texts. The outcomes of unit 3: "Texts and the early tradition" included:

- events, people and places that relate to the origin of the tradition…
- sociocultural conditions, institutions and world view of the society out of which the tradition emerged and developed…
- the historical conditions which prompted the writing of the text;
- the purpose, authorship, and, if appropriate, audience of the text;
- the literary structure and major themes of the text;
- methods of textual interpretation.

(Board of Studies, 1999, pp. 20-21)

Unit four: "Texts and their teachings" included:

- exegetical methods appropriate within the tradition under study;
- the literary context of passages under study;
- the social and historical dimensions of the text;
- a religious idea, belief or social theme arising from the study of a foundational text in its original historical, social and religious context.

(Board of Studies, 1999, pp. 25-26)

This historical-critical approach to biblical scholarship by the *Texts and Traditions* study is useful for schools since it follows the encouragement given by Church documents such as *The interpretation of the bible in the church* (The Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993). Because of this use of the historical-critical method the self-administering questionnaire used in this research included a large section on the *Texts and Traditions* study, and its influence in Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

At the time of the research reported in this thesis, the *Texts and Traditions* study design in use was an earlier edition published in 1994 (Board of Studies, 1994). While some assessment had changed, like the *Religion and Society* study design, the thrust of the approach was still one of phenomenology and typology.

According to Ryan (1997, p. 109) these Victorian Certificate of Education courses, and similar religious studies courses in other Australian states, have led to increased levels of satisfaction for teachers, increased levels of interest from students and development in the quality of students' work.

This study investigates both the *Religion and Society* and *Texts and Traditions* units to obtain quantitative data from Religious Education Co-ordinators about the extent of their use in Victorian Catholic secondary schools, and their influences on the general religious education curriculum.

Contemporary Australian Writers

The more objective or "educational" approach advanced by phenomenology and typology came to influence Catholic religious education. As noted earlier, the 1980s saw a number of educational reports in Australia, which raised the issue of the nature of religious education. *The Steinle Report* (1973), suggested that religious education need not be about faith development. *The Russell Report* (1974), focused on religion in schools in the context of their influence in human society. *The Nott Report* (1977), saw the study of forms of religions through their place as part of the character of culture and *The Rawlinson Report* (1980) saw a place for both denominational religious education and a general religious education within the normal school context.

By this time, Australian scholars in religious education had also raised questions about the classroom context and its appropriateness for catechesis. Rossiter (1982, p. 25) defined catechesis as an instructional dialogue between believers, which presumes an initial awaking or conversion to faith. It includes a willingness to develop deeper understanding of and participation in the Christian faith tradition. Its natural context is a community of faith, with an orientation to the development of mature adult faith and its basic form is pastoral ministry rather than education (Rossiter, 1982, p. 25).

Malone (1984, p. 10) agreed, also including dialogue between believers and growth in faith which includes a free choice and a response. Dialogue was a key component for Treston (1993, p. 32) while Ryan suggested that the catechetical theorist would see catechesis as, "forming, informing and transforming those who participate (1999, p. 19).

Rossiter (1981, p. 24) was concerned that the aims of catechesis in schools need considerable qualification when applied to the classroom. He stated that schools act as a natural constraint to the aims of catechesis. Teachers can act as substitutes for the family and the community of faith, yet each teacher in turn may have a different pedagogical orientation. This can lead students to be, "confused about what teachers are trying to achieve through religious education" (1981, p. 27). Rossiter suggested other issues for catechesis in schools, which included the importance of a student's personal freedom and personal development (1982, p. 34). Faith cannot be imposed and adolescents are at a time in life when differentiation from others may be experienced. This can lead to:

> …a marked unwillingness to co-operate with a religious education that seems to be marketing Christian attitudes and values, especially if these are perceived as restrictive. (Rossiter, 1982, p. 34)

In discussing the "doubtful readiness" of Australian students for a catechetical program, Ryan agreed with Rossiter:

> An approach which relies upon a student's predisposition and openness to Christian discipleship will encounter resistance among students who are not prepared to accept this invitation. (1999, p. 20)

Johns puts this point into the context of a liberal democracy:

> In a liberal democracy, such as ours, there can be no foreclosing of rational options. Pupils must, in order to function in this society, complete their education in such a state that they are able (within their individual limits) to make decisions on the basis of relevant information, to appreciate the consequences of decisions, to change their opinions in the light of new evidence (i.e., not to be indoctrinated), to listen to debate, to give reason, and to be aware of the right of others to hold different opinions. (1981, p. 28)

Ryan mentions a number of other limitations to catechesis in the religious education classroom, including its unacceptability to government authorities and its inability to cope with multiculturalism (1999, p. 21).

Because of these growing concerns with a catechetical approach to religious education, other understandings and definitions of religious education had been put forward. Moran (1991, p. 249) suggested the main aim of religious education was to teach people, "to understand". He went on to say:

> The student of religion focuses on observation of data, audio, or visual records, books and essays. This is the underlying question: Can I grasp with some logic the human experiences grouped under the term "religion"? (p. 250)

Malone agreed but would add, if possible, some impact on the student's personal life:

> The R.E. program that I would like to see developed in a Catholic secondary school would have as its goal the development of those areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes that would help the young person understand and appreciate such a religious perspective [transcendence and purpose of life] and if possible help them become more religious in their own lives. (1984, p. 11)

Rossiter suggested the need for religious education to have a similar status to other subjects in the curriculum with an emphasis on content, study skills, written work, assignments and assessment (1982, p. 30). He went on to say:

> Such an approach to religion classes considers that the religious education curriculum should concentrate on communicating knowledge and understanding of religion, while at the same time, not neglecting the affective dimension and not disregarding the importance of other aspects of religious education outside the formal curriculum (e.g. participation in liturgy, community building, retreats, pastoral activities). (1982, p. 30)

Lovat (1989, pp. 85-95; 2002, pp. 62-68) put forward as a critical model for religious education a proposal, combining what he saw as the best of the Church-based and State-based programs stating, "I have done this by combining the basic *methodology* (author's emphasis) and *structure* of the *Typological model*, with the *critical thrust* of the *Praxis model*" (1989, p. 86; 2002, p. 62).

Religious education is summed up by Treston as a meeting point between religion and education, "a conversation between learning and the whole experience of the phenomenon of religion" (1993, p. 32). As Ryan pointed out (1999, p. 22) the goal of this type of religious education is understanding and it is seen as a life-long concern.

Religious Literacy in the 1990's

By the 1990's this theorising about the nature of religious education had developed into a discussion of religious literacy and the achievement of learning outcomes. Religious literacy is defined by Barry and Rush as:

> …that ability which a student progressively acquires, to interrelate and synthesise, through a range of genre, and within cultural and social contexts, knowledge, process, communication, attitudes and values, in the light of the Catholic tradition, so as to make meaning and facilitate effective and critical participation in the life of his/her faith community and wider society. (1999, p. 35)

This approach to religious education involves two dimensions, the cognitive and the affective. The cognitive dimension involves the skills of knowledge, process and communication while the affective dimension involves opportunity for the development of desirable attitudes and values in the content studied (Barry & Rush, 1999, p. 36).

By the 1990's in Victorian primary and secondary schools, all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) became subject to benchmark standards of cognition and skills. Acknowledging the importance of these benchmarks for religious literacy, Engebretson, De Souza, Sullivan and Stewart said, "the presence of Religious Education in the school curriculum means that it is subject to the same educational standards as other subjects" (1999, p. 38). Explaining the cognitive dimension, Engebretson et al. outlined the need to educate students in knowledge including

history, stories, texts, values, symbols as well as the lived experience of Catholic/Christianity. They went on to say that,

> This is a **cognitive** (their emphasis) exercise which may take place whether the student identifies as a Christian believer or not. It is an objective process, which implicitly invites to faith, but which is primarily concerned with developing knowledge. (1999, p. 38)

Also related to the cognitive dimension is the acquisition of skills such as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Engebretson, 2001).

Engebretson et al. see the affective dimension not as separate to the cognitive as Barry and Rush do, but "intricately bound up" with it (1999, p. 39). The affective dimension is seen as an invitational dimension. It is only touched on in classroom learning as it is the domain of the whole school community. It is the invitation by the school to the student, "to faith in the living tradition that he or she studies daily at a cognitive level" (p. 39).

The advantages of an outcomes based approach to religious education are clear:

> …it establishes religious education as a (sic) academic discipline in the school curriculum with status that is equal to other formal disciplines that are structured by an outcomes approach; it targets the intended observable results of teaching and learning for each student; it conceives religious education as an intentional activity that aims to religious literacy; it provides for accountability; it promotes a more rigorous study of religious education. (Welbourne, 2000, p. 1)

On the other hand, Welbourne does caution the teacher using an outcomes based syllabus that they have the responsibility to use this approach:

> with whatever flexibility is necessary to ensure that both the integrity of the syllabus and the need of the individual student's search for personal meaning are (sic) respected. This means that religious educators must avoid a situation of technocratic rationality, which is inherent in a misunderstanding of the approach. (p. 1)

In 2001, after this research had been completed, this outcomes approach to religious education was included in the revised Victorian Certificate of Education studies *Religion and Society* and *Texts and Tradition* (Board of Studies, 1999). By the late 1990s then, an educational, rather than a catechetical approach informed religious education in Victorian Catholic schools.

Melbourne Diocesan Texts

In 2001 and 2002 the Melbourne archdiocese introduced mandatory religious education textbooks for all students in Catholic secondary schools. Year Seven (Rymarz, 2000) and Year Nine (Engebretson, 2000) texts were introduced in 2001 followed by Year Eight (Rymarz, 2002) and Year Ten (Engebretson, 2002) in 2002. These texts continued the outcomes approach to religious education. All four teacher companion texts indicated that the curriculum framework for use was built on an understanding of knowledge as functioning within the categories of:

> Remembering
> Understanding
> Applying
> Analysing
> Evaluating
> Creating
> (Rymarz, Engebretson, Pagon & Ryan, 2001, p. 20; Rymarz, Brown & Hirth, 2002, p. 21; Engebretson & Pagon, 2001, p. 20; Engebretson, K. & Engebretson, T., 2002, p. 21)

All teacher companion texts have at the beginning of each chapter an outline of the cognitive outcomes of knowledge and skills for that chapter, as well as affective outcomes in the areas of attitudes, values and faith response.

This has meant that by 2002 any student entering a Catholic secondary school in Victoria can expect that the religious education they encounter in the classroom

from Year Seven to Year 12 (including the VCE) will be presented with an educational approach based on outcomes.

However, it is of note that all teacher companion texts include a section on, "Foundational Catechetical Goals". These catechetical goals are the same for all four Year Levels from Year Seven to Year Ten and comprise six statements. These six statements are considered, "the fundamental tasks of catechesis which underlie the whole program" (Rymarz, Engebretson, Pagon & Ryan, 2001, p. 10; Rymarz, Brown & Hirth, 2002, p. 11; Engebretson & Pagon, 2001, p. 10; Engebretson, K. & Engebretson, T., 2002, p. 11). These six statements are derived from the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) and include reference to:

- promoting a deepening awareness of Jesus Christ,

- promoting a deepening knowledge of Jesus Christ,

- students undertaking a journey of interior transformation, and

- challenging students to permeate their whole life with a spirit of prayer.

(Rymarz, Engebretson, Pagon & Ryan, 2001, p. 10; Rymarz, Brown & Hirth, 2002, p. 11; Engebretson & Pagon, 2001, p. 10; Engebretson, K. & Engebretson, T., 2002, p. 11).

It would seem therefore that the mandatory religious education textbooks while promoting cognitive outcomes, have adhered to the catechetical aspect of religious education that many writers have questioned over the last twenty years. However, this catechetical aspect is now seen as implicit in the cognitive dimension, rather than as the primary focus of religious education. It is an acknowledgment that, as the *General Directory for Catechesis* says, religious education does, "sow the dynamic seed of the Gospel" (1997, p. 73).

Summary

Church documents on catechesis do emphasis the importance of the use of scripture and modern biblical scholarship, particularly the historical-critical method. As the following chapter of this thesis will show, scripture is to have a pre-eminent position in the work of religious education. However, by 1997 the General Catechetical Directory has made it clear that catechesis and religious education are not the same thing. Catechesis is the nurturing of faith, religious education on the other hand, "assists (students) to understand the Christian message" (Congregation of the Clergy, 1997, p. 76).

The documents on Catholic schools also demonstrate the gradual shift in understanding about catechesis and religious education. In 1977 *The Catholic School* indicated that religious education was concerned with, "a total commitment…to the Person of Christ" (para. 50) but by 1982 in *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses in Faith* a distinction was emerging. This became clearer in the 1988 document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* where it was explained that catechesis takes place within a community of faith not available in a school (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 68).

Since the Kerygmatic era there has been a significant shift in the understanding of what religious education is. Life-centred catechesis emphasised by the 1971 *General Catechetical Directory* and Amalorpavadass (1973) has had a great influence on Australian religious education. In particular the 1995 Melbourne *Guidelines* still strongly reflected this influence.

However, the influence of writers such as Rossiter (1981) in Australia and Smart (1969) in Britian reflected a shift in understanding that led to religious education being seen as communicating knowledge and understanding of religion. This was particularly reflected in phenomenology and typology as seen in the Victorian Certificate of Education studies *Religion and Society* and *Texts and Traditions*. Gradually this change in understanding emerged in Church documents such as *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* and the 1997 *General Catechetical Directory*.

Today religious education is expected by the Catholic Church and by those working in the field, to be a subject within a school's curriculum having the same status and educational standards as other subjects. It should require the development of knowledge and skills just as for any other subject at the particular Year level while at the same time sowing the seeds of the gospels. This is the understanding of religious education that this research will take as normative for Victorian Catholic secondary education.

This understanding of the nature of religious understanding has been summarized diagramatically by Buchanan (2003):

Figure 1.1

Orientations in Religious Education in Schools.

Empasis on   **Empasis on**
Faith Formation   **Knowledge**
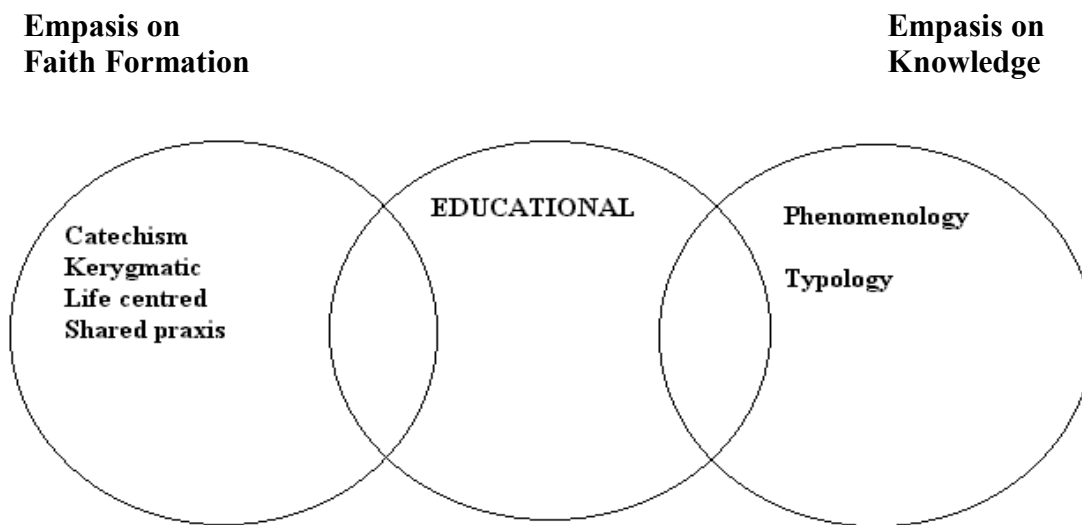
With this understanding of the nature of religious education in mind, this research seeks to investigate, in the religious education classrooms of Victorian Catholic schools, how scripture is used in this process. Therefore, the questions that have driven the research reported in this thesis are:

- To what extent are students offered the best biblical scholarship available to them at their appropriate level, as an educational approach to religious education requires?

- Is the study of scripture in the Catholic secondary school linked to both cognitive and affective dimensions?

- Is the use of scripture in the religious education classroom linked to a primarily catechetical approach, and if so what educational issues arise from this?

CHAPTER 2: CRITICAL BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND THE CATHOLIC

CHURCH

Introduction

Chapter One of this thesis explored the nature of religious education, concluding that today religious education is to have the same status and educational standards as any other subject within a school's curriculum. This chapter is concerned with outlining the key approaches of modern biblical scholarship in order to provide further context for the research reported in this thesis. The chapter explores some of the various methods and approaches used in modern biblical exegesis, comments on the Pontifical Biblical Commission's 1993 exposition on these methods and approaches, and outlines the development of the Catholic Church's gradual acceptance of critical biblical study. This will enable a context to be given to this research into how the bible is used within religious education classes. It will also enable teacher's responses to the research instrument to be compared with present approaches to modern biblical scholarship. This is turn will enable judgements to be made about the appropriateness of the methods employed by teachers with students in the classroom. The following chapter will then place bible usage within the religious education classroom in the context of recent research.

Reading and understanding the bible is a complex task which is very different from reading and understanding a modern text such as a letter or newspaper article. Hayes and Holladay (1987, p. 14) outline a number of complexities that are related to reading and understanding the bible. These include the fact that the bible is not addressed to the modern reader, it was not composed in a modern language, and the original and modern readers are separated by an enormous historical and cultural gap.

Further complicating the task of reading and understanding the bible, is the fact that the oldest manuscripts we have are copies made long after the originals.

The terms *exegesis*, *criticism* or *hermeneutics* can all be used to refer to biblical scholarship (Schneiders, 1991, p. 122). Brown (1997, p. 20) uses the term *hermeneutics* with its widest possible definition: "interpretation by commentary on and explanation of what someone else has said or written", to include the traditional criticisms associated with biblical scholarship (pp. 21-29). *Biblical exegesis* is used by Hayes and Holladay (1987, p. 14) to refer to the task of reading and understanding the bible. Schneiders (1991, p. 123) suggests that these terms should be used with more rigor as they do denote different foci of research. She suggests that *exegesis* is concerned with ascertaining the literal meaning of the text, *criticism* is to do with the process of analysing the text, and *hermeneutics* is concerned with the interpretation of the text (pp. 123-125). Schökel (1998, p. 13) has a similar view, suggesting that *exegesis* is the exercise of comprehending and interpreting a text, *exegetical method* is the way of proceeding systematically in the interpretation of a text, and *hermeneutics* is the theory of the activity of understanding and interpreting texts. Jeanrond (1994, p. 2) also sees *hermeneutics* as the theory of interpretation, while Palmer (1988, p. 8) explains *hermeneutics* as both the event of understanding a text and also of what understanding and interpretation, as such, are.

As the research conducted in this paper is concerned with the classroom activity of the student with the use of scripture, it is most appropriate to refer to this as *biblical exegesis*. Schneiders (1991, pp. 123-125) would describe this classroom activity as both *exegesis* and *criticism* while Schökel (1998, p. 13) would describe it as both *exegesis* and *exegetical method*. Neither would refer to it as *hermeneutics*.

Hayes and Holladay (1987, p. 14) also see the classroom study of the bible as *biblical exegesis*.

Biblical exegesis is a specialized discipline involving various methods and approaches to the biblical text. It is a critical study that can be traced back to the work of Greek commentators on the writings of Homer and other Greek classics. They attempted to establish the best texts and analyse structures in such works as *The Iliad and the Odyssy* (Fitzmyer, 1995, p. 26). This was taken up by people such as Origen (184-254) and Jerome (331-419) in the early Church (Fitzmyer, 1995, p. 27). It must be kept in mind, however, that the theology of the early Christian communities determined the results of their exegesis (Hayes and Holladay, 1987, p. 19). They would attempt to find hidden symbolic or allegorical meanings behind the text. This can be seen in Augustine's analysis of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 29-37) where he refers to the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho as Adam (p. 20). During the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the study of the biblical languages led to a reaction against an allegorical interpretation of the Bible (Fitzmyer, 1995, p. 28). The Enlightenment introduced textual and literary criticism and source criticism developed during the seventeenth century (Fitzmyer, 1995, p. 29) In the twentieth century refinements in source criticism, the development of redaction criticism, and archaeological discoveries have significantly contributed to the interpretation of the bible (Fitzmyer, 1995, p. 33).

<div align="center">Modern Biblical Scholarship</div>

<div align="center">*Textual Criticism*</div>

The original Hebrew and Greek texts of the bible have not survived. However, thousands of complete or partial manuscripts of the Hebrew and Christian

Scriptures are available. The oldest Greek manuscripts of the gospels are papyri dating back to the second and third centuries (United Bible Societies, 1983, p. xv). These existing copies are the work of later scribes. Textual Criticism had its beginnings when scholars in the seventeenth century became aware of variant readings in these many manuscripts of the Greek New Testament (Achtemeier, 1985, p. 1052). A knowledge of how these texts were transmitted is important for our understanding when translating and explaining the bible (Brown, Johnson & O'Connell, 1990, p. 1084) as well as in the quest for the original wording.

After a text was originally written, copies would be made to extend its influence. Divergence in these texts arose when the copyist missed a line, copied the same line twice or attempted to smooth out grammatical harshness (Metzger, 1975, p. xv). Changes in the texts also occurred when the texts being copied were read aloud to the copyist. Words or phrases were omitted, repeated or misspelled. Deliberate attempts were also made to smooth out grammatical or stylistic harshness as well as for theological reasons concerned with the meaning of the text (Metzger, 1975, p. xvi).

As Hayes and Holladay (1987, p. 38) state, the aims of textual criticism are to determine the transmission of a particular text, its original wording where possible, and to determine the best form of the text for the modern reader. Various criteria have been developed for working back towards the more original reading: "the more difficult reading is to be preferred", "the shorter reading is to be preferred", "dissonance is to be preferred" (Hayes and Holladay, 1987, p. 38) as well as style, vocabulary and literary context.

Historical Critical Method[1]

The Historical Critical Method is a means of analyzing the bible through time (Keegan, 1985, p. 24). Barton (1998, p. 9) says that this method is used by a large number of scholars today. It asks questions such as when and by whom the texts were written, who the intended audience was, and what were the stages by which the text came into being? It is concerned with what the text meant to the original readers and not what it means to the modern reader and with historical reconstruction, in what happened in the past (p. 11). It attempts to be value free. This has led to the criticism that this was not possible and was in fact a "fruitless quest". It is claimed by some commentators that it is impossible for modern biblical scholarship to step, "out of (their) own historical horizon in order to enter, unencumbered by (their) own historicity, into the ancient world of the Bible" (Schneiders, 1991, p. 123).

Historical Criticism

Historical criticism is concerned with the detection of the literal sense of the text, that is what the author meant to say (Brown, 1997, p. 21). As an aid to understanding the text, it is necessary to become familiar with the historical period of the text and the situation of the author and the audience (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, p. 48). This involves the text's setting in time and space, and as such involves the

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[1] The Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) (1993), considers the Historical Critical Method as "indispensable" and "required" for a proper understanding of scripture (p. 35). The PBC acknowledges that the Historical Critical Method uses scientific criteria, seeks to shed light upon the historical processes which gave rise to the biblical texts and as such it, "has made it possible to understand far more accurately the intention of the authors and editors of the Bible" (p. 38). The PBC, however would acknowedge that in its classic form it, "restricts itself to a search for the meaning of the biblical text within the historical circumstances that gave rise to it and is not concerned with other possibilities of meaning which have been revealed at later stages of the biblical revelation and history of the Church" (p. 41).

historical, geographical and cultural setting of the original author(s) and audience(s) (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, p. 27). Schneiders says that:

> … the text is a *human artifact* produced by real people in remote times and places and under certain historical circumstances; it is written in a particular ancient language according to forms in use at the time of composition and in the styles of particular writers; it was influenced by the thought, culture, and literature of its environment of composition. It is the task of history as a discipline to investigate all of these matters and their implications for valid interpretation of the text. (1991, p. 114)

Form Criticism

The bible is a collection of texts from many centuries with many authors and many literary genres. The bible has gospels, letters, prophecy, wisdom sayings, hymns as well as historical books. Within these genres are smaller genres such as myth, proverb, homily, prayer, miracle story and parable (Lohfink, 1979, p. 64). Form criticism focuses on the smaller literary sections and analyses the form, content and function of a particular passage (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, p. 83). If a particular passage is found to have a recognizable pattern it can belong to a given genre. In fact Buss describes form criticism as "integrative pattern analysis" (1993, p. 70). He goes on to state:

> The word "integrative" in this definition indicates that form criticism gives attention to all aspects of a text, including its language, content, and contextual function. The word "pattern" highlights the fact that the concern of form criticism is not merely with phenomena that appear once but with features that are shared or can be shared by other texts, past or present; texts possessing common features are regularly grouped into types, or "genres." (1993, p. 70)

Form criticism is also concerned with the life situation (*Sitz im Leben*) that produced, shaped and used the passage, that is, the particular institutional and social setting and the total cultural background of the passage (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, p. 83). The term *"Sitz im Leben"* for the life situation of the text reflects the pioneering work of Hermann Gunkel is this area. He considered that texts, as well as having a

definite linguistic form, had a "seat in life" or normal location connected with a repeating social occasion (Buss, 1993, p. 73). Once one understands the nature and form of a passage through a study of its literary form, an awareness of how a text communicates its message can be gained (Bailey & Vander Broek, 1992, p. 11).

The Psalms, for example, can be classified as laments, thanksgivings and hymns (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, p. 85). Their *Sitz im Leben* is that of, "liturgical texts used in Israelite services of worship" (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, p. 85), particularly temple worship (Lohfink, 1979, p. 45). In the New Testament we see early Christian worship, preaching and teaching. By analysing particular forms such as a miracle story or a parable, we can come to a new understanding and appreciation of the faith and practices of the early Church.

Source Criticism

The authors of the various sections of the bible often incorporated pre-existing material and sources into their work (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, p. 76). The examination of a text's literary features to discover these sources behind the text is known as source criticism (Viviano, 1993, p. 29). The bible itself does occasionally mention some of its sources such as the *Book of the Wars of Yahweh* (the book of Numbers 21:14) and the *Book of Jashar* (the book of Joshua 10:13). However, source criticism is more concerned with those sources not specified, such as the stories that circulated in oral or written form to which the biblical authors had access.

Viviano (1993, p. 31) outlines three main criteria for establishing pre-existing sources: marked differences in writing style, terminology and perspective;

contradictory material; and multiple versions of the story. Hayes and Holladay (1987, p. 77) also include the presence of linking statements and sub-units.

In the case of the Pentateuch for example, biblical scholars have traditionally found four sources behind the text (J, E, D and P). Within the book of Genesis chapters 1-11 can be found styles of repetition (And God said), vocabulary (the use of *Elohim* and *Yahweh*) as well as perspective to indicate these different sources (Viviano, 1993, p. 39). An analysis of the synoptic gospels has led to the gospel of Mark being considered a probable source used and expanded upon by the authors of the gospels of Matthew and Luke. As well as this, a second source (Q) was probably used by both authors (Perkins, 1998, p. 241). These sources give us an insight into the earlier oral and written stages in the development of a text and the theological perspective given to it by the author.

Redaction Criticism

Redaction criticism considers the editorial work of the authors of individual texts. It refers to:

> That form of interpretation whose primary focus is the editorial stage(s) that led towards or produced the final written form or composition of a passage, the final stage(s) of the tradition, as it were, that has become crystallized in written form. (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, p. 101)

It considers the work of the individual authors in using their sources in the composition of the texts. Redaction criticism is normally associated with the synoptic gospel writers. It considers them to be not merely "transcribers of a tradition" but "uniquely creative theologian(s)" (Corrington, 1993, p. 87). That is, the text may exhibit editorial features that can provide a deeper understanding of the passage.

From a study of the synoptic gospels many writers have concluded that the gospel of Mark was the earliest gospel, and that the authors of the gospels of Matthew and Luke used it as one of their sources (Hayes & Holladay, 1989, p. 102). For example, the texts which refer to the death of Jesus exhibit differences in what happened after Jesus' death, such as the tearing of the temple veil, tombs opened and saints being resurrected (the gospel of Matthew 27: 51-54), the last words of Jesus on the cross and the words of the centurion. These distinctive features led to questions being asked such as why the author of the gospel of Luke omitted Jesus' cry of dereliction (Lk 23:44-49)? A distinctive theological outlook of the author emerges, suggesting that the text was influenced by concerns of the author's intended audience.

Literary Critical Method[2]

Biblical scholars have been concerned with limitations in the historical critical method. They claim that the historical critical method uncovers much preceding the text but not about the text itself (Keegan, 1985, p. 30). That is, it fails to take seriously the narrative character of the text. Biblical scholars using a literary critical method look to the text itself to yield meaning, using the canons of general literary criticism. Schneiders (1991, p. 125) suggests that the literary critical method has two concerns:

> … first, how the text "works", that is, how it engages the reader in the production of meaning. Second, literary criticism raises the question of how well the text does what it does, how adequately it functions in the production of meaning.

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[2] When dealing with the Literacry Critical Method the PBC acknowledges that the Historical Critical Method is not sufficient on its own and that other methods and approaches are needed (p. 42).

Narrative Criticism[3]

Gunn (1993, p. 171) has defined narrative criticism as:

… interpreting the existing text (in its "final form") in terms primarily of its own story world, seen as replete with meaning, rather than understanding the text by attempting to reconstruct its sources and editorial history, its original setting and audience, and its author's or editor's intention in writing… Here meaning is to be found by close reading that identifies formal and conventional structures of the narrative, determines plot, develops characterization, distinguishes point of view, exposes language play and relates all to some overarching encapsulating theme.

Narrative criticism analyses the text from the point of view of real authors and readers and implied authors and readers. The real author is the real person who wrote the text and the real reader is the person who actually reads the work (Keegan, 1985, p. 93). Of much more importance is the implied author, the author discoverable in the text:

What one gets are the feelings, the values, the concerns and whatever is available that comes to expression in the text i.e. whatever the real author decides to make the governing values, or ideology, or concerns, or objectives of this text. (Keegan, 1985, p. 95)

The implied reader on the other hand is the reader implied by the text, that is, the one who puts the text together. The text gives direction to the reader, makes expectations of the reader and the reader brings his or her personality to bear upon the text. In the case of a biblical text only a believer can assume the role of the implied reader (Keegan, 1985, p. 98). Powell (1990, p. 20) suggests that the goal of narrative criticism is to read the text as the implied reader. He explains that one should ask the

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[3] The PBC acknowledges the usefulness of Narrative Criticism: "While the historical-critical method considers the text as a 'window' giving access to one or other period…, narrative analysis insists that the text also functions as a 'mirror', in the sense that it projects a certain image – a 'narrative world' – which exercises an influence upon readers perceptions in such a way as to bring them to adopt certain values rather than others." (p. 47). However, the PBC considers that Narrative Criticism needs to be supplemented by the use of the Historical Critical Method, that it has a tendency to exclude doctrinal elaboration and that it can find itself "out of step" with the tradition of the Church (p. 48). Finally, the

questions the text assumes its readers will ask, but not the questions that the implied reader would not ask: "it is necessary to know everything that the text assumes the reader knows and to 'forget' everything that the text does not assume the reader knows" (p. 20).

Keegan (1985, p. 104) says that therefore the full meaning of the text is subjective. The implied reader fills out what is left unsaid, and thereby creates the work and brings it to completion:

> The implied reader brings the literary work into being by assuming the role required by the text and in so doing receives from the text the growth in self-understanding that the text intends to communicate. (Keegan, 1985, p. 104)

Structural Criticism[4]

Structural criticism is concerned with the relationships within a text in its final form. The text stands on its own, and there is no reference to the author, or to the author's original intention, or to the historical setting. It is based on an understanding of human experience that sees ordering principles or structures behind that experience. It understands language to include any set of ordered symbols, to have varying levels of meaning and to include the principle of binary opposition i.e. opposites (Hayes & Holladay, 1987, pp. 111-115).

According to Patte (1993, p. 153) a text is meaningful for readers only insofar as they recognize the different features in the text and a structure among these features. Features include: letters, syllables, words, sentences, paragraphs, parts,

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PBC says of Narrative Criticism that that it is not sufficient by itself to grasp the full meaning of scripture (p. 48).

[4] The PBC acknowledges Structural Criticism's contribution to our understanding of the bible (p. 51) but is concerned that it can become, "remote and complex" (p. 51) and thus remain, "at the level of a formal study of the content of texts, failing to draw out the message" (p. 51).

characters, actions, situations, subplots etc. These features once recognized lead to different structures and thus meaning being perceived in the text. In other words there is a complex set of relationships which give meaning to the text.

Beneath the surface the same basic structure governs all languages. These "deep structures" are the basis of structural criticism:

> A wide variety of readers can all read a given literary work and receive from it roughly the same message or emotive effect because the deep structures that make this work of literature meaningful are part of each person's subconscious or preconscious. The same deep structures are operative in all human beings. It is precisely these deep structures which structuralism seeks to uncover. (Keegan, 1985, p. 44)

By way of illustration, Hayes and Holladay (1987, p. 115) use the creation story in the book of Genesis chapters one and two. Instead of using source criticism to identify editorial redaction activity, structural criticism identifies a natural definition of the unit, beginning with God creating and ending with the heavens and the earth being finished (Gen 1: 1 – 2: 1). Secondly the unit divides into two parts with five uses each of the expression "and God said" (1: 1 – 19 and 1: 20 – 2: 1). The first half concludes with reference to the sun, moon and stars to rule over the heavens and the second half with humanity to rule over the earth.

Rhetorical Criticism[5]

Rhetorical criticism focuses on the means through which a text achieves a particular effect on its readers. Gitay says of rhetorical criticism that it:

> illustrates the communicative nature of biblical discourse, which seeks in numerous cases to appeal to its reader/listeners. (It will) enable the

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[5] The PBC indicates that as biblical texts are in some ways persuasive in character some knowledge of rhetoric is needed (p. 43). However, according to the PBC as a method it is not sufficient in itself particularly if it remains on a level of description or concern only for style (p. 45). Also, the PBC is concerned that Rhetorical Criticism may run the risk of, "attributing to certain biblical texts a rhetorical structure that is really too sophisticated" (p. 45).

critic systematically to study the discourse's strategy and techniques of effective communication. (1993, p. 135)

Powell suggests that rhetorical criticism includes a study not only of the effect of the text on the reader but also a study of how the effect was achieved as well as the situation that was being addressed (1990, p. 14). The effect includes instruction, delight and persuasion. How the effect was achieved includes means such as the use of arguments, evidence and documents, the trustworthy character of the writer or an appeal to the reader's emotions. The situation being addressed refers to the circumstances of the intended audience.

The text is to be understood from the perspective of those to whom it is directed. In the Christian scriptures, for example, St. Paul's letter to the Galatians is considered a judicial type of rhetoric for use in a court of law, while the Sermon on the Mount is considered to be deliberative (Powell, 1990, p. 15).

Reader Response Criticism[6]

By the mid-1970s, some biblical scholars were applying reader-response methods from literary criticism to the bible. The historical critical method, it was argued, takes account of the origin and development of a text in a search for the meaning of a text, it does not take account of the meaning created by the reader of the text.

> Reader-response criticism approaches biblical literature in terms of the
> values, attitudes, and responses of readers. The reader, therefore, plays

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[6] The PBC particularly comments on Liberationist (pp. 66 – 69) and Feminist (pp. 69 – 72) approaches to biblical criticism. On a Liberationist approach the PBC says: "such a reading can be limited, not giving enough attention to other texts of the Bible. It is true that exegesis cannot be neutral, but it must also take care not to bcome one-sided. Moreover, social and political action is not the direct task of the exegete." (p. 68). While acknowledging that feminist exegesis has brought many benefits (p. 71) the PBC is concerned that when it, "proceeds from a preconceived judgment, runs the risk of interpreting the biblical texts in a tendentious and thus debatable manner" (p. 71) and that it can entail, "rejecting the content of the inspired texts in preference for a hypothetical construction, quite different in nature" (p. 72).

a role in the "production" or "creation" of meaning and significance…Radical reader-response approaches also challenge conventional views concerning the autonomy of the critic and the scientific and objective nature of the process of reading and criticism. (McKnight, 1993, p. 197)

Jasper (1998, p. 27) acknowledges this shift in approach, saying that there has been a, "change in focus of interest from the intention of the author and the original context of the writing, to the response of the reader in determining the meaning and significance of the text". Both Powell (1990, p. 16) and McKnight (1993, p. 197) acknowledge that reader-response criticism is in fact a "compendium of approaches" or a "spectrum of positions". There is no one method of reader-response criticism. However, all reader-response approaches lead to the text having no universal or correct meaning as the reader transforms, "the content in accord with his or her own identity" (Powell, 1990, p. 17).

Jasper (1998, p. 28) uses feminist interpreters to illustrate reader response criticism. He uses the work of Bal (1988) and Trible (n.d.) on the Book of Judges in which they are critical of the power and authority operative in the text, and its assumptions of male readers. Jasper quotes Trible's claim that her feminist reading:

> Recognizes that despite the word, authority centres in readers. They accord a document power even as they promote the intentionality of its authors…In the interaction of text and reader, the changing of the second component alters the meaning and power of the first. (Trible, pp. 48-9, as cited in Jasper, 1998, p. 28)

Feminist criticism, as an approach of reader response criticism, focuses upon the reader and deconstructs the assumptions of traditional biblical critics. It introduces:

> characters, situations and possibilities in a "fictive" game which takes utterly seriously the Bible "as literature" and thus challenges it as an authoritative "sacred text" within a patriarchal tradition. (Jasper, 1998, p. 29)

McKnight suggests that reader-response criticism is a return to the precritical period in biblical studies (1993, p. 203). This is reflected in the plea made by Raymond Brown in 1981 for a return to the historical critical method, because other methods were less certain and objective (Keegan, 1985, p. 81). Provan (1998, p. 206) acknowledges this point in suggesting that with the historical critical method there was an acceptance, "that interpreters should not simply absorb the biblical narrative texts…into their world, reading their own dreams and visions into it". He goes on to say that what is problematic:

> …is that with the general move away from the notion that the communicative intentions of author(s) or editor(s) are centrally important to the interpretative task – that what the text itself is saying is centrally important – we have arrived in an interpretative era in which the distinction between text and interpreter has become blurred. (p. 206)

This is backed up by Ashton (1998, p. 259) who, in discussing the story about the woman at the well in the gospel of John 4:5-42 assesses the interpretations of a number of writers on this text. He states that they have all made careful appraisals and have pondered the same evidence and arguments and yet, "how are we to account for the remarkable divergences…?" of interpretation. Provan suggests that, "it is certainly sometimes the impression of the reader of such interpreters that he or she is finding out considerably more about the interpreter than about the New Testament" (1998, p. 206).

However, McKnight (1993, p. 206) acknowledges the value of reader response criticism. Firstly, it facilitates serious interaction with the text and may free biblical studies from the domination of disciplines such as history, sociology and psychology. Secondly, it allows readers to interact with the text in the light of their own context. Thirdly, it allows the religious concerns of the text to impinge upon reading and

fourthly it does not preclude other approaches such as historical and sociological exegeses.

Conclusion

This survey of methods of critical biblical scholarship demonstrates that there is no one definitive method of biblical interpretation. Different methods complement each other and together help the student to arrive at a fuller understanding of scripture. This rich variety of methods can give direction and guidance to teachers and students in religious education classrooms. It can help both teachers and students particularly at the secondary school level to deal with the many questions that will arise in their daily use of the bible. An awareness of this variety of approaches means that issues dealing with the various translations of scripture, literary genres and the sources of the text can be dealt with.

The Catholic Church and Critical Biblical Scholarship

Introduction

The Catholic Church was initially suspicious of the development of modern critical biblical scholarship and was slow to accept it. Key documents in the Catholic Church's acceptance of critical study include *Providentissimus Deus* (1893), *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), *Dei Verbum* (1965) and *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993).

Providentissimus Deus

The development of the Catholic Church's modern understanding of scripture can be seen emerging in the papal encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1893. This encyclical, while written to protect scriptural interpretation against the rationalistic science of the time, did nevertheless encourage the practice of the studying of the languages of the East and the practice of scientific criticism (Pope

John Paul II, 1993, par. 4). In particular it was a response to a rationalistic interpretation of the bible in the nineteenth century, to archaeological discoveries, progress in textual criticism and the comparative study of ancient religions (Fitzmyer, 1995, p. 17).

Providentissimus Deus gave direction for biblical scholars to train students in biblical interpretation. It indicated that the Vulgate translation was to be used, as well as the ancient manuscripts, and that the bible was not to be interpreted against a sense determined by the Church. Scholars were free to pursue their private studies, but an interpretation that was a direct contradiction of a Church dogma was not to be followed. The final and supreme law was to be Catholic doctrine. *Providentissimus Deus* urged the study of languages, and it acknowledged that the authors of biblical texts used the vocabulary and outlook of their time. Pope Leo XIII also included a definition of the Church's teaching on the inspiration of the bible:

> By supernatural power God so moved and impelled the human authors to write – he so assisted them when writing – that the things that he ordered and those only they first rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Inspiration, which is incompatible with error, extends to the canonical Scriptures and to all their parts. (Leo XIII as cited in Brown and Collins, 1990, p. 1170)

Brown and Collins (1990, p. 1169) suggest that *Providentissimus Deus* inaugurated a new era in Catholic biblical scholarship.

1902 to 1920 and Divino Afflante Spiritu

Pope Leo XIII established the Biblical Commission in 1902, and this was followed by Pope Pius X founding the Biblical Institute in 1909. These teachings were reinforced in 1920 by Pope Benedict XV's encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* which encouraged biblical scholars to search beyond the literal sense for a deeper meaning (Stead, 1996b, p. 19).

This was followed in 1943 by Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* which was issued to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of *Providentissimus Deus*. This encyclical encouraged biblical scholars to give attention to the original language of the texts, and there was a shift of emphasis in the relationship between the literal and the spiritual sense, in the importance of the Church Fathers and in the interpretation of historical facts in terms of literary form:

> In particular, the biblical interpreters, with care and without neglecting recent research, ought to endeavor to determine the character and circumstances of the sacred writer, the age in which he lived, his written or oral sources, and the forms of expression he employed…History, archaeology, and other sciences should be employed to understand more perfectly ancient modes of writing…and the study of literary forms cannot be neglected without serious detriment to Catholic exegesis. (Brown and Collins, 1990, p. 1170)

Fitzmyer comments that *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, was:

> a liberating document, which was responsible for a remarkable return of Catholics throughout the world to the Bible, to the reading and study of it, to prayer based on it, and to the feeding of their spiritual lives on the written word of God. (1995, p. 20)

As Stead acknowledges, it opened the way for scientific research by Catholic biblical scholars for the purpose of faith (1996b, p. 20).

Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels

In 1964 the Pontifical Biblical Commission issued, *Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels*. This began with praise of biblical scholars, then reiterated *Divino Afflant Spiritu* before distinguishing three stages in the gospel tradition. Stage one was what Jesus of Nazareth actually said and did. Stage two, was the adaptation of Jesus' message by his apostles, and stage three included what the gospel writers selected to fit their purpose in presenting Jesus to their audiences

(Brown, 1985, p. 13). This was linked with advice to exegetes to do their work with a disposition to obey the Magisterium.

Fitzmyer (1995, p. 21) considers this 1964 document on the historical truth of the gospels to be, "epoch-making". He goes on to say:

> That Instruction was noteworthy, not only for its implicit recommendation of the historical-critical method of interpretation and its explicit espousal of form criticism, but also for its distinction of the three stages of the gospel tradition. (p. 22)

Dei Verbum

The Second Vatican Council (1962 to 1965) produced the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) in 1965. It used the 1964 Pontifical Biblical Commission document as a guide. Chapter One dealt with revelation, Chapter Two with the two sources of revelation, scripture and tradition, Chapter Three with inspiration and inerrancy, Chapter Four with the Hebrew scriptures, Chapter Five (drawing from the 1964 document), with the gospels and Chapter Six with the role of the bible in the life of the Church (Brown and Collins, 1990, p. 1169). In particular it encouraged access to sacred scripture for all the Christian faithful (para. 22).

In relation to inspiration *Dei Verbum* stated in chapter three:

> Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Holy Mother Church, relying on the belief of the apostles, holds that the books of both the Old and New Testament in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because, having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 3:15-16) they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the church herself. In composing the sacred books, God chose men (sic) and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which He wanted.

Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of salvation. Therefore, "all Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproving, for correcting, for instruction in justice; that the man (sic) of God may be perfect, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Greek text). (par. 11)

This was a summary of traditional teaching on inspiration (Collins, 1990, p. 1024). It included references to *Providentissimus Deus*, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, the Councils of Trent and Vatican I, as well as to Augustine and Aquinas. It taught that all of scripture is inspired, that is, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. However, *Dei Verbum* acknowledged that there is a human quality in the processes by which scripture was produced. Abbot adds a footnote of explanation:

The Bible was not written in order to teach the natural sciences, nor to give information on merely political history. It treats of these (and all other subjects) only insofar as they are involved in matters concerning salvation. It is only in this respect that the veracity of God and the inerrancy of the inspired writers are engaged. This is not a quantitative distinction, as though some sections treated of salvation (and were inerrant), while others gave merely natural knowledge (and were fallible). It is formal, and applies to the whole text. The later is authoritative and inerrant in what it affirms about the revelation of God and the history of salvation. According to the intentions of its authors, divine and human, it makes no other affirmations. (1966, p. 119)

Dei Verbum, then, made the point that the interpreters of scripture should carefully investigate what meaning the sacred writers really intended, and have regard to "literary forms" (para. 12). It encouraged biblical scholars to continue their work (para. 23), and urged all the Christian faithful, "To...learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures" and reminded the faithful that prayer should accompany the reading of scripture (para. 25). The ministry of the word according to *Dei Verbum* is nourished by scripture. This ministry of the word according to *Dei Verbum* includes, "catechetics, and all other Christian instruction" (para. 24).

1993: The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church

In 1993 The Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) issued *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. The purpose of the document was stated as a desire, "to indicate the paths most appropriate for arriving at an interpretation of the Bible as faithful as possible to its character both human and divine" (p. 34). It defined and evaluated methods of biblical interpretation such as the historical-critical method, methods of literary analysis such as rhetorical, narrative and semiotic analysis and contextual approaches such as the liberationist and feminist approaches.

The historical-critical method according to the PBC,

> is the indispensable method for the scientific study of the meaning of ancient texts…(Holy Scripture's) proper understanding not only admits the use of this method but actually requires it. (1993, p. 35)

After outlining the history and development of the historical-critical method the PBC concluded:

> All this has made it possible to understand far more accurately the intention of the authors and editors of the Bible, as well as the message which they addressed to their first readers. The achievement of these results has lent the historical-critical method an importance of the highest order. (p. 38)

When dealing with methods of literary analysis the PBC singles out three modes: rhetorical, narrative and semiotic. It indicates that the historical-critical method is not totally sufficient, and today biblical exegesis makes use of new methods of literary analysis (p. 43). However, there are limitations in these methods which the PBC outlines (pp. 45, 48 & 51).

The PBC then deals with approaches based on Tradition such as the Canonical approach, the Jewish traditions approach and the history of the influence of the text. Also approaches that use the human sciences such as sociological, anthropological

and psychological and psychoanalytical approaches are surveyed. Finally under the heading of contextual approaches liberationist and feminist approaches are dealt with.

Both Pope John Paul II and the PBC felt the need to comment on fundamentalism (see Chapter Three of this thesis for a definition and discussion of fundamentalism). Pope John Paul II saw in fundamentalism a false notion of God and the incarnation, leading to a rejection of the mysteries of scriptural inspiration. He said:

> Far from destroying differences, God respects them and makes use of them (cf 1 Cor 12:18, 24, 28). Although he expresses himself in human language, he does not give each expression a uniform value, but uses its possible nuances with extreme flexibility and likewise accepts its limitations. That is what makes the task of exegetes so complex, so necessary and so fascinating! (John Paul II, 1993, par. 8)

The PBC said of fundamentalism, that it refuses to take account of the historical character of revelation, it seeks to escape any closeness of the divine and the human, it ignores or denies problems from the original Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek form, it separates the interpretation of the bible from the tradition and it invites people to a kind of "intellectual suicide" and gives life a "false certitude" (p. 73-75).

When the PBC dealt with the *Interpretation of the Bible in the Life* of the Church it discussed the actual use of the Bible in liturgy, in prayerful reflection (*Lectio Divina*), in ecumenism and in pastoral ministry. It said (p. 127) of pastoral ministry that three principal situations can be distinguished: catechesis, preaching and the biblical apostolate. The explanation of the Word of God in catechesis has sacred scripture as first source and one of the goals of catechesis is, "to initiate a person in a correct understanding and fruitful reading of the Bible" (p. 127). This links well with Pope John Paul II's comment that the goal of exegesis, "is to put believers into a

personal relationship with God" (address on the *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 1993, par 11).

The PBC, in *the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, while strongly encouraging the use of the historical-critical method, has indicated that there are many possible approaches to biblical interpretation and that each method rightly used can help in the interpretation of the biblical text. Byrne, himself a member of the PBC at the time of the writing of this document, acknowledged this when he commented that,

> The basic tone is positive and open to innovation. In particular, its acceptance of the idea that texts are open to development and a certain plurality in meaning should be welcome to all who struggle in varied circumstances to find in the Bible God's living Word for today. (1994, p. 329)

> Six years later Corley agreed:

> The document encourages students of the Bible to explore a diversity of possible approaches, so as to gain insights into the riches in the scriptural text. The final page of the document issues a reminder that none of the methods of interpretation is an end in itself, but rather that all the methods are intended to serve the principal aim, which is "the deepening of faith" (p. 134). (2000, p. 15)

> Houlden said of *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* that it,

> Is perhaps the most remarkable and encouraging document to come from authorities within the Roman Catholic church since the Second Vatican Council, or indeed ever. For good or ill, it strikes a positive yet discriminating note about those modern methods of biblical study which prevail in most of the mainstream churches…(1995, p. vii)

Summary

The Church has progressed significantly since its cautious acceptance of biblical scholarship with *Providentissimus Deus* in 1893. By 1993 the PBC had directed that the historical-critical method was indispensable for a proper understanding of biblical texts. It has also now acknowledged that a diversity of approaches is needed in the quest to interpret scripture.

Conclusion

There are many implications of the development of Catholic documents on the interpretation of scripture for the critical study of scripture in Catholic secondary schools. Teachers now have available a variety of critical methods for their use of scripture with students in the religious education classroom. In fact, the PBC now mandates the use of the historical critical method as well as the use of other methods and approaches. Of further importance for the religious education classroom is the stance taken by Pope John Paul II and the PBC on fundamentalism. A fundamentalist, non-critical approach to scripture is clearly rejected by the Church. Scripture may not be used to give a false understanding of humanity's relationship with God. Teachers of religious education are exhorted to take into account critical biblical scholarship in their classrooms.

The research reported in this thesis paints a picture of how scripture is used in the classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools. It encounters a range of questions in relation to the issues of:

- Fundamentalism,

- the extent to which critical methods of biblical scholarship are being used with students, and

- the nature of the religious education classroom

The following chapter locates this research in the literature on adolescents and the use of scripture, and outlines recent Australian research in this area. This will provide an empirical context for the discussion of the data and its analysis that follow.

CHAPTER 3: SCRIPTURE AND THE ADOLESCENT

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The first chapter of this study set the research in its broad context, giving a history and present theory of religious education for Victoria's Catholic secondary schools. The second chapter surveyed the field of biblical scholarship, in order to establish the second of the contexts against which the research reported in this study is situated. This third chapter surveys research on adolescents and scripture study, in order to clearly locate the present research in its field, and to show how it both consolidates and extends existing research.

Changes in the Use of the Bible in Australia's Catholic schools

Ryan (1997) outlines the history of biblical study in Australian Catholic schools. He explains that in the nineteenth century students were taught biblical narratives using approved versions of the Bible. At this time, in the wake of the Reformation and the central place of the bible in Protestant Churches, the bible was regarded with suspicion by Catholics and most did not own a bible, or even read one (1997, p. 27). Biblical stories were taught from bible history books and were used as, "a source for proving Catholic claims and beliefs rather than for edification and enlightenment" (Ryan, 1997, p. 28). Students were expected to memorise and retell bible stories. The bible was seen as a support to the doctrinal instruction of the Catechism and as late as 1960 it was being said:

> Not Bible History, then, but the teaching of the Church must, on Catholic principles, be at once the beginning, middle and end of religious instruction. Hence, Bible History, to claim a place in religious instruction, must do so only inasmuch as it bears on the doctrines of faith...(Schuster, 1960, p. vii, as cited in Ryan, 1997, p. 28)

Today, the situation has changed so much that it has been said, "In almost all written curriculum materials, Protestant and Catholic, the bible is the primary content taught at the elementary grade level" (Cully, 1995, p. 8), and "Religion teachers must take seriously their student's initiation into a correct understanding and fruitful reading of Scripture as one of the goals of the religion program" (Stead, 1996a, p. 95).

On the other hand, Hill (1989) has concerns about the underlying reasons for this shift in the use of the bible in religious education. In particular, he is concerned that it is just another fad, without a well-founded educational rationale. This has caused him to question teachers' motives for using the Bible:

> So why are you doing this? Why are you going to so much trouble? Why is the class so deep in the Bible (if not the text, at least the paraphernalia)? Is it just a passing fad with you, now that there's not much mileage in the Shroud of Turin? Will it be Medjugorje next term (plenty of hype around that)? Is it that course on Judaism you've done, or Biblical Studies? or perhaps you read a journal article recently? (1989, p. 10)

In regard to the use of the bible, religious education in Australian has turned full circle. Scripture was hardly used at all in the nineteenth century, but it is now considered the primary text (Liddy & Welbourne, 1999, pp. 28-29; Ryan, 1997, p. 29). There are concerns that this use of scripture has no clear educational rationale. This gives rise to concerns as to its use in an educational context, the issue that is fundamental to this study.

This chapter analyses research about adolescents and scripture study, and highlights issues such as how and why the bible should be used with students, what should be taught and what problems have been encountered. It provides a further background and context for this study and highlights its significance by showing the

scarcity of research in this area, particularly as it affects adolescents in secondary school.

The Difficulties Faced by Teachers of Scripture

Boys (1990, p. 11) lists six problems typically encountered when dealing with scripture. These are: that scripture is from an ancient and alien culture; people have their own preconceptions about scripture; today's culture is multi media (and therefore "virtually illiterate"); people are indeed sinful people that rationalize; we attend unimaginative liturgy and academic scholarship has been too preoccupied with the past. Holm (1975, p. 90) agrees that scripture is from an alien culture when he says that the bible was written 2,000 to 3,000 years ago in a foreign Middle East culture for immediate use at that time. Boys explains the difficulties she outlines by suggesting that students encountering scripture are encountering a world of strange names and customs, coming from a completely different worldview from their own. Many students have preconceptions with scripture as a book of rules or morals, or as a guide to the end times (Boys, 1990, p. 11). These difficulties lead to the students not being able to focus on the text or completely misunderstanding its meaning. For Boys (1990, p. 10), if students are not focused on the text there is no desire to know, they are not able to learn, and they cannot become more open to the spiritual truths of Christianity.

Using the story of the Good Samaritan (the gospel of Luke 10: 29-37) Holm (1975, p. 91) illustrates this difficulty of students not being able to focus on the text, and thus misunderstanding its meaning. She comments that if students don't know the history of the relationships between Samaritans and Jews, the terrain, the meaning of the term "neighbour" and the consequences for the Levite and the Priest in having

contact with a dead body, they will trivialise the story. That is, they will not be able to see beyond the surface of the text to the message that the author intended for his audience.

Bastide (1987, p. 116) sums up the problems faced by secondary teachers, noting that young children see bible stories such as Noah's Ark as historically true. However, soon after they enter secondary school they see the historical improbability of these stories and so reject them as untrue and consequently can reject the whole bible. Holm puts it very starkly:

> Most children of primary school age will believe their teachers, because they are prepared to accept things on the authority of adults, but by about thirteen many of them have developed a strong reaction against the Bible, partly for the very reason that adults have told them that they ought to regard it as a holy book. (1975, p. 98)

The research of Francis (2000) in England and Wales suggests that in fact by adolescence most students never read the bible (p. 168). Francis questioned 33,134 pupils in Years 9 and 10 from 185 state, independent, denominational and non-denominational schools asking them, "Do you read the Bible by yourself?" He used a four point response scale of: daily, weekly, sometimes and never (p. 168). Two-thirds (66.2%) claimed that they never read the bible, 29.1% read the bible on an occasional basis, 2.4% read the bible at least once a week and 2.3% read the bible every day (p. 168).

Drawing on his research in the United States of America, Jones (1983, p. 139) suggests that trust and interest in the bible decreases throughout adolescence, and that during university years attitudes to the bible change even further in the direction of a less favourable attitude. Jones states that:

> At the end of college years only about 56 per cent of the female students and 38 per cent of the male students had a favourable attitude

towards the New Testament, with reference to its religious significance, and even fewer had a favourable attitude towards the Old Testament, with reference to its religious significance. (1983, p. 142)

This links closely with Birnie's (1983, p. 145) view that the problem for the teacher of scripture, "is that of convincing pupils that any book can be that important". He sees it as a crisis of credibility and authority, "of all that is read and said and not lived" (Birnie, 1983, p. 145). Hill (1991, p. 97) sees the problem as one of communication. Scripture may be impeded in its reception due to the teacher failing to reach the student or the student not appreciating the teaching. The Australian authors, Liddy and Dean (2000) caution the teacher when using particular texts from scripture:

> Does the text give a false or unworthy view of God or of people to these children at this stage of their development? Is there anything I shall teach using this text that these children will have to unlearn at a later stage? (p. 53)

So, while scripture is used more widely than ever in Catholic schools, there are real dangers that students may misunderstand it, or are not open to the Christian truths to be found there. This survey of problems suggests that they reject it as untrue or simply ignore it (Holm, 1975, Jones, 1983, Bastide, 1987, Fransis, 2000,).

The Problem of Fundamentalism

This misunderstanding of scripture can take the form of fundamentalism. Boys (1990, p. 12) is concerned that ignoring the work of biblical scholars will lead to an, "uncritical naivete" that will end in fundamentalism. Holm (1975, p. 95) explains this concern in more detail, suggesting that the apparent random selection of biblical passages for life themes in religious education detaches the passages from their context, ignores the nature of the literature, the period in which it was written and its original purpose. He then states, "It is a basically fundamentalist use of the Bible"

(1975, p. 95). Collins (1995, p. 23) uses similar arguments in his critique of the 1995 *Guidelines*. Hill (1991, p. 111) says that with older children, the study of the bible should include a contextualist understanding of the people and culture in the bible, "so as to avoid that widespread simplistic fundamentalism about the Bible". Bader (1982, p. 1) accuses many bible study programs of being fundamentalist in nature.

Nipkow (1983, p. 163) agrees, suggesting that many people have left Church organizations, only to regularly come together in fundamentalist and missionary groups as they search for meaning. He sees that this has occurred because there has been a, "loss of certainties" in regard to such issues as employment and a clear view of the future. This has led to a growing need for security, for meaning and a sense of the truth of life itself. People are finding this certainty in new religious movements, that present simplified belief-systems. Of mainline Churches, Nipkow says:

> Church life is not attractive, theology not clear, homogeneous and simple enough. Religious seekers today display anti-intellectual attitudes. They shrink from sophisticated modern theology. (p. 163)

Woods (1989, p. 14) discusses the problem of fundamentalism at length, pointing out that fundamentalists consider the bible to be without error in all details. He sees this view of the bible to be due to the fundamentalist's understanding of inspiration. They fail to take account of the human element in inspiration, that is, the individual writer's style, vocabulary, theology and intention as well as the genre chosen.

This concern with fundamentalism is very much in agreement with the concerns of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (1993, pp. 73-75) and Pope John Paul II (1993, para. 8). As Fallon (1993, p. 31) says, the words in the bible are not god's words in a direct and unmediated way, they are words which god has inspired a

human author to use, and the reader must recognise the limitations of human language.

> Fallon goes on to say:
>
> As intelligent people…if we wish to be informed by the writings which have been preserved as sacred by the Christian community, we must be willing to go to the trouble to discover their meaning, using all the historical and literary tools available…The great enemy of fundamentalism is scientific study of the Bible that takes it seriously as an inspired human document, and attempts to find its meaning in its own historical and literary terms. (1993, p. 38)

Ignoring the historical, literary and cultural context of a scripture passage can give students a false understanding of the text. This is particularly so in the later years of secondary schooling when students are more developed as critical thinkers. If fundamentalism is to be addressed, the Catholic Church's understanding of inspiration and the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis need to be introduced to students.

Developmental Psychology and the Use of the Bible

Developmental psychology, particularly the work of Jean Piaget (1964) has been considered the foundation for the life experience religious education programs outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. This developmental psychology is still influential today (Ryan, 1997, p. 59). Also of influence in Catholic circles was the work of Lawrence Kohlberg (1981, 1984) who proposed a six stage hierarchical development of moral reasoning, and James Fowler's (1981) six stages of faith development. Of note also is the work of Erikson (1964) who developed a five stage pattern of social development, that proposes that children between the ages of six to twelve come to learn the basic skills needed for life.

Since Fowler's work on faith development has had considerable influence in the Australian context, it is appropriate to give an overview of these stages here.

Fowler's stages of faith development commence with a pre-stage of undifferentiated faith in which a baby's, "trust, courage, hope and love are fused" (p. 121). Faith, for Fowler, at this stage is of, "basic trust and the relational experience of mutuality with the one(s) providing primary love and care" (p. 121).

> Stage 1 Intuitive-Projective faith is the,
>
> fantasy-filled, imitative phase in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith of primally related adults. (p. 133)

It is a stage of becoming "self-aware", of the birth of imagination in which the world is experienced and understood through image and stories (p.134). Fowler comments that in this stage children in their third or fourth year can use fairy tales and biblical narratives to find these images and stories to shape their lives (p. 130). He goes on to say that education at this age:

> …has a tremendous responsibility for the quality of images and stories we provide as gifts and guides for our children's fertile imaginations…parents and teachers should create an atmosphere in which the child can freely express, verbally and nonverbally, the images she or he is forming. (pp. 132-133)

Stage 2 Mythic-Literal faith is typically the faith of a primary school child. It is a time of, "sorting out the real from the make-believe" (p. 135). It is a stage where:

> Beliefs are appropriated with literal interpretations, as are moral rules and attitudes. Symbols are taken as one-dimensional and literal in meaning. In this stage the rise of concrete operations leads to the curbing and ordering of the previous stage's imaginative composing of the world. The episodic quality of Intuitive-Projective faith gives way to a more linear, narrative construction of coherence and meaning. Story becomes the major way of giving unity and value to experience. (p. 149)

Stage 3, Synthetic-Conventional faith, occurs in adolescence. It is a stage characterised by an ideology of values and beliefs that the individual is not aware of and as such does not examine. Faith is unreflective and conformist with significant others in their lives. Authority is located in traditional authority roles, and the person may be developing a myth of one's own becoming, in identity and faith (p. 173).

Stage 4, Individuative-Reflective faith, is the stage when the late adolescent or adult takes on responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyles, beliefs and attitudes:

> The self…now claims an identity no longer defined by the composite of one's roles or meanings to others…Self (identity) and outlook (world view) are differentiated from those of others and become acknowledged factors in the reactions, interpretations and judgments one makes on the actions of the self and others. (p. 182)

Stage 5, Conjunctive faith, for Fowler is about going beyond, "the explicit ideological system and clear boundaries of identity that Stage 4 worked so hard to construct and to adhere to" (p. 185). In attempting to describe this stage Fowler uses the example of the effect of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercise on the use of scripture. He says,

> Instead of *my reading* (author's emphasis), analyzing and extracting the meaning of a Biblical text, in Ignatian contemplative prayer I began to learn how to let the text *read me* and to let it bring my needs and the Spirit's movement within me to consciousness. (p. 186)

According to Fowler, Conjunctive faith is unusual before mid-life, and is freed from tribe, class, religious community or nation (p. 198).

Stage 6 Universalizing faith is rare. Fowler sees it as a, "disciplined, activist *incarnation*…of absolute love and justice" (p. 200). Those in this stage engage in activities designed for the, "transformation of present reality in the direction of a transcendent actuality" (p. 200).

> They are "contagious" in the sense that they create zones of liberation
> from the social, political, economic and ideological shakles we place
> and endure on human futurity…Universalizers are often experienced as
> subversive of the structures (including religious structures) by which
> we sustain our individual and corporate survival, security and
> significance. (p. 201)

The work of both Erikson and Piaget coincide in the six to eleven year age group. Piaget, concerned with cognitive development, saw elementary school age children in the concrete operational stage. When children learn and explore their environment through experience, it is particularly important for religious education as they, "are the years in which young Christians will learn the story" (Cully, 1995, p. 71). Cully summarises this influence of developmental psychology on religious education, saying:

> Sensitivity to these developmental stages prompts teachers and parents
> to choose biblical material carefully. Verses of assurance that God can
> be trusted will be used early. "God cares about you," "When I am
> afraid, I will put my trust in you." The Psalms have many such verses,
> as have the Gospels. (1995, p. 70)

In the 1960s, Ronald Goldman applied the Piagetian categories to research into the use of the bible with primary school children. He concluded that the development of religious thinking was slower than the development of thinking in other areas. Therefore biblical material was unsuitable before the onset of formal operations at about 13 to 14 years of mental age, and that direct exposure to biblical texts should be avoided in primary school, since the bible is not a children's book but an adult activity in the area of theology. He considered that a context for religious education was needed that was more connected to the real world of children than to the bible. He advocated using students' experiences and their natural development, and suggested that religious education should be taught using a thematic, life-centred approach (McGrady, 1983, p. 126). Goldman migrated to Australia in the 1970s,

where his work was most influential, and is considered to be decisive in the introduction to Australia of life experience catechesis (Ryan, 1997, p. 60).

However, Goldman's research has been highly criticised. It has been suggested that the passages of scripture he used in his research, and their readability, may have influenced the response of the children (Greer, 1983, p. 113). Further criticisms are that Goldman's stages of conceptual development do not have an adequate Piagetian base, that stages of development theory cannot be applied to religious thinking and that this can mislead parents and educationalists (McGrady, 1983, p. 131). Madgen (1993, p. 12) sees the influence of Goldman as one of the reasons for the decline in the use of the bible in religious education and says: "the Bible and life are inseparable. Children draw from it what they can within the framework of their own experience". McGrady (1983, p. 133) concludes by stating:

> The redefinition or abandonment of the role of the Bible in religious education, and the tendency to regard life-centred and Bible-centred approaches as antagonistic and mutually exclusive, cannot be justified by the research to date. By so arguing, we hope to encourage those who believe that a religious education programme that does not draw at all grades on the Bible is impoverished.

For Csanyi (1982, p. 521) it is precisely because, during this mythic/literal stage (as Fowler would call it) when children naturally employ story and myth, that biblical narratives should be used. If children are deprived of these biblical narratives involving story and myth, they will find it difficult to develop a sense of belonging to their faith community.

As previously outlined, if developmental psychology is applied to older adolescent children, Fowler (1981, p. 172) would suggest that many adolescents are in Stage 3, Synthetic-Conventional faith. At this stage adolescents are able to do biblical research, they can use maps, dictionaries and encyclopaedias. They are beginning to

think conceptually. As Cully (1995, p. 83) says of adolescence: "the potential for serious Bible study exists but the knowledge they bring to such study is minimal" and they can have the impression of the bible as just a rule book (1995, p. 86). It is at this stage that the basis for a non-literal interpretation of scripture can be laid. Therefore, Cully suggests that teachers of scripture with adolescents must have a mature understanding of the bible and its contemporaneity (1995, p. 86), have an approach that allows use of the critical intellectual faculties and, "tries to help them make the transition from their childhood faith to the lifelong task of maturing as Christians" (1995, p. 89). He advocates the study of the bible under the study of literature, history, sociology, geography and theology (1995, p. 86).

Liddy and Welbourne (1999) agree with Cully. However, they suggest that teachers of scripture need not only professional competence with "tools of the trade" such as biblical commentaries, dictionaries, atlases and knowledge of critical biblical scholarship but also awareness of the implications of the developmental characteristics of students (1999, p. 33). They suggest that for adolescence in Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional faith, their search for identity:

> is one of their strong psychosocial characteristics and suggests that they need to explore ways of relationship and to reflect on their personal commitment and social obligations as part of their Christian identity. (1999, p. 36)

For this reason Liddy and Welbourne consider that the emphasis in teaching scripture could be given to "the theme of covenant as an expression of relationship with God" and secondly "the prophets and their call for personal and social values". They indicate particular texts for these themes. These are, Genesis 12: 1-9, the call of Abraham, Exodus 19: 2-8, the promise of a Covenant, Amos 8: 4-8, against swindlers and exploiters and Micah 6: 8, on social justice (1999, p. 36).

Liddy and Welbourne consider senior secondary students (ages 17-18 years) are ready to see how biblical themes contribute to their philosophy of life, personal lives and current social issues. They are able to engage in critical reflection, should be introduced to the academic insights of biblical scholarship and need to make connections between scripture and life. Texts from scripture should therefore focus on the spirituality of the Christian (1999, p. 36). Texts such as Luke 4: 18-30, the narrative of Jesus at Nazareth, Acts 2: 42-47, the description of the early Christian community and Mark 10: 17-22 the parable of the rich young man are suggested as examples that fulfil this criteria.

However, when discussing developmental psychology and the use of scripture, a note of caution must be introduced. There have been many concerns about the work of Fowler. Fowler's theories have been questioned because of a perceived lack of scholarly rigour (research procedures concerning his experimental design and methodology), his incorporation of the work of Kohlberg and Piaget and of his use of the word "faith" (Webster, 1984, pp. 16-17). Webster suggests that Fowler's work should therefore be seen as:

> an attempt to discern how the self constructs its meaning – and this at the level of practical theology rather than scientific theory. (p. 18)

Smith (1986) is not so dismissive of Fowler's work. She defends Fowler precisely in the areas where Webster attacks his work. Smith sees no problem in incorporating the work of Kohlberg and Piaget, suggests that Webster gives no evidence for his assertions and sees it as entirely appropriate that Fowler use the term "faith" (1986, pp. 80-82). In fact Smith sees Fowler's understanding of faith as, "not incompatible with reliable biblical and theological sources, both Protestant and Catholic" (p. 82). He says:

> From the Catholic point of view there is no problem at all in accepting the proposition that human beings are so constituted that they search for meaning in existence and that their understanding of the ultimate will develop along with all other aspects of their humanity. (1986, p. 82)

Haywood (1986), on the other hand, agrees with Webster particularly in the area of Fowler's reliance on the work of Piaget. He would suggest that Piaget's theories are not empirically verified and are not capable of being extended into other areas, particularly in the area of faith development (p. 77).

Moran (1992) question Fowler's work in its understanding of development, the meaning of the term "religious", and in the area of the imagery of development. Moran offers an alternative view of development, seeing development as open-ended, and indicating a direction, but not an end, to human activity:

> Development means that there is direction but not a point of termination; there is improvement but never a finished state; there are ends within human activity but no end external to human activity. (p. 150)

Moran goes on to discuss the compatibility of conversion and development in his discussion of traditional religion and development, claiming that they need each other (p. 153). Conversion needs to be seen as developmentally life-long (p. 154). With these points in mind, Moran then offers alternative images for development. He says that while development is horizontal, vertical and spiral it also can be three-dimensional (p. 156). Moran develops this image further by suggesting that it should also involve the senses, visual, auditory and tactile before stating, "the most radical answer to the question of an alternative image is: no image at all" (p. 156).

Moran applies this understanding of open-ended development to education and comments:

Is education a preparation for life, or is education life itself? It is neither. Education is the reshaping of life's forms with end (meaning, design) and without end (termination, conclusion)…the schooling of the young is indispensable and more important than ever. Helping the child to think, to analyze, to abstract, to deduce, etc. is an important part of psychological, moral, or religious development. (pp. 159-160)

So for Moran, Fowler is too restrictive in his understanding of the process of of human development. Moran would prefer a view of human development that is never ending and in which education is a continual process.

Nevertheless religious educators do take note of Fowler's work and incorporate it into their theories. Liddy and Welbourne (1999, p. 36) in particular recommend particular passages of scripture for senior secondary students based on the stages of faith developed by Fowler.

Developmental psychology can be helpful to the teaching of scripture in religious education classrooms. In particular it can help the teachers to tackle difficulties concerning their choice of scripture passages and the problem of fundamentalism. For this reason it is taken into account in the research reported in this thesis.

Why Teach Scripture? - An Educational Rationale

Hill (1989) offers both an ecclesiastical and an educational rationale for the teaching of scripture. Quoting from Church documents such as *Divino Afflante Spiritu* and *Dei Verbum*, Hill sees an ecclesiastical rationale in the teaching of scripture as it is following the, "safe lead of Mother Church and even has the credit of implementing her recommendations" (1989, p. 11). However, he sees this as inadequate, as one needs to know why one is following the Church's lead. He suggests an educational rationale that is more comprehensive, seeing a need to

develop the student's biblical culture, for the student to encounter Christ and read the word of God (1989, p. 13). For Hill (1989) the bible,

> Is ... the way my pupils and I get close to the Christian (hopefully Catholic now) thing ... in the Bible we find another way of introducing us into the Christian mystery, of sharing in the experience of God's action ... Scriptures are a *rich and varied tradition* that we cannot do without. (1989, p. 11)

He concludes by saying that it is, "a praiseworthy objective in RE (at some stage) to plot for people the pattern of God's dealings with the human race, and in fact the whole world as found in the Bible" (1989, p. 12). To do this Hill sees the need to have a balanced spiritual diet. He is concerned that for too long in the Catholic Church, religious education has been based on the "Body of Christ" (that is the Eucharist and the other sacraments) and not balanced with the "Word of God" (that is scripture) (1989, p. 12). While much of Hill's educational rationale concerns the gaining of knowledge of the facts of the bible and its culture, his understanding of religious education is education in faith, that is the personal faith development of students (cf. Ch. 1). Scripture, in the religious education class, for Hill also includes the reading of, "the Word of God", of meeting Jesus in the "Word" and of maintaining a balanced spiritual diet.

Woods (1989, pp. 14, 16) sees the transmission of values and an understanding of how God inspired the writers of scripture as his rationale. While suggesting that scripture needs to be taught with attentiveness, Boys (1990) gives a clear outline of her rationale when she urges believers to take account of biblical scholarship: "The final goal of biblical scholarship is the same as believing contemplation: that the text become, in and for our time, Word of God in the Church of Jesus Christ" (1990, p. 12).

Bastide (1987, p. 119) agrees, saying that some study of bible background is needed for two reasons: so that Jesus can be seen as a real person, and to gain insight into Jesus' teachings, some knowledge of his social world is needed. In advocating the use of scientific inquiry with the bible, Cully says: "The purpose of any approach to Bible study with adolescents is to permit them to use the critical intellectual faculties that are stretching their minds and exhilarating them through the questions they perceive" (Cully, 1995, p. 88).

Hammond (1993) sees political implications in teaching the bible. He says that as the bible speaks of justice it is obviously political. He refers to the Books of the Psalms, and those of Exodus, Leviticus, Amos, as well as John the Baptist and Jesus to illustrate this point and then says: "Politics is where religion begins to bite" (1983, p. 152). He continues saying:

> The political implications of a sacred book bring into sharp focus the issue of the basic aim of religious education - whether it should be about informing or transforming the lives of pupils, or perhaps both. (1983, p. 153)

For Hammond a political reading of he bible in the area of justice means that God is on the side of the poor and for religious education this means:

> That the potential high flyers in religious education, from whose questions other pupils and staff can learn, will be the poor of the school, not the eager and highly literate, those with extended vocabularies and the necessary sophistication to cope with the abstractions and fine distinctions of religious thought, but those others who barely read and badly write, are often absent, rarely do homework, and state their needs in disruptive behaviour. Perhaps this is the most difficult pedagogical implication of a political reading of the Bible. (1983, p. 155)

All these reasons for the teaching of scripture in religious education recall Pope John Paul II and the Pontifical Biblical Commission, which said that one of the goals of catechesis is to initiate a person into a correct understanding and fruitful

reading of the bible, and to put believers into a personal relationship with God (John Paul II, 1993, par 11).

On the other hand, Fueter (1979) argues against the bible being used in this catechetical way. He says:

> To hope that R.E. and especially regular study of the Bible in school has something to do with 'bringing young people to Christ' is a delusion. It is problematical to encourage any religious experience in the competitive and hierarchical atmosphere of the classroom. The best news will be perceived as bad news when one is forced to listen to it. (p. 5)

According to Fueter, the bible should be introduced in school classrooms because its influence in culture; history, art, language and philosophy justifies it (p. 7). In fact he suggests that European culture has been moulded by biblical thought patterns and as such teachers need to help students overcome the, "dogmatic and intellectual approaches" (p. 7) that hinder the translation of a biblical text into their own situation. This view is in agreement with the phenomenological and typological approach outlined in Chapter One of this thesis and allows for the use of an approach based on cognitive outcomes. However, it would not allow for the use of affective outcomes which Catholic schools such as those surveyed in this research would expect to be an aspect of their religious education.

Liddy and Welbourne (1999) suggest a catechetical approach when they say that it is an adolescent's right to know the bible as it is part of their heritage and contributes to their Christian identity (p. 28). As well as teaching scripture with the insights of biblical scholarship, Liddy and Welbourne say that it has the potential, "to open learners to the transformative power of God's Word" (p. 28).

Emphasising an educational rationale, however, Welbourne (2001b) acknowledges that the bible is a primary source of knowing God. It is for religious educators one of the languages of faith in a religious education curriculum. She adds:

> In essence, the task of the religious educator in relation to the bible is to help students look critically at the text to find out how the truth is conveyed in a way that is relevant to their lives. (p. 1)

Much of the material outlined here comes from a catechetical approach to the teaching of scripture. Writers see the importance of introducing students to, "The Word of God", to seeing, "Jesus as a real person" or developing a, "personal relationship with God". Some of these writers advocate the use of critical biblical scholarship to help in the catechetical objectives outlined above. However, an educational rationale that is based on cognitive and affective outcomes concerned with developing the critical intellect is a minority view. In general, the purpose of using scripture is seen as the development of faith, and the educational rationale of learning to understand and analyse scripture for its own sake is rarely articulated. As Chapter One of this thesis demonstrated, this predominantly catechetical approach is no longer acceptable for a variety of reasons including the need for a community of faith, student free choice and the multicultural nature of religious education classrooms today.

Against this background the research reported in this thesis seeks to discover the rationales that are operating within Catholic secondary schools and individual religious education classrooms across the state of Victoria, and to analyse them against the background of religious education and biblical study theory.

Approaches and Methodologies in Teaching Scripture

In discussing biblical resources Welbourne (2001a) says that there is no substitute for the bible itself (p. 1). She goes on to indicate four criteria that a teacher needs for selecting adequate resources for biblical education. These criteria can also be seen as a prerequisite for the use of scripture in the religious education classroom. Welbourne (2001a, p.1) suggests that the teacher of scripture needs:

- An awareness of the developmental characteristics of students.

- Professional competence with the 'tools of the trade' – for example, biblical commentaries, concordances, biblical dictionaries, source books and atlases.

- Knowledge of suitable translations and the skill to appraise critically resources for teaching the bible.

- Knowledge of critical biblical scholarship and the skills of interpretation and decoding the text.

These criteria are important for the teaching of scripture because without them no teacher can help their students to access the bible critically. As Welbourne says:

> For the seriously minded Christian religious educator today there is no excuse for a lack of critical knowledge about the bible. To perpetuate poor teaching about the bible through ignorance of recent biblical scholarship is to deny students access to the intended meaning of the scriptures as a source for deepening their relationship with God. (2001a, p.1)

Many and varied approaches to the teaching of scripture are suggested by researchers. Bastide (1987, p. 121) advocates the use of biblical themes, Marie Hill (1985-86, p. 172) suggests role playing, while Fueter & Wegener (1983, p. 156) suggest the use of techniques such as cartoons. Cully (1995, pp. 48-65) comprehensively outlines teaching/learning strategies such as: story, drama, visual art, music, computers and video as methods of bible study. Drawing, drama, music, slides and film are explained in detail by Fueter (1979, pp. 9-15). Morris (1987, pp.

247-249) explains a ten point approach to the use of Scripture that includes openness to the text, the use of critical literary research, knowledge of the audience the text is being prepared for and applying the text to that audience. Cully (1995, p. 9) reminds readers that, "The Bible is the foundation for Christian education because through its pages Christians learn who God is and how God acts". The bible has been handed down in story telling, in pictorial form, in liturgy and in dance, song and drama and the whole of the bible has value in itself. For Cully (1995, p. 11) teachers need to have a deep familiarity with the text or they will randomly select verses for proof-texting.

Engagement with the text itself is the key for Stead (1996a, p. 105). Students are to be initiated into a correct understanding and fruitful reading of scripture by the teacher. Teaching skills such as how to locate references in the bible, how to use a biblical atlas and dictionary, how to recognise literary forms, how to trace the plot, character and style in the narrative and how to explore the theological realities in the stories are needed. For Stead (1996a, p. 105) teachers must also offer students opportunities to relate these scripture stories to their lives through prayer. Stead underpins the teaching of scripture, saying:

> All teaching of Scripture must proceed from a clear understanding that the Bible is theological interpretation of and reflection on historical realities and faith experiences. It should also include exploration of the language employed by the biblical authors. (1996a, p. 96)

More comprehensive approaches are offered by Nipkow (1983), Hill (1991) and Boys (1990). Focusing on the experiential way of learning, Nipkow sees a need to enter into dialogue with the text without regard to careful analysis, using imagining, meditating and paralleling with secular texts. After this, critical analysis using historical, social and linguistic exegesis can take place, followed by helping students

to assimilate the elements of the bible story according to their stage of development (for adolescence a Synthetic-Conventional faith according to Fowler, 1981). Also for adolescents there is a need to see the truths embodied in the biblical story in adults. Niplow suggests that teachers:

> Drop their professional role-behaviour as teachers in order to speak and act as individuals and adults...It seems in any case to be natural that students when working on important issues want to see what is important to the teacher himself (sic) and if he, too is still on a journey. They do not want an attitude of superiority and perfection, but of elementary authenticity. (1983, p. 167)

Hill (1991) sees the teaching of scripture as a matter of communication and being up-to-date with biblical scholarship. He explains this in ten points, which include there being no substitute for the text, the need for biblical scholarship to be integrated with the life of faith and an understanding of the structure of the bible as a whole (1991, pp 97-103). Boys (1990) sees the need to teach scripture with imagination and the vital prerequisite for this is attentiveness. She explains some clues for this approach which include the use of historical criticism, understanding how the texts has been used by the ancestors in songs, sermons, paintings and sculptures etc., learning how people in other circumstances and traditions hear these texts, and she sees a need for teachers and students to be willing to take seriously the text's claims of truth (1990, pp. 12-13).

Bastide (1987, p.124) suggests that as, "The Bible is made up of different types of literature which have different purposes-myth, legends, stories, prophecy, history, law, poetry, letters", it is important that children from about ten years of age be introduced to this. He sees (1987, p.124) a need for children to move into a more mature understanding of biblical literature so, "that they can appreciate the truth of the Bible in a fuller way and not reject it for inadequate reasons".

Holm (1975) agrees with this approach saying that a more systematic approach to scripture can be taken in the middle school years. Using the Hebrew Scriptures as an example, she suggests that students can become familiar with the different writing styles found there such as poetry, history, stories, law etc. In the Christian Scriptures, she suggests that while the purpose of teaching the bible story is for the content of the message, this could be done by encouraging students to do detective work to find out the origin, authorship, destination and purpose of a book such as the gospel of Mark, St. Paul's letter to Philemon, St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians or the Acts of the Apostles (1975, p. 83).

Kiley and Crotty (1999) see the importance of this in their concern for myth, ritual and sacred story. They suggest that myths convey ultimate meaning or profound spiritual truth (p. 27). For this reason, while biblical stories need to be read within their historical setting, they also need to be retold in the present, through appropriate translations (p. 31). This is also of concern to Fueter (1979). He suggests that students need to learn to discern the merits of the various translations on the market (p. 9). Fulcher (1982) goes further and suggests that textual criticism itself be taught (p. 69). This involves the study of archaeology, ancient libraries, the use of papyri and the life styles of scribes (p. 69). Kiley and Crotty argue that students need these skills so that they can appreciate sacred story and access ultimate meaning. This will only happen if students are given the skills to, "resist the pressure to reject those sacred stories that might not be historical and might not be scientific (p. 32).

Because of his concerns with fundamentalism, Woods (1989, pp. 14-15) suggests that students need to be taught about inspiration in relation to biblical authors, linked in with the cultural and historical situation of the authors, including the

genre, occasion and purpose of any particular book. He is concerned that teachers "emphasise the theological message behind each event" (1989, p. 16) as the writers pre-supposed the faith of the readers. Woods (1989, p. 16) adds a warning that as the bible is a document of faith, it should not be measured against modern benchmarks that use historical and scientific methodology. He believes that the bible cannot be interpreted accurately, "without an appreciation of the faith of both the writers and the readership that was being addressed" (p. 16).

Robinson (1981) is concerned that students should become active participants in their learning, and as such he suggests that they become detectives who research and survey scripture (p. 25). Using the infancy narrative in the gospel of Matthew (Matt 1:18-2:23), he outlines an approach to the teaching of scripture that involves investigation by students of events in the narrative, the theology of the writer and the religious and socio-economic situation of the time (p. 25).

Liddy and Welbourne (1999) conveniently summarise many of the approaches to the teaching of scripture with students. Firstly they acknowledge that while it is important to give students a critical understanding of the text, it is still more important to, "help students go beyond the information to a deeper understanding" (p. 39). They then outline approaches that seek to make the student sensitive to the story by asking questions such as: Where? When? What? Who? How? and Why? (p. 39). Approaches of historical reconstruction, literary sensitivity, and critical study are outlined (pp. 41-45).

> Boys & Groome (1982) are concerned that historical criticism be used:
>
> we need to adopt a methodology that restrains our own biases, prejudices and world-views; such is the essence of "historical criticism": "an attempt to allow Scripture itself to tell us what it is,

rather than to impose upon Scripture, for whatever worthy motives, a concept of its nature which is not derived from the materials, the 'phenomena', found in Scripture itself". (p. 489)

From this concern comes Boys' and Groome's suggestions of how one might learn from scripture. They suggest that one must be critically aware, use one's common sense, not equate truth with facticity, and search out and listen to voices other than our own (p. 500). Finally, they suggest that the way in which scripture is taught should involve the critical reading not only of the text, but of the world in which we live, and the honouring of reciprocity between text and experience (p. 505). That is, "the ideal context for teaching this Book is a community of believers" (p. 507).

Liddy and Dean (2000) are also concerned with the use of historical criticism. They comment that, "How we interpret our Scriptures is shaped by what we know of their formation" (p. 50).

Hartley (1999a) says of the teaching of scripture:

My conviction is that the ministry shared by the religious educator of breaking open the Word of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures could not be more central to our mission. (p. 36)

With the Pontifical Biblical Commission's 1993 document, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, in mind she comments on its implications for the secondary classroom. She says that it challenges teachers to a type of scripture study that involves far more than proof-texting of topics (p. 37). In particular she points to the teaching of *Texts and Traditions* within the Victorian Certificate of Education and its use of historical criticism (p. 37). She also comments that students should be introduced to narrative criticism, literary-critical approaches and social-scientific methodologies (pp. 38-40).

In summary, many and varied methodologies are suggested which include music, art, drama and story. A number of authors mention developmental psychology in using scripture with adolescents. However, there is a common concern for students to avoid fundamentalism and to have a correct understanding of scripture. The use of historical-criticism is regularly mentioned, and is at the root of most of the approaches and methodologies suggested such as literary form, myth and historical setting. Behind this concern for the use of the historical-critical method is the concern that students access a correct understanding of the meaning of scripture. For this reason students also need to be taught about the Catholic doctrine of inspiration, and that the bible is theological interpretation of the historical experiences of the authors.

This research reported in this thesis investigates the extent to which the use of historical-criticism is being used in the religious education classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

Recent Research

D. Madgen - The Use of the Bible in Australian Catholic Primary Schools, 1993

In 1993 Madgen examined six curriculum documents used in Australian Catholic primary schools in relation to approaches to teaching the bible. This included the *Guidelines for Religious Education for Primary Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* (1984) that were in use at that time. She used the grounded theory approach (Madgen, 1993, p. 26) where theory is generated from the data rather than verified by the data. She examined each curriculum document in relation to its introductory rationale and beliefs sections, where references were made to the bible, the units of practical work, the use and interpretation of biblical texts in

the materials and the specified or implied methodologies relating to the use of the Bible. Madgen (1993, p. 17) used as her frame of reference Barton's modification of Abrams' scheme for analysis of literary criticism, which suggestes that there are four elements in literary criticism: the work itself, the artist who produced it, the subject of the work and the audience. Her research led her to ask two questions: *Why* the bible was used?, and *How* was the bible used? (pp. 28-29).

Madgen found that "Biblical texts are chosen according to the curriculum authors' interpretation of how well they fit the chosen theme" and that the texts were, "used in a catechetical setting to promote faith development" (1993, p. 51). For Madgen "Themes pre-determine the use of the bible. It is never examined as an object worthy of study in its own right" (1983, p. 52) and, "Questions are rarely used to explore biblical texts" (1993, p. 65). She concludes:

> In the *Melbourne Guidelines* the Bible is used almost entirely for the catechetical and thematic purposes of the curriculum authors, to the extent that interpretation bears no relationship to the insights of biblical scholarship. Students are rarely given the opportunity to interact with and interpret the text. They have very limited opportunities to develop even basic skills in textual analysis. Students are severely restricted in the amount and types of biblical texts to which they are exposed. The percentage of each unit devoted to the Bible is small in comparison to other points in the plan which offer numerous suggestions for discussion, activities and questions. In striving to make the Bible always relevant to the theme, the curriculum authors often lose sight of the Bible itself (1993, p. 66).

While Madgen's thesis relates to the *Guidelines* in use in Melbourne at the time of her research, and to Catholic Primary schools, its findings relating to a thematic and catechetical use of scripture raise issues for the research reported in this thesis. These concerns of Madgen are mirrored in the comments of Collins (1995, p. 23) concerning the 1995 secondary *Guidelines* when he suggested that scripture references in the *Guidelines* were used for proof-texting and were fundamentalist in

nature. This gives direction to this research, as it indicates how scripture can be used to proof-text a theme in religious education.

M. Carswell - Educating into Discipleship, 1995

In her research into establishing that the biblical call to discipleship is essential in catechesis, Carswell (1995) examined, as did Madgen, the 1984 *Guidelines for Religious Education for Primary Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne*. Carswell critiqued three passages from the gospel of Luke; Luke 19:1-10 (the narrative of Zacchaeus), Luke 10:25-37 (the narrative of The Good Samaritan), Luke 10:38-42 (the story of Martha and Mary) and one passage from the gospel of Mark; Mark 10:13-16 (the story of Jesus and the children). For Carswell, theologically these passages are texts that have discipleship as their primary focus, but this historical-critical interpretation bears little resemblance to the interpretation in the *Guidelines* for these passages.

In examining the methodology employed in the 1984 *Guidelines*, Carswell (1985, p. 14) commented that, "No strategies or processes to guide teachers in their use of scripture with students are given". She then examined each of the four scripture references mentioned above. Of the story of Zacchaeus from Luke 19:1-10, Carswell stated that the *Guidelines* do not once present the story in a manner congruent with the interpretations of biblical scholars using critical methods, and she then stated that:

> The story of Zacchaeus is presented as little more than a 'moralistic fable', a vehicle for the discussion of individual, peripheral points, rather than as a story which illustrates a call into relationship with Jesus and the consequent demands of discipleship. (p. 17)

The use of the story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42) in the *Guidelines* ignores the many aspects of discipleship in the narrative and appears for Carswell to

be presented as a simple story of kind friends of Jesus. She said (p. 21), "The mis-use of this story must present one of the more dramatic examples of lost opportunity found in the *Guidelines*". The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) is limited in the *Guidelines* to the topics of decision making and justice (p. 24) and the principal meaning of the story of Jesus and the children (Mark 10:13-16) is lost by the *Guidelines* according to Carswell. (p. 26)

Carswell (1985, pp. 27-36) saw three reasons for this discrepancy between theory and practice in the use of scripture in the *Guidelines*: methodological difficulties, lack of knowledge and concern for a "safe" interpretation. By methodological difficulties Carswell was concerned that the bible was poorly used in the catechetical process in the *Guidelines*. This occurred because of the life centred methodology, where passages of scripture were being used to find relevance under a particular topic. The selection of scripture passages in the *Guidelines* was reliant on the view and understanding of the curriculum authors. Referring to the research of Stead (1996b), Carswell claimed that teachers lack knowledge, and resort to the texts they know the most, relying on an interpretation received in their primary schooling. Concern for a "safe" interpretation comes from the limitations placed on a text by the curriculum authors, and by the constraints of Church teaching (p. 35). Carswell concluded by saying:

> Research suggests that children in Catholic Primary Schools in Victoria are taught a limited, repetitive and selective section of the Christian story through an approach which is problematic with regard to its selection of scripture to support topics of study and the actual use of scripture within those topics. (p. 36)

The work of Carswell confirms and extends the conclusions of Madgen (1985). In attributing the lack of modern biblical scholarship to a thematic approach, lack of knowledge, and concern for a "safe interpretation" Carswell's work gives

direction to this research, which focuses on the use of scripture in Catholic secondary schools in Victoria. In particular Carswell's research reinforces the need for this research to investigate the thematic use of scripture in the religious education classroom.

B. Stead - The Influence of Critical Biblical Study on the Teaching and Use of Scripture in Catholic Primary Schools in Victoria, 1996

Between July 1992 and March 1993 Stead (1996b, p. 136) researched the questions of what scriptural texts are taught in Catholic primary schools in Victoria, how these are taught and therefore the professional development needs of teachers in their use of scripture with children. She carried out this study through an initial pilot study of some ten schools in July-August 1992. The main study of some 200 teachers and 60 Religious Education Co-ordinators proportionally represented from the four dioceses in Victoria was undertaken in October 1992. A follow up study occurred in March 1993 for clarification of data through interviews and diary keeping by a reference group of some 40 teachers. She used mailed questionnaires for the gathering of data from the teachers and Religious Education Co-ordinators, and telephone interviews for the follow up group (1996b, p. 138). She asked teachers about their confidence and frequency of use of scripture, reasons for using scripture, factors influencing selection of scripture and problems experienced (1996b, p. 138).

In her analysis of the data, Stead observed that the data had provided a window into classroom practice and that, "The data demonstrates that the majority are committed to the use of scripture with students. Their commitment is expressed in frequent use of biblical narratives ... , but not necessarily in the use of the Bible ... nor in critical study of narratives prior to use" (1996b, p. 192). She concluded (1996b, p. 193) that students do not experience a broad range of biblical narratives or literary

styles and in fact up to 83% of biblical education's content comes from the gospels.

Also the use of substitutes such as children's bibles for the bible itself, the process of

religious education, the lack of critical study by teachers prior to teaching the

narratives and the lack of explanation of the literary form or social, cultural and

religious customs relevant to the particular biblical story, were seen by Stead to be

obstacles to the biblical education of students (1996b, p.196-199). Stead concluded

from her research that:

> Students are seldom engaged in any aspect of critical study of the
> Bible, and discussion is limited to a small body of narratives used in
> the illustration of topics from the guidelines. Scripture might be used
> regularly but it would seem that it is not used effectively. Teachers are
> committed to the use of scripture, but not to critical study that theorists
> believe must precede teaching. Consequently students hear the same
> narratives unit after unit, year after year, with interpretations shaped to
> meet the topics under discussion (1996b, p. 199).

For Stead (1996b, p. 261-262) critical biblical study was not influencing the

teaching of scripture in Catholic primary schools in Victoria, and teachers had not

moved beyond natural literalism, nor had they the knowledge essential for their task.

Stead's recommendations (1996b, p. 263) include that the status of the bible be raised

in the school, that critical skills be developed in students and that education for

students about the world of the bible be included. Finally, Stead's recommendations

(1996b, 267-268) included, directions for future research in the areas of parallel,

comparative and longitudinal studies. She saw the need for replication of the research

in other states, repetition of the research after a period of five years in Victoria and a

comparative study between teachers who have completed the current VCE units *Texts*

and Traditions and those who have not.

Stead's work confirms the research of Madgen (1993) and Carswell (1995)

and gives significant direction to this research. Her findings are, as she suggests, a

window into classroom practice in Victorian Catholic primary schools. The research reported in this thesis intends to provide a window into the classroom practice of religious education of Catholic secondary schools. The self-administering questionnaires used in this research parallel closely the instruments used by Stead in primary schools, and like Stead's research seek information on confidence and frequency of scripture use, reasons for using scripture and factors influencing the selection of scripture passages.

J. Hartley – Current Practice in Teaching the Scriptures in Catholic Secondary Schools, 1999

In 1999 Hartley conducted interviews with fifty-five religious educators from the dioceses of Sydney, Lismore, Armidale, Canberra and Ballarat. She was seeking to discern if the conclusions reached by Stead in her research into the use of scripture in Catholic primary schools could be applied to Catholic secondary schools (1999b, p. 46). Those interviewed included diocesan religious education consultants, six university lecturers involved in the training of secondary religious educators, and forty-five secondary classroom teachers. Sixteen of these classroom teachers also completed a written questionnaire.

Hartley reported that frequency in the use of scripture was, "miles ahead" and "increasing dramatically" and that students are familiar with the biblical texts and are, "interested and eager to engage in its study" (1999b, p. 46). Curriculum statements are more detailed and are lessening teachers' reliance on a small body of biblical narratives, and there is a use of varied teaching strategies within the classroom (1999b, p. 46). Hartley also commented that:

> A significant number of teachers recognise the need for a secondary school's biblical studies program not to neglect either knowledge, or skills, or attitudes…An authentic reading of 'God's Word in human words' calls on interpretive skills founded in sound scholarship,

particularly in face of the media (including the Internet) popularisation
of fundamentalist and literal interpretations. (1999b, p.47)

While recognising this, Hartley commented that biblical scholarship was still confusing to some adult Catholics but religious educators were using modern biblical scholarship, "to increase their students' understanding of the bible and make its riches more accessible" (1999, p. 47).

However, Hartley's research expressed concerns about teacher confidence and personal appreciation of scripture, the use of a limited number of passages repeatedly and that, "some teachers remain unconvinced of the value of formal evaluation in religious education" (p. 47).

She concluded that two factors remain significant in the choice of scripture passages; diocesan guidelines and the co-ordination of the schools program. For tertiary religious educators and theologians Hartley concluded that their,

> task is to ensure that all teachers are equipped with appropriate
> background knowledge, sound planning and teaching skills and
> personal appreciation of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. (p. 47)

Hartley's research was very limited in scope and depth when compared to the work of Stead (1996). However because it is the only research that has as its focus Catholic secondary schools it is noted here. It had a similar aim to this research in that Hartley (1999) wished to extend the work of Stead into secondary schools. It will be of interest to compare Hartley's findings with this research.

Due to Hartley's very limited research being the only research into Catholic secondary schools and to the use of scripture in religious education, the research reported in this thesis takes on added importance and significance. The research reported here is the only extensive research into scripture and the teaching of the bible

in Catholic secondary schools to be carried out in Australia, and as far as this researcher has been able to ascertain, in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Therefore it is a pioneering study, and will give impetus and direction for future research in this field.

Summary

Writers are aware of the attitudes of adolescents to scripture and the danger that they will reject the bible or move into fundamentalism. This is countered by developmental psychology which suggests that adolescents are ready to do biblical research. Adolescents are able to use their critical intellectual faculties to learn about the historical, cultural and literary forms of scripture, to be taught about biblical inspiration and to do research into the theological message behind any given story. Teachers are encouraged to have a mature understanding of scripture, and to be prepared to use all manner of methods such as prayer, meditation, liturgy, imagining and attentiveness to enable students to meet Jesus and to see God in action in people's experience.

These statements are in agreement with the rationale presented in Church documents (see Chapters One and Two of this thesis) and indicate that the use of scripture is concerned with the development of faith in students which is a fundamental role of a Catholic school as well as with an educational introduction to biblical scholarship.

However, many of the researchers who suggest reasons why scripture should be taught to school students have a purely catechetical understanding in mind. They indicate that scripture should be used to, "meet Jesus", "get close to the Christian story" and to develop a, "personal relationship with God". Others have a stronger

educational rationale when they suggest that scripture study be undertaken because it is part of the Christian identity and heritage and is an important use of students' critical intellectual faculties.

When suggesting methods and approaches to the teaching of scripture, many writers have a thematic or catechetical use in mind. However, many suggest the use of the historical-critical method when they write about students' need to understand myth and ritual, literary genre, inspiration and the theological message of scripture.

Researchers in Australia, particularly in Victorian Catholic primary schools, in the 1990s saw a thematic rather than a critical use of scripture occurring. This gave them cause for concern. However, Hartley, in her limited research in 1999 in Australian Catholic secondary schools saw an increase in the use of a variety of passages and strategies as well as critical biblical scholarship.

There is clearly a lack of research in the area of the teaching of religious education and scripture. Stead's (1996b) research was very significant and needs to be complemented at the secondary level. Very little is known about the pedagogical practices taking place in the religious education classrooms generally, and particularly in the specific area of religious education in Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

This research, like Stead's, will be unprecedented in Victorian Catholic secondary schools. For the first time Religious Education Co-ordinator's and other classroom teachers of religious education will be asked to describe what they do in their classrooms with scripture. This chapter has given an account of the current thinking and research in this field, and has demonstrated that this type of classroom research has not been done before at the secondary level. The material in this chapter

sets the scene for this research by indicating the difficulties faced by teachers, particularly students' lack of interest, fundamentalism and the psychological readiness of the adolescent for scripture study. An educational rationale is given and approaches and methodologies recommended.

This research is situated within this context, and is intended to present a picture of the incorporation of scripture into the religious education program of Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999. Focus will also be placed on the purpose for which scripture is used, the extent to which it is used and the methods employed in its use. Also this research investigates how and to what extent the VCE study *Texts and Traditions* Units 1 to 4 have been adopted by senior Victorian Catholic secondary students and its influence on Years Seven to Ten religious education curriculum. Finally, this research is intended to extend the work of Stead (1996b) into the use of scripture in Victorian Catholic primary schools.

This research will test the theories of scriptural teaching suggested here. It will give a picture of what is actually happening in the classrooms of religious education in Victorian Catholic secondary schools. Thus it will provide a unique window into Victorian Catholic secondary religious education, and the use of biblical study within it.

In the following chapter the research design will be explained in the light of general social research theory. The particular approach to methodology, the research instrument and the research analysis will be discussed. A profile of the participants in this research will be outlined giving demographic information according to dioceses, age, sex, experience, qualifications and year levels taught.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH PROBLEM, DESIGN AND

SETTING

The problem

It was argued in Chapter One of this thesis that religious education today in Victorian Catholic schools is expected to have equal status with other subjects in the curriculum. It is expected that the cognitive and affective dimensions of religious education will be addressed in the classroom, and that a purely catechetical approach to religious education is no longer appropriate. Chapter Two established the importance of modern biblical scholarship for the Catholic Church and pointed out Pope John Paul II's and the Pontifical Biblical Commission's stance on fundamentalism, and its mandate concerning the use of the historical-critical method of biblical studies.

Chapter Three also pointed out the dangers of fundamentalism, but showed that much of the literature on scripture use with adolescent students, is catechetical in tone, using a thematic proof-texting approach. However, developmental psychology has indicated adolescents' readiness to use their critical intellectual faculties, a fact supported by those who see an educational rationale for the teaching of religious education as the appropriate approach for today. However, there is limited research on the extent to which the educational approach to religious education has taken hold within the Victorian Catholic secondary education system, and in particular the extent to which the Victorian Catholic secondary education system has adopted the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation within the religious education classroom.

This chapter outlines the aims of the research to be reported on in this thesis and the methods used to gather and analyse the data, and reports on the profiles of the respondents who participated in the data gathering process.

The aims of the research reported in this study are:

- To present a picture of the incorporation of scripture into the religious education program of Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999, and in particular the incorporation of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. Focus will also be placed on the purpose for which scripture is used, the extent to which it is used and the methods employed in its use.

- To investigate how and to what extent the VCE study *Texts and Traditions* Units 1 to 4 have been adopted by senior Victorian Catholic secondary students and its influence on Years Seven to Ten religious education curriculum, and

- To extend the work of Stead (1996b) into the use of scripture in Victorian Catholic primary schools.

Social Research

Introduction

The research reported in this thesis is concerned with the gathering of data relating to the issue of religious education and biblical studies. It is concerned with enhancing our knowledge in this field. Therefore it falls into the general category of social research which can be traced back to the work of Comte in France in 1848 (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 3). He pioneered the development from theology and philosophy to the gathering of empirical data as a means of explaining social problems. Today, social research could be summarised as seeking to build basic

knowledge about society. It is, "for, about and conducted by people" (Neuman, 1997, p. 16).

Social researchers' aims in building this basic knowledge vary depending on why they have undertaken their research. Their aims may be to explore, explain, evaluate and predict, to understand human behaviour through interpretive research, or to critique society for the purposes of empowering people for social change (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 16). In the case of the research reported in this thesis, there is the general goal of understanding what is happening in the religious education classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools. It is therefore exploratory and descriptive research. Generally the goals of exploratory research can be listed as to:

- Become familiar with the basic facts, people, and concerns involved.
- Develop a well-grounded mental picture of what is occurring.
- Generate many ideas and develop tentative theories and conjectures.
- Determine the feasibility of doing additional research.
- Formulate questions and refine issues for more systematic inquiry.
- Develop techniques and a sense of direction for future research.
(Neuman, 1997, p. 20)

The goals of descriptive research as listed by Neuman (1997, p. 20) are to:

- Provide an accurate profile of a group.
- Describe a process, mechanism, or relationship.
- Give a verbal or numerical picture (e.g., percentages).
- Find information to stimulate new explanations.
- Present basic background information or a context.
- Create a set of categories or classify types.
- Clarify a sequence, set of stages, or steps.
- Document information that contradicts prior beliefs about a subject.

Even though much has been written on the topic of scripture use by students, this research is exploratory because there is little actual research, particularly in the specific context of Victorian Catholic secondary education. The research reported in this thesis gives a picture of what is occurring in the religious education classrooms of

Catholic secondary education across Victoria. It generates theories as to why the situation is as it is, and it gives direction for future development and research.

This is descriptive research since it profiles religious education courses in schools across Victoria and their use of scripture with students. The teaching of contemporary biblical scholarship is described both verbally and numerically and in so doing documents, "information that contradicts prior beliefs about a subject" (Neuman, 1997, p. 20).

Various types of social research have developed to achieve these aims. Social research can be based on measurement and the use of statistics (quantitative research) or on the description of respondents' understanding and experience of their reality (qualitative research), or it can be a combination of both:

> Qualitative research has its origins in descriptive analysis, and is essentially an inductive process, reasoning from the specific situation to a general conclusion. Quantitative research, on the other hand, is more closely associated with deduction, reasoning from general principles to specific situations. (Wiersma, 1995, 12)

Qualitative versus Quantitative Methodology

Quantitative research with its, "modern and highly sophisticated statistical technique and computer models" (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 42) is considered to have the strongest influence on social research around the world, with the vast majority of research undertakings employing its methodology. However, this methodology has been criticised. Concern is expressed that reality is not objective but subjective, that quantitative measurement cannot capture the real meaning of social behaviour, that the use of a hypothesis restricts the options of the research and that objectivity is not desirable or possible, to outline just a few of the objections (Sarantakos, 1998, pp. 43-45).

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is a process of interpretation and theory building. This is achieved through researching people in their natural settings, and coming to an understanding of the respondent's world. It is less structured, with an emphasis on discovery and exploration. Observation is a common method employed by qualitative research (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 53). The research reported in this thesis is qualitative, in that it is research on a group of people, Religious Education Co-ordinators (RECs) and Religious Education Teachers of Years Seven to Ten (RETs), in their professional setting, which is Victorian Catholic secondary schools. However, it uses quantitative elements in its use of a self-administering questionnaire, that is analysed statistically by the computer program *Statistical Program for Social Sciences*, Version 9 for Windows 97 (1999) (SPSS). Qualitative and quantitative data are used together to both explore and describe (Neuman, 1997, p. 20) the situation.

The qualitative aspect of the research focuses on the meaning and the description of what is happening in the religious education classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools. The context is critical, and so the first three chapters of this thesis outline the contexts of this study, including an understanding of the nature of religious education, a definition of modern biblical scholarship as well as an outline of recent research in this area.

Methodology of Research

Introduction

The aims of the research reported in this study were achieved by a state-wide survey, which included qualitative and quantitative aspects, sent to all ninety-nine Catholic secondary schools in the Australian state of Victoria. This encompassed the

four dioceses of Melbourne, Ballarat, Sandhurst and Sale with their separate Catholic Education Offices. The Principal of each school was asked to select one teacher of religious education in Years Seven to Ten, and the Religious Education Co-ordinator to complete the questionnaire. No criteria were given to the Principals for selecting the one teacher of Years Seven to Ten religious education.

Research Design

To obtain an overview of the situation throughout Catholic secondary schools in the state of Victoria, two descriptive surveys were used. The first was used to gather data from classroom teachers of religious education in Years Seven to Ten (RETs). Years 11 and 12 were not included in this survey, as the influence of VCE *Texts and Traditions* could strongly influence the data. The VCE study *Texts and Traditions* has been addressed with the survey to RECs. Its purpose has been to obtain information on one particular teacher in each Catholic secondary school in Victoria.

A second survey, directed at Religious Education Co-ordinators (RECs) was undertaken in an attempt to obtain detailed information from Years Seven to Twelve in each school. While no definition of RECs was supplied to Principals, the term is used to refer to a member of the religious education teaching staff who has been given the administrative and curriculum responsibility for the teaching of religious education. This would include responsibility for the development of courses of study, the resourcing of these courses with suitable student and teacher texts, professional development of teachers within this area and a role in the appointment of staff to the teaching of religious education.

The Catholic Education Office for each diocese had been contacted for permission to carry out the research. Principals of Catholic secondary schools were also contacted by mail and asked if their schools would participate in the survey. The purpose of the research and its significance and relevance to Catholic schools, and to religious education in particular, was explained. The two self administering questionnaires were included with copies of the ethical clearance document from Australian Catholic University and letters of permission from the Catholic Education Offices, together with two consent forms and a post-paid, self addressed envelope for the return of the questionnaires.

Self administering questionnaires were chosen as the survey method due to the geographically diverse spread of Catholic secondary schools throughout Victoria. It was considered that this would be the most likely method to "generate reliable and valid data from a high proportion of the sample within a reasonable time period" (Burns 1990, p. 286-7). Other relevant advantages of this method include the fact that each respondent received exactly the same (identical) set of questions, the respondent was free to answer in his/her own time, fear or embarrassment from personal contact was avoided and confidentiality could be guaranteed which was considered likely to result in more truthful responses (Burns 1990, p. 300). According to Sarantakos (1998, p. 224) many respondents prefer to write rather than talk about certain issues, and since they can consult their files, questionnaires can offer a considered and objective view of the issues under discussion.

However, it must be kept in mind that in the use of self-administering questionnaires it may be difficult to secure an adequate response rate. According to

Wiersma (1995, p. 187) a 70% rate is desirable when surveying a professional population. Neuman sees it as more complex than this. He states that,

> the smaller the population, the bigger the sampling ratio has to be for an accurate sample (i.e., one with a high probability of yielding the same results as the entire population). (1997, p. 222)

Neuman (1997) acknowledges that researchers disagree about what constitutes an adequate response rate, and says that it depends on population, practical limitations and the topic (p. 247). He sums up by stating that, "Most researchers consider anything below 50 percent to be poor and over 90 percent as excellent" (p. 247). Specifically for mailed questionnaires, response rates are of major concern, and a rate of 10 to 50 percent is common (p. 247). A response rate of a least 50% is possible to achieve with careful question design and follow-up reminders.

Other problems with this method include the possibility of bias sampling, the inflexibility of questions and the possibility of the misinterpretation of the questions (Burns 1990, p. 301). Bias sampling could lead to one particular group of teachers being over represented among respondents, for example, teachers with theology qualifications or teachers of Year 12 religious education predominating among those surveyed. An attempt was made to overcome bias sampling through asking the Principal to select respondents from a given year level. The problem of inflexibility was addressed by a large number of open ended questions, and the possibility of misinterpretation of the questions was addressed through the pre-testing of the questions, and a careful and detailed explanation in the covering letter of the purpose of the questions and the research being carried out.

Survey questionnaires have the additional limitations of the researcher not knowing the conditions under which the questions were answered, and the possibility

of partial responses due to lack of motivation and/or supervision (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 225). It was hoped that the combination of the covering letter, a mixture of fixed-alternative and open-ended questions, together with the possible interest the research topic may generate among religious education teachers, would allow the respondents to feel part of the research process.

Where possible fixed or closed alternative questions were used. This was because they are quicker and easier for both respondents and researchers, they are easy to code and analyse, they encourage respondents to answer sensitive issues (personal classroom practice can be a sensitive area for many teachers), and there are fewer irrelevant answers to questions (Neuman, 1997, p. 241). However fixed-alternative questions have many disadvantages. They can suggest ideas the respondent may not have otherwise thought of, respondents with no opinion may answer thoughtlessly or be frustrated with the choices offered, and there may be the tendency to give simplistic responses to complex issues (Neuman, 1997, p. 241).

The problems of fixed-alternative questions can be overcome by including a number of open questions. Open-ended questions allow for an unlimited number of possible answers in some detail on complex issues (Neuman, 1997, p. 241). However these also have their own problems associated with generating large amounts of information, some of which may be irrelevant, and the time and effort needed to process and evaluate it (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 231). The final structure of the instrument used for this research was determined after pre-testing with a small group of five teachers of religious education. The purpose of the pre-testing was to identify any misunderstandings, ambiguous or inadequate items (Wiersma, p. 183).

The validity of the findings was enhanced by triangulation, that is, the use of two or more data sources, methods, researchers or data type (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 267). With two different survey populations (RECs and RETs) the questionnaires enhanced the validity and reliability of each other, and therefore of the data gathered through corroboration, that is, multiple instances of the same data from the two different survey populations. As Berg says:

> By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements. (1995, p. 5)

Research Questions

The Religious Education Classroom Teacher (Appendix A)

The questionnaire for classroom teachers was designed with a number of introductory demographic questions (question 1) to lead the respondent by degrees into the survey. Items in the questionnaire were then grouped into sections that dealt with the influence of scripture on the life of the respondent (question 2a), the respondents's confidence in using scripture in the classroom with students (question 2b), the actual use of scripture within the religious education classroom this year (questions 3-6), and a final section for any additional comments by the respondent (question 7).

The items that made up the section of the questionnaire on the actual use of scripture in the religious education classroom, formed the body of the survey and were further grouped into sections that dealt with frequency of use of scripture generally (question 3), passages from the bible actually used in class (questions 5 & 6a), the purpose for which these passages were used (questions 4, 6b, c & d) and finally the methods employed in the use of these passages from the bible (questions

6e, f, g, h, & i). This questionnaire paralleled the questionnaire used by Stead (1996b) in her research into the use of scripture in Catholic primary schools in Victoria.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator (Appendix B)

The questionnaire for Religious Education Co-ordinators was also designed with a number of introductory demographic questions (question 1). The questionnaire was then grouped into sections dealing with the influence of scripture on the life of the respondent (question 2), confidence in using scripture in the classroom (question 2b), school practice regarding the use of scripture in religious education (question 3 to 5), the personal classroom practice of the respondent (questions 6 to 9) followed by a final question (question 10) for any additional comments by the respondent.

The body of the Religious Education Co-ordinator's questionnaire consisted of items on school and personal practice with the use of scripture. Question Three dealt with general school policy on the use of scripture, resources available to the classroom teacher and any requirement by the school of students to purchase a bible. Question Four dealt with scripture passages that are taught at Years Seven to Ten and Question Five dealt with scripture in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), particularly the teaching of *Texts and Traditions* Units 1 to 4. Questions Six to Nine (personal classroom practice) were exactly the same as those for the religious education teacher. They dealt with frequency of scripture use generally (question 6), actual passages of scripture used in class (questions 8 & 9a), the purpose for which these passages are used (questions 7, 9b, c & d) and the methods employed in the teaching of these passages from the bible (questions 9e, f, g, h, & i).

Questionnaires were colour coded and numbered to indicate diocese, zone and school. Through personal contact with Catholic Education Offices representatives in each diocese and follow up letters and phone calls to Principals, it was expected that a high rate of return would be generated. In fact the return rate was 67.6% for RECs and 61.6% for classroom teachers of religious education which according to Neuman (1997, p. 247) is a good rate of return.

Research Analysis

The analysis of the data consisted of determining the frequencies of the responses to the various items. The results have been reported in table form with percentages of respondents indicating a particular response provided. Each questionnaire has been numbered so that a response rate from each diocese was able to be determined.

Cross-tabulation analyses with chi square tests were done to investigate for any statistically significant relationships between the two groups of respondents (significant associations = p < .05, non-significant associations = p > .05). This test provides information concerning whether the collected data are close to the value considered to be typical and generally expected, and whether two variables are related to each other (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 404.).

All questions were coded and entered into the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is a popular computer software package that is specifically designed for analyzing quantitative data, and it can compute statistics and present data using tables and graphs (Neuman, 1997, p. 511). Fixed alternative questions were relatively easy to code. Open ended questions required content analysis involving identification of themes, concepts and categories (Berg, 1995, p.

181) which then were coded for input into SPSS. The categories developed from the responses to the open ended questions needed to be accurate, mutually exclusive and exhaustive if quantification was to take place (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 333).

This detailed, systematic and comparative analysis of the qualitative data leading to the development of theory is known as grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss first developed grounded theory in their research into dying patients in the United States of America (1967). Specifically, theory is derived from the data and is then illustrated by characteristic examples of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 5). In other words,

> In discovering theory, one generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence; then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 23)

This detailed, systematic analysis of the data involved the discovery and naming of categories that emerged from the data and coding these (Strauss, 1987, p. 27). The initial coding is termed open coding, that is, the unrestricted coding of the data. It involves the scrutiny, line by line, word by word, of the data. Its aim is to produce concepts that fit the data (Strauss, 1987, p. 28). During this process this researcher asked questions of the data such as, "Is this data relevant to the overall research aim? What category does this indicate? and, What is the meaning of the data? (Strauss, 1987, pp. 30-31).

This review of the open response items led to the researcher himself identifying and classifying the various values and levels of the relevant variables. The researcher's judgements were then checked for consistency and reliability by Dr James McLaren, Acting Head of School, School of Theology (Victoria) Australian Catholic University, St Patrick's Campus and co-supervisor of this thesis. Following

this check inconsistencies were discovered. This led to a review of the data and changes were made to the values and levels of variables. Dr McLaren then rechecked the data. Finally and independently Dr Veronica Lawson, Senior Lecturer, School of Theology (Victoria) Australian Catholic University, St. Partick's Campus as a second judge checked the data for consistency. She confirmed the values and levels of variables as consistent and reliable.

This coding is the key to the analysis of the data and therefore to the discovery of theory. Once these categories had been discovered and then coded, they were entered into SPSS. SPSS was then able to calculate frequencies, percentages and averages and present these in tables and graphs.

The point of the discovery of theory is to offer an explanation about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 22). In this case the phenomenon is the use of scripture in the religious education classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

In keeping with the philosophy of grounded theory, the researcher approached the research with no prior hypothesis. In the manner of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), theory emerged as data was analysed and comparisons made. While statistics were used, the data analysis is inductive (Neuman, 1997, p. 419) with the goal of building a detailed picture of religious education in Victorian Catholic secondary schools. This inductive analysis of the qualitative data used key themes and concepts to make generalizations (Neuman, 1997, p. 420).

In particular, *method of agreement* (Neuman, 1997, pp. 428-429) which focuses on what is common across respondents was used to generate theory.

Common responses concerning the use of sections of the bible, respondents' understanding of passages of the bible and respondents' purpose for using the bible with students was sought and from this the categories from which the theory would emerge were generated. As well as this, *ideal type* (Neuman, 1997, pp. 432-433) was used to interpret data. In this research the ideal type of contemporary biblical scholarship was established in Chapter Two, while the ideal type of religious education was established in Chapter One. These are the standards to which the data (reality) was compared. *Ideal type* was used to demonstrate how well the teaching of scripture in Victorian Catholic secondary schools measures up to that ideal outlined in Chapters One and Two.

Profile of Participants

Introduction

The data relating to the profile of those that chose to respond to the self-administering questionnaires is presented here rather than in the findings chapter to emphasise the validity and reliability these respondents give to the data that will be presented in the following chapter. All Principals in Catholic secondary schools in the State of Victoria were mailed questionnaires and asked to participate. It was hoped that returns from all dioceses would give a representative sampling of Religious Education Co-ordinators and classroom teachers of religious education. Mailing took place in early September, 1999 with a return date of 15th October, 1999. After this date, follow up phone calls were made to all schools that had not returned the questionnaires. By the end of the 1999 school year, 67 questionnaires had been returned from the Religious Education Co-ordinators and 61 from the classroom teachers of religious education. With 99 Catholic secondary schools in Victoria (Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 1999) in 1999 this is a response rate of 67.6%

for Religious Education Co-ordinators and 61.6% for classroom teachers of religious

education. Thus the desired return rate of at least 50% was achieved.

Religious Education Co-ordinators

Distribution of Responses from Religious Education Co-ordinators by Education Zone

Distribution of responses from Religious Education Co-ordinators by zone is
presented in Figure 4.1:

Figure 4.1

Distribution of Responses from Religious Education Co-ordinator by Education Zone.
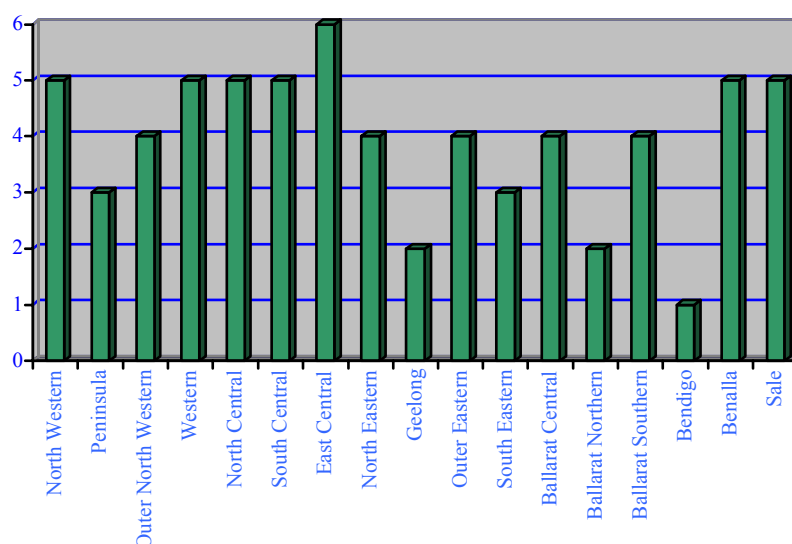
Figure 4.1 indicates that all four dioceses and all 17 educational zones of the

organizational structure for Catholic education in Victoria were represented.   The

highest return rate was 100% from the Central and Southern zones of the Ballarat

Diocese.   The lowest return rate was 33% from the Bendigo Zone of the Sandhurst

Diocese, as only one of the three Religious Education Co-ordinators returned the

questionnaire.   This was closely followed by the Geelong Zone of the Melbourne

Diocese, with a return rate of 40% - two questionnaires from the possible five were

returned.

Profile According to Age and Sex

Table 4.1 illustrates the age and sex profiles of the Religious Education Co-ordinators who responded to the questionnaire:

Table 4.1

Profile of Religious Education Co-ordinators according to Age and Sex.

	Frequency	*Percentage*	*Minimum Age*	*Maximum Age*	*Average Age*
Female	34	51	27	62	46
Male	31	46	32	58	41
Missing	2	3			
Total	**67**	**100**			

Table 4.1 indicates that of the 67 responses from Religious Education Co-ordinators 34 or 51% were female and 31 or 46% were male. The average age of the female Religious Education Co-ordinators was 46 years compared to the male Religious Education co-ordinators of 41 years. According to staffing returns from the four dioceses of Victoria in February 1999 (Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 1999) 64% of all teachers in Victorian Catholic secondary schools were female and 36% male. This indicates that the sample of Religious Education Co-ordinators according to gender has a slightly higher percentage of males than females. The same staffing returns also indicate that the average age of teachers in Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999 was 40.41 years (Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 1999). The Religious Education Co-ordinator respondents had a similar figure for males and a slightly older figure of 46 years for females. From this table it can be seen that the Religious Education Co-ordinator respondents reflect the average staffing patterns in Catholic secondary schools in Victoria in 1999.

Table 4.2 presents a distribution of Religious Education Co-ordinators by age:

Table 4.2

Distribution of Religious Education Co-ordinators by Age.

	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Frequency	1	18	29	15	1
Percentage	1.6	28.1	45.3	23.4	1.6
Cumulative Percentage	1.6	29	75	98	100

Table 4.2 indicates that 75% of Religious Education Co-ordinators were under 50 years of age with 73.4% being between 30 and 50 years of age. This is to be expected as the average age of Religious Education Co-ordinators is 43.36 years of age.

Profile According to Experience

Table 4.3 illustrates the Religious Education Co-ordinators' years of teaching experience, years in their present school and years as a Religious Education Co-ordinator:

Table 4.3

Profile of Religious Education Co-ordinators according to Experience.

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Years of teaching experience	5	40	18.76
Years in present school	1	19	6.88
Years as a Religious Education Co-ordinator	1	19	4.02

With a minimum of five years teaching experience and a maximum of 40 years teaching experience among the Religious Education Co-ordinators, it would appear that some were still in the early stages of their careers in Catholic education. However, with average years of experience being 18.76, Religious Education Co-ordinators were on the whole experienced teachers who could be expected to have developed their teaching skills successfully.

Table 4.4, showing the distribution of Religious Education Co-ordinators by experience, further reinforces this notion of experience. Only 14.9% or 10 Religious Education Co-ordinators had 10 years or less teaching experience while 85.1% or 57 had 11 or more years of teaching experience and 34.3% or 21 have 21 years or more teaching experience.

Table 4.4

Distribution of Religious Education Co-ordinators by Experience

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40
Frequency	1	9	16	18	12	4	4	3
Percentage	1.5	13.5	23.8	26.8	18	6	6	4.4
Cumulative Percentage	1.5	14.9	38.8	65.7	83.6	89.6	95.5	100

It is interesting to note that some of the Religious Education Co-ordinators were new to the school they were in, and new to the position of Religious Education Co-ordinator. However, the average years in their present school was 6.88 years with an average of 4.7 years as a Religious Education Co-ordinator. They were therefore an experienced group of educators.

Year Levels Taught

The number of Religious Education Co-ordinators who taught at a particular year level are presented in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5

Number of Religious Education Co-ordinators Teaching at each Year Level.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Frequency	19	17	25	28	37	45
Percentage	28.4	25.4	37.3	41.8	55.2	67.2

From Table 4.5 it can be seen that the teaching of Religious Education Co-ordinators seems to center around Years 11 and 12. In all, 45 Religious Education Co-ordinators or 67% taught Year 12, and 37 or 55% taught Year 11. This may well be linked to the requirements of the Victorian Certificate of Education and the higher qualifications of Religious Education Co-ordinators as compared to the classroom teachers of religious education (see Tables 4.7 and 4.14).

The profile of the respondents is further illuminated by Table 4.6: Number of year levels taught by Religious Education Cordinators:

Table 4.6

Number of Year Levels Taught by Religious Education Co-ordinators.

	Nil	*One*	*Two*	*Three*	*Four*	*Five*	*Six*
Frequency	2	10	24	17	10	2	2
Percentage	3	15	36	25	15	3	3
Cumulative Percentage	3	18	54	79	94	97	100

Table 4.6 indicates that 76% of Religious Education co-ordinators surveyed taught at two, three or four year levels and 40% taught three or four year levels. Only 15% taught at one year level while two taught five year levels and two taught at all year levels. Two Religious Education Co-ordinators did not teach at any year level. One indicated that they taught, "occasional lessons at various levels" while the other did not comment about the reasons for this situation.

Combined with years of teaching experience, the number of year levels taught, further highlights the skills and knowledge evident in this group.

Qualifications

Table 4.7 illustrates the qualifications of the Religious Education Co-ordinators surveyed:

Table 4.7

Qualifications of Religious Education Co-ordinators.

	Frequency	Percentage
Pre-Service education at ACU	4	6
Certificate of Religious Education	1	1.5
Graduate Diploma in Religious Education	21	31.3
Bachelor of Arts with major in Biblical Studies	1	1.5
Bachelor of Theology	28	41.8
Masters of Religious Education	5	7.4
Masters of Theology	2	3
Doctorate in RE Teacher knowledge	1	1.5
Missing	4	6
Total	67	100

In all, 97% of the Religious Education Co-ordinators surveyed indicated that they had a qualification in religious education, and two respondents indicated that they did not. These two respondents did not indicate if further study was currently being undertaken or contemplated at a future date.

Religious Education Co-ordinators in Victorian Catholic secondary schools are highly qualified. Twenty eight or 41.8% of the group indicated that they had a Bachelor of Theology, two a Masters of Theology, five a Masters of Religious Education and one had a Phd. Of those with a qualification less than Bachelor of Theology, three indicated that they were currently studying for a Bachelor of Theology. Of those with a Bachelor of Theology, three indicated that they were currently studying for a Masters of Theology, two were studying for a Masters of Religious Education and one was studying for a Masters of Ministry.

Classroom Teachers of Religious Education

Distribution of Responses from Classroom Teachers of Religious Education by Education Zone

Distribution of responses from classroom teachers of religious education by zone is presented in Figure 4.2:

Figure 4.2

Distribution of Responses from Classroom Teachers of Religious Education by Education Zone.
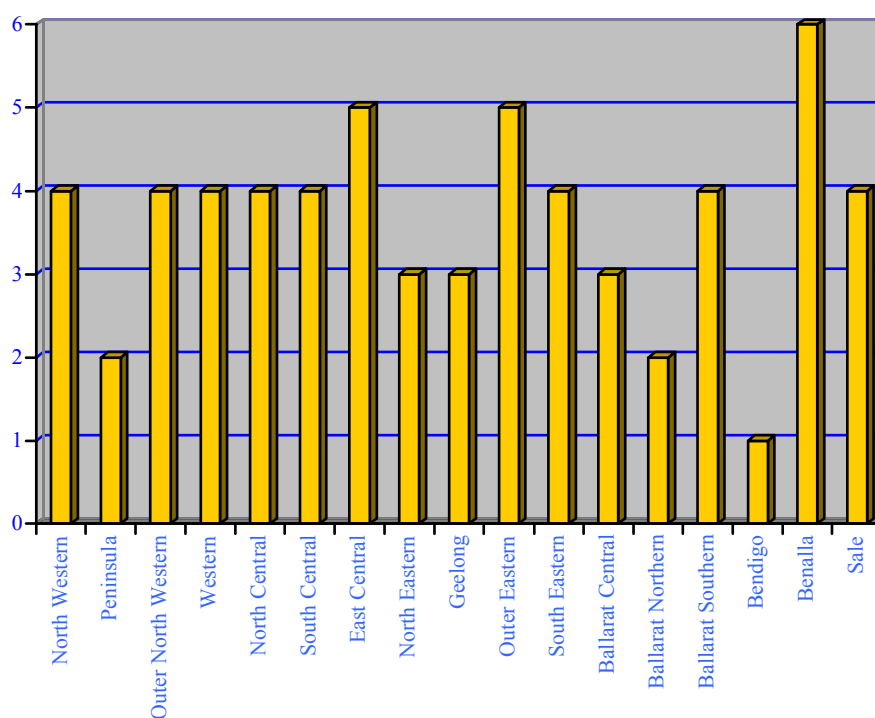
Figure 4.3 demonstates that all four dioceses and the 17 educational zones of the organizational structure for Catholic education in Victoria were represented. The highest return rate was 100% from the Southern Zone of the Ballarat Diocese and the Benalla Zone of the Sandhurst Diocese. The lowest was 33% from the Bendigo Zone of the Sandhurst Diocese, where only one of the three classroom teachers of Religious Education returned the questionnaire. This was closely followed by the South Central

Zone of the Melbourne diocese with a return rate of 44% - four questionnaires from the possible nine were returned.

Profile According to Age and Sex

Table 4.8 illustrates the age and sex profiles of the classroom teachers of religious education who responded to the questionnaire:

Table 4.8

Profile of Classroom Teachers of Religious Education according to Age and Sex.

	Frequency	*Percentage*	*Minimum Age*	*Maximum Age*	*Average Age*
Female	38	62	24	62	40
Male	20	33	31	60	43
Missing	3	5	--	--	--
Total	**61**	**100**	--	--	--

Table 4.8 indicates that of the 61 responses from classroom teachers of religious education, 38 or 62% were female and 20 or 33% were male. The average age of the female teachers was 40 years, compared to the male teachers of 43 years. Comparing these figures with the staffing returns from the four dioceses of Victoria in February 1999 (Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 1999) it can be seen that the ratio of 62% female to 33% males among the respondents compares well with 64% of all teachers in Victorian Catholic secondary school being female and 36% male. As already stated, the average age of teachers in Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999 was 40.41 years (Catholic Education Office Melbourne, 1999). The figure for the respondents who were classroom teachers of religious education was similar with males at 43 years of age and females at 40 years of age. From this table it can be seen that the classroom teachers of religious education respondents reflect the average staffing patterns in Catholic secondary schools in Victoria in 1999.

Table 4.9 presents a distribution of classroom teachers of Religious Education by age:

Table 4.9

Distribution of Classroom Teachers of Religious Education by Age.

	22-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Frequency	11	16	13	15	3
Percentage	19	27.6	22.4	25.8	5.2
Cumulative Percentage	19	46.6	69	94.8	100

Table 4.9 indicates that 69% of the classroom teachers of religious education who responded were under 50 years of age and 19% under 30 years of age. Therefore 50% were between the ages of 30 and 50. This is a much wider spread than for the Religious Education Co-ordinators (73.4%).

Profile According to Experience

Table 4.10 illustrates the years of teaching experience of the classroom teachers of Religious Education:

Table 4.10

Profile of Classroom Teachers of Religious Education according to Teaching Experience.

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Years of teaching experience	2	40	18.08

With a minimum of two years teaching experience and a maximum of forty years among the classroom teachers of religious education, it would appear that some were in the early stages of their careers in Catholic education while others were nearing the end. However, with average years of experience being 18.08 years, the classroom teachers of religious education were experienced teachers who could be expected to have developed their teaching skills successfully.

Table 4.11 Distribution of classroom religious education teachers by experience, explains this further. Nineteen religious education teachers or 32.2% had ten or less years teaching experience while 33.9% or 20 teachers had 21 or more years teaching experience.

Table 4.11

Distribution of Classroom Religious Education Teachers by Experience.

	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40
Frequency	11	8	10	10	4	6	5	5
Percentage	18.6	13.6	17	17	6.8	10	8.5	8.5
Cumulative Percentage	18.6	32.2	49.2	66.1	72.9	83.1	91.5	100

While comparison of these figures with those for Religious Education Co-ordinators indicates a less experienced group, this is to be expected, and does not indicate that this group of religious education teachers is not experienced. In all, 67.8% of the sample had more than ten years experience and could be expected to bring many insights to this survey.

Comparison of these figures with those for the Religious Education Co-ordinators indicates a number of similarities. Both groups had a similar average age (43 years for Religious Education Co-ordinators compared with 41 years for classroom teachers) and their average years of teacher experience is virtually the same, that is 18.76 for Religious Education Co-ordinators and 18.08 for classroom teachers. This suggests that the overall information gained from these survey results should reflect best practice within Victorian Catholic Secondary education.

Year Levels Taught

The number of classroom teachers of religious education who taught at a particular year level is presented in Table 4.12:

Table 4.12

Number of Classroom Teachers of Religious Education Teaching at each Year Level.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Frequency	23	30	24	14	8	8
Percentage	37.7	49.2	39.3	23	13.1	13.1

From Table 4.12 it can be seen that the teaching of classroom teachers of religious education centered around Years Seven, Eight and Nine. Twenty three or 37.7% taught at Year Seven, 30 or 49.2% taught at Year Eight and 24 or 39.3% taught at Year Nine. This compares to eight or 13.1% who taught at each of the Year 11 and 12 levels. This may well be linked to the requirements of the Victorian Certificate of Education and the higher qualification of Religious Education Co-ordinators (see Table 4.7).

This profile of classroom teachers of religious education is shown further in Table 4.13:

Table 4.13

Number of Year Levels Taught by Classroom Teachers of Religious Education.

	One	Two	Three	Four
Frequency	29	19	12	1
Percentage	47.6	31.1	19.7	1.6
Cumulative Percentage	47.6	78.7	98.4	100

Table 4.13 indicates that 78.7% of classroom teachers of religious education taught at one or two year levels and 50.8% taught two or three year levels. Only one respondent taught at four levels. Compared with the Religious Education Co-ordinators, religious education appeared to be a smaller component of the teaching allotment of the classroom teachers of religious education. This is to be expected as Religious Education Co-ordinators could be considered specialist teachers in their field.

Qualifications

Table 4.14 illustrates the qualifications of the classroom teachers of Religious Education who responded to the survey:

Table 4.14

Qualifications of Classroom Teachers of Religious Education.

	Frequency	*Percentage*
Pre-Service education at ACU	11	18
Certificate of Religious Education	8	13.1
Graduate Diploma in Religious Education	20	32.8
Diploma Of Theology	1	1.6
Bachelor of Theology	6	9.8
Masters of Religious Education	2	3.3
Missing	13	21.3
Total	**61**	**100**

Of the 61 classroom teachers who returned the survey, 47 or 77% indicated that they had a qualification in religious education. A further 13 or 21.3% indicated they did not have a qualification, and one did not complete this question. Of those who did not have qualifications in religious education, one indicated that he or she had 50 hours of accreditation[7] and three units from a theological institution, one was in progress with a Graduate Diploma in Religious Education, one had a Certificate in Basic Theology from the Melbourne Catholic Education Office[8] and one was currently having his/her accreditation reviewed with the assistance of the Religious Education Co-ordinator. There were no other indications given from the survey of any other professional development activity taking place at the time of the survey.

According to their qualifications, the classroom teachers of religious education were a varied group. One third or 20 respondents had a Graduate Diploma in

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[7] This is a process by which the Melbourne Catholic Education Office gives accreditation to teachers to teach religious education in the diocese.

religious education. Together with those who had a Diploma of Theology, Bachelor of Theology and a Masters in Religious Education, this is 47.5% of the sample, making them a well qualified group of teachers. However, 18% had only their pre-service training qualification and another 13.1% had a basic Certificate of Religious Education, that is 31.1% or another third of the sample. The last 21.3% of the sample is made up of those who indicated that they were not qualified in religious education.

Summary

While significant statistical measurement was used with the research tool (the self-administering questionnaire) this research also has an inductive reasoning component for the development of theory from data. Therefore it is both quantitative and qualitative research in the social sciences. It is an attempt to present a picture, according to teachers of religious education, of the place of scripture in the religious education classroom, and in so doing to draw some conclusions about religious education generally across Victorian Catholic secondary education. Chapter Five of this thesis presents the statistical information gathered from the questionnaires (quantitative data) in tabular form, while Chapters Six and Seven discuss and analyse this data using inductive reasoning (qualitative data). Finally, chapters Six and Seven conclude with the presentation of a picture of the teaching of scripture in the religious education classrooms across Victorian Catholic secondary education. This picture includes the formulation of theory about the reasons that underlie this picture, and its implications for the teaching of biblical scholarship and the nature of religious education within Victorian Catholic secondary education.

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[8] The Melbourne Catholic Education Office offers a five day basic theology course covering topics such as scripture, moral theology, Church history, sacramental theology as well as religious education.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the data yielded by the questionnaires to Religious Education Co-ordinator's (RECs) and classroom teachers of religious education in Years 7 to 10 (RETs). It includes material relating to the influence of scripture on respondents and their confidence in using it with students, general school practice, the general practice of respondents and the practice of respondents in relation to specific scripture texts used with students in Years Seven to 12. Because of the vast amount of data, no analysis is provided in this chapter. Rather, findings are simply presented, to be discussed and analysed in the following two chapters. In Chapters Six and Seven the data is discussed and brought into dialogue with the pedagogical and theological principles discussed and established in Chapters One to Three.

Importance of and Confidence in Using Scripture for RECs and
Teachers of Religious Education

Role of Scripture in the Life of Religious Education Co-ordinators

The role of scripture in the life of the respondents, when linked with their qualifications and experience, is likely to give a fuller account of the respondents' ability to use the bible with students. Respondents familiar with scripture throughout their life, at home, at school and as adults can be assumed to have a confidence from this familiarity with the bible, that others without this familiarity would not have. Each respondent was asked to rate the influence of scripture in his or her life on a five point scale (1-No Influence through to 5-Strong Influence). Figure 5.1 presents the responses of Religious Education Co-ordinators.

Figure 5.1

Role of scripture in the life of Religious Education Co-ordinators.
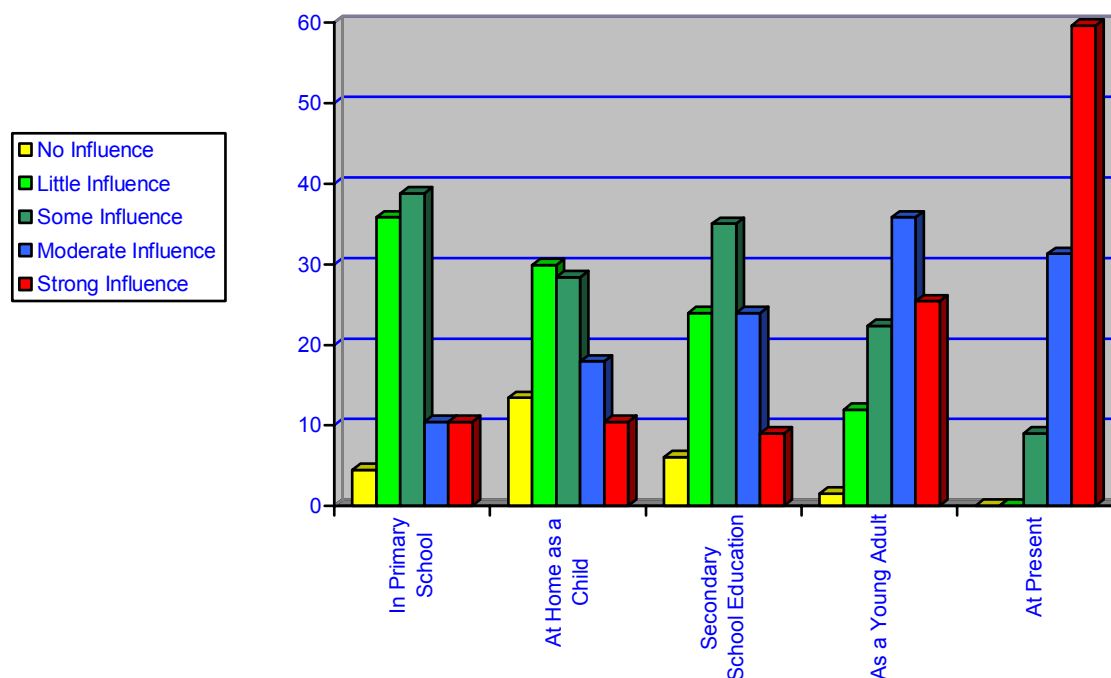
Figure 5.1 indicates that scripture had little or some influence for a majority of RECs at primary school and as a child, and this was also the case at secondary school. Some RECs (23.9%) indicated that there was a moderate influence at secondary school. It is only as young adults and at present that scripture takes on a moderate or strong influence, with 59% of RECs indicating a strong influence at present.

Religious Education Co-ordinators' Confidence in the Use of Scripture

Religious Education Co-ordinators were asked to rate their confidence in using scripture with their students. A five point scale with one indicating very low through to five indicating very high was used. Table 5.1 indicates that 60 or 89.5% of respondents rated their confidence with scripture as high or very high. Conversely no respondents rated themselves as very low and only seven or 10.5% rated their confidence with scripture as low or moderate.

Table 5.1

Religious Education Co-ordinators' confidence in the use of scripture with their

students.

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very Low	--	--	--
Low	1	1.5	1.5
Moderate	6	9	10.5
High	27	40.3	50.8
Very High	33	49.2	100
Total	**67**	**100**	

Religious Education Co-ordinators were then asked to clarify their rating by suggesting reasons for their confidence or lack of confidence with scripture. Table 5.2 indicates the reasons given by the 89.5% of respondents who claimed to be confident with scripture (up to four reasons were recorded per respondent):

Table 5.2

Religious Education Co-ordinators' reasons for confidence in the use of scripture

with students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Study	47	43.9	88.7
Personal Relationships/Love of Scripture	32	29.9	60.4
Professional Experience	12	11.2	22.6
Other	16	15	30.2
Total	**107**	**100**	**201.9**

Overwhelmingly (88.7%) RECs indicated that study was the key reason giving them confidence in using scripture with students.

Table 5.3 indicates the reasons given by the 10.5% of Religious Education Co-ordinators who indicated a lack of confidence in using scripture with students:

Table 5.3

Religious Education Co-ordinators' reasons for lack of confidence in the use of

scripture with students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Lack of Training	8	57.1	72.7
Personal Background	1	7.1	9.1
Other	5	35.7	45.5
Total	**14**	**100**	**127.3**

Lack of training (72.7%) reinforces the importance of study indicated in table

5.2. It is the key factor for RECs' confidence with scripture.

Role of scripture in the life of classroom teachers of religious education

Figure 5.2

Role of scripture in the life of classroom teachers of religious education.
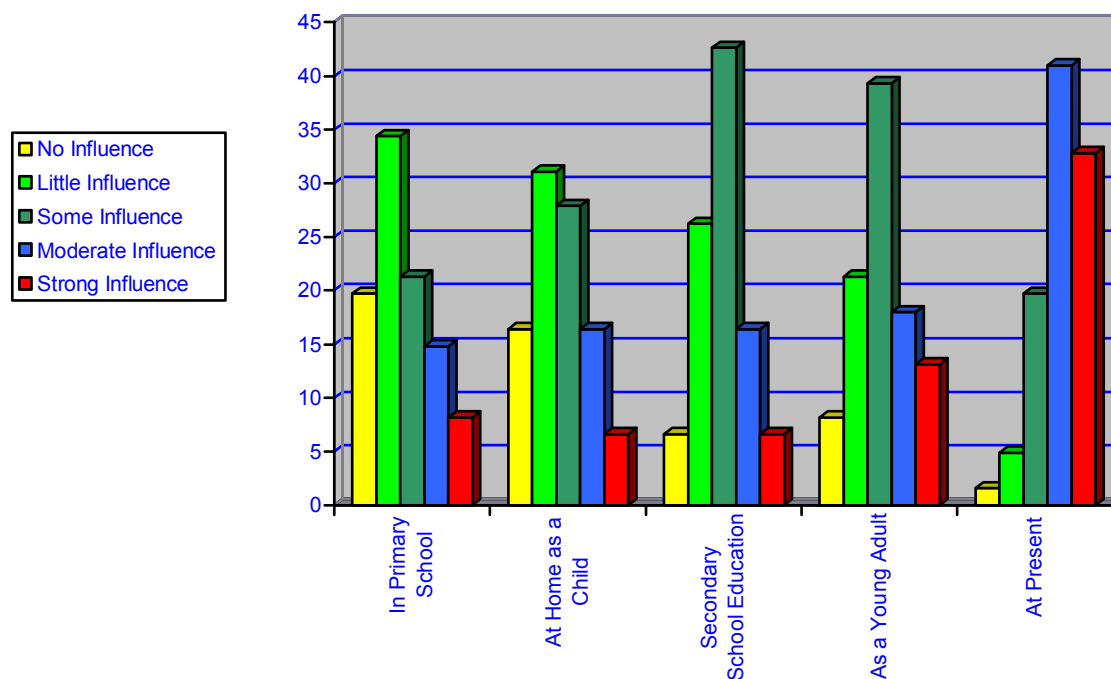
Figure 5.2 indicates that for classroom teachers of Years Seven to Ten

religious education (RETs) scripture had little or some influence in the majority of

cases while at primary and secondary school, at home as a child and as a young adult. It is only at present that scripture has moderate (41%) or strong influence (32.8%).

Religious education teachers' confidence in the use of scripture

Classroom teachers of religious education were also asked to rate their confidence in using scripture with their students. Table 5.4 indicates their responses:

Table 5.4

Religious education teachers' confidence in the use of scripture with their students.

	Frequency	*Percentage*	*Cumulative Percentage*
Very Low	--	--	--
Low	4	6.5	6.5
Moderate	14	23	29.5
High	30	49.2	78.7
Very High	13	21.3	100
Total	**61**	**100**	

As with Religious Education Co-ordinators, classroom teachers of religious education were then asked to clarify their rating by suggesting reasons for their confidence or lack of confidence with scripture. Table 5.5 indicates the reasons given by the 70% of respondents who claimed to be confident with scripture (up to four reasons were recorded per respondent):

Table 5.5

Reasons Given by Classroom Teachers of Religious Education for their Confidence in the Use of Scripture with Students.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Study	31	38.8	72.1
Love of Scripture	20	24.7	46.5
Professional Experience	7	8.6	16.3
Other	23	28.4	53.5
Total	**81**	**100**	**188.4**

As with RECs, study for RETs (72.1%) was seen as the key factor in confidence in using scripture with students.

Table 5.6 indicates the reasons given by the 28.5% of religious education teachers who indicated low or moderate confidence in using scripture with students:

Table 5.6

Religious Education Teachers' Reasons for Lack of Confidence in the Use of Scripture with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Lack of Training	10	38.5	62.5
Lack of Experience	2	7.7	12.5
Personal Background	2	7.7	12.5
Other	12	46.2	75.0
Total	26	100	162.5

Table 5.6 indicates lack of training (62.5%) as the key factor in RETs lack of confidence in using scripture with students. This supports the importance of study highlighted in Table 5.5.

An Overview of Teaching Concerning the Bible in Victorian Catholic Schools

Introduction

This section focuses on overall school practice with scripture in the religious education classroom. Religious Education Co-ordinators only, were asked about the general practice regarding the use of scripture within their schools. Questions sought responses relating to school policy on the use of scripture, resources available in the school, the purchase of a bible by students, translations of the bible that were used and the retention by the students of the bible throughout their secondary schooling. Respondents were also asked to indicate whether units on the study of scripture were

taught, what topics these units covered, and at what year levels these units on scripture were taught.

School Policy on the Use of Scripture with Students

Religious Education Co-ordinators were asked if their schools had a policy about the use of scripture with students. Fifty-nine Religious Education Co-ordinators (88.1% of respondents) indicated that their school did not have a policy, four (6%) did not respond to the question while four (6%) indicated that their school did have a policy on the use of scripture with students. Respondents who indicated that their school did have a policy on the use of scripture with students were asked to attach a copy of the policy to the questionnaire, and one school did this.

This one school policy was a document that included some basic principles in relation to the religious education curriculum, and an overview of specific objectives in religious education for Years Seven to 12. Of the nineteen basic principles, one related to the use of scripture: "assist students to understand the role of Scripture and Tradition within the life of the Church". There were five specific scriptural objectives. The first four related to the Hebrew Scriptures, the Christian Scriptures, the use of the bible for prayer and the recognition of, "the truth and values presented in Scripture (especially the Gospels) and (that students) can interpret and apply these in present life situations". The final objective was that students, "Are familiar with the literary forms of the Bible and their significance in interpreting Scripture".

The Bible Purchased by Students

Religious Education Co-ordinators (RECs) were also asked general questions about school practice in relation to the use of scripture. RECs were asked whether students were required to purchase a bible in Year Seven, the translation purchased

and if it was expected to be retained throughout their secondary schooling. Two responses indicated that students were not required to purchase a bible in their schools at Year Seven, one response did not answer the question while sixty four responses (95.5% of respondents) indicated that their school required students to purchase a bible for Year Seven. Sixty-one (91%) indicated that it was expected that students would retain this bible throughout their secondary schooling. Four (6%) indicated that their students were not expected to retain this bible and two respondents did not complete this question.

Table 5.7 indicates the translation students were required to purchase:

Table 5.7

Bible Translations Required to be Purchased by Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Good News 7-12[9]	77	51.6	67
Good News 7-10	4	2.6	3.5
NRSV 7-12[10]	29	19.4	25.2
NRSV 7-10	2	1.3	1.7
Changing to NRSV 2000	8	5.7	6.2
NRSV for T&T	5	3.3	3.9
Other	24	16.1	20.9
Total	**149**	**100**	**128.4**

Twenty four responses were categorises as "Other". These responses referred to many different translations such as the New American Bible[11], The Jerusalem Bible[12] or the New Jerusalem Bible[13], New International Version[14] and the Revised

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[9] *Good News Bible. The Bible in Today's English Version.* (1979) New York: Thomas Nelson.
[10] *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version.* (1990). Glasgow: Collins Publishers.
[11] *The New American Bible.* (1987). Wichita: Catholic Bible Publishers.
[12] *The Jerusalem Bible.* (1966). London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
[13] *The New Jerusalem Bible.* (1985). London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
[14] *The Holy Bible: New International Version.* (1993). London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Standard Version[15]. "Other" also referred to unusual school situations such as the use of the Good News Bible in Years Seven and Eight and the NRSV in Years Nine to 12. Some respondents chose to include a comment about their personal preferences. They indicated that they personally preferred RSV, NRSV, Good News, Jerusalem Bible or in one case the King James Bible. Also included in this category were comments relating to previous practice. One respondent indicated that he or she had previously used the Jerusalem Bible, while another indicated that he or she had tried the NRSV but students had struggled with it, and as a result they were now using the Good News Bible.

Scripture in Years Seven to Ten

Religious Education Co-ordinators were asked about the teaching of scripture at Years Seven to Ten in their school. Fifty-eight (86.6% of respondents) indicated that units specifically on scripture were taught in Years Seven to Ten. Six (9%) indicated that units specifically on scripture were not taught in Years Seven to Ten and two (3%) did not answer the question. Figure 5.3 represents the year levels at which these scripture units were taught as a percentage of total respondents to that question.

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[15] *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition.* (1966). London: Catholic Truth Society.

Figure 5.3

Units on Scripture-Year Levels Taught as a percentage of respondents to this question.
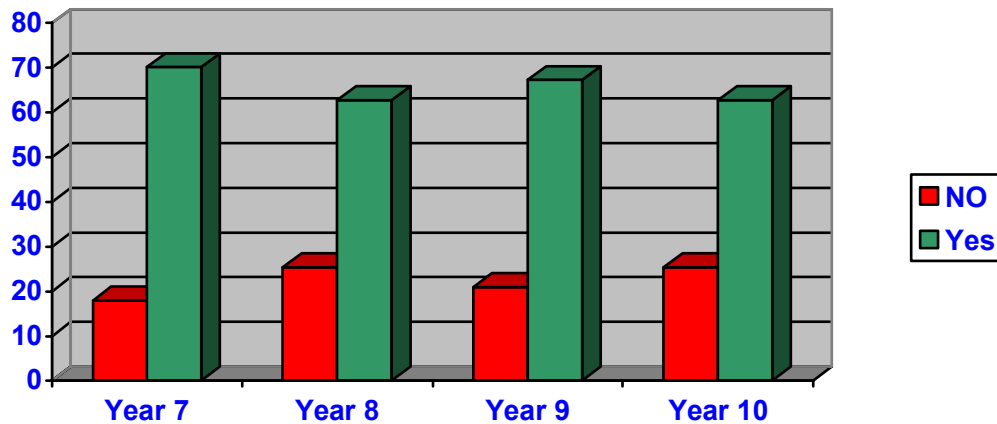
Topics Taught

Introduction

Religious Education Co-ordinators were then asked to indicate the topics taught in these specific units on scripture in Years Seven to Ten. It was expected that the nomination of topics by the REC's would give further insight into the nature of the units that these REC's considered to be, "units on scripture". For the purposes of this research, "units on scripture" is considered to mean those units of study of the bible which employ critical biblical exegesis such as the historical-critical method as outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis. Evidence to indicate this would be the study of literary genres, sources behind the text and the editorial work of the authors, as well as general studies introducing the bible to students such as the structure of the bible itself. The formation of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures as well as the development of the biblical canon would also be considered, "units on scripture" " and these need to be distinguished from units where scripture texts are used to support a theme. This latter use of scripture cannot be called "units on scripture" because the

first intention of the unit is not to educate students in the understanding of the bible as a sacred text valuable for study in itself.

Year Seven

Up to four responses per respondent were recorded.

Table 5.8

Topics Taught Year 7.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Introduction to the Bible	9	19.6	37.5
Gospels and/or Christian Scriptures	9	19.6	37.5
Hebrew Scriptures	14	30.4	58.3
Themes	14	30.4	58.3
Total	**46**	**100**	**191.7**

Year Eight

Up to two responses per respondent were recorded.

Table 5.9

Topics Taught Year 8.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Hebrew Scriptures	15	53.6	75
Themes	10	35.7	50
Christian Scriptures	3	10.7	15
Total	**28**	**100**	**140**

Year Nine

Up to three responses per respondent were recorded.

Table 5.10

Topics Taught Year 9.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Gospels	13	35.2	52
Christian Scriptures other than Gospels	3	8.1	12
Hebrew Scriptures	9	24.3	36
Themes	9	24.3	36
General Biblical	3	8.1	12
Total	**37**	**100**	**148**

Year Ten

Up to three responses per respondent were recorded.

Table 5.11

Topics Taught Year 10

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Gospels	9	29	39.1
Christian Scripture	5	16.1	21.7
Hebrew Scriptures	7	22.6	30.4
Themes	10	32.3	43.5
Total	**31**	**100**	**134.8**

Tables 5.8 to 5.11 indicate that as well as thematic topics, major topics taught included Christian and Hebrew Scriptures, particularly the gospels.

General Scripture Topics

Nineteen respondents named topics in units specifically taught on scripture but failed to indicate at which year levels they were taught. Table 5.12 indicates these general non year level specific topics:

Table 5.12

General Scripture Topics.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bible - General	6	8.3	31.6
Hebrew Scriptures	22	30.6	115.8
Christian Scriptures	24	33.3	126.3
Themes	20	27.8	105.3
Total	**72**	**100**	**378.9**

Resources Available

Religious Education Co-ordinators were asked to identify four or five resources available to teachers for teaching and using scripture with students. Table 5.13 indicates RECs responses. Up to five responses per respondent were recorded.

Table 5.13

Resources Available for Teaching and Using Scripture with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bible	20	9	33.9
Biblical Reference Text	40	17.9	67.8
Teacher Theology Text	28	12.6	47.5
Student Text	79	35.4	133.9
Teacher notes/course outlines	8	3.6	13.6
REC/other staff	7	3.1	11.9
Melbourne Guidelines	7	3.1	11.9
Other	34	15.2	57.6
Totals	**223**	**100**	**378**

Scripture in Years 11 – 12

Introduction

Religious Education Co-ordinators were asked about the teaching of religious education in Years 11 and 12. Information was sought about the teaching of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) units *Texts and Traditions*[16], other VCE

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[16] see Chapter 1, pp. 28-29 for a detailed discussion of Texts & Traditions.

religious studies units, school based programs, units of work on scripture and the influence of *Texts and Traditions* on the teaching of scripture in Years Seven to Ten.

Texts and Traditions

RECs were asked if their school taught any of the *Texts & Tradition* units. Only one respondent did not answer this question. Thirty-one respondents (46.3%) indicated that they did not teach *Texts & Traditions* while thirty-five (52.2%) indicated that they did teach *Texts & Traditions*. Those who indicated that they did teach *Texts & Traditions* were then asked to explain which units were taught at their schools and at what levels.

Table 5.14

Texts & Traditions units Taught.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
All Units	7	22.5
Units 3/4 only	5	12.5
Units 1 and/or 2 only	22	55
Will teach in the future	4	10
Total	**40**	**100**

Table 5.15

Year Levels at which Texts & Traditions are Taught.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
Year 11 and 12	7	24.1
Year 12 only	6	20.7
Year 11 only	12	41.4
Other	4	13.8
Total	**29**	**100**

Non-Texts and Traditions students

RECs were asked if their schools had any VCE students who would not undertake a *Texts & Traditions* unit at all throughout their VCE. All responded to this question. Twenty two (32.8%) indicated that there were no students who would not

undertake a *Texts & Traditions* unit. Forty five (67%) indicated that there were students who would not undertake *Texts & Traditions* throughout their VCE. The RECs were then asked to indicate what proportion of their VCE students would not be undertaking any *Texts & Traditions* units, and 42 responded to this question.

Table 5.16

Percentage of non-Texts & Tradition Students in Years 11 & 12.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
60% and below	11	26.2
Between 61% & 89%	12	28.6
90% and above	19	45.2
Total	**42**	**100**

RECs were then asked to indicate the various aspects of a religious education curriculum that these non-Texts & Tradition students undertook in their VCE.

Table 5.17

Type of Religious Education for non-Texts & Traditions Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
Other VCE Units	44	89.8
School Based	4	8.2
Retreats	1	2
Total	**49**	**100**

Respondents were then asked to explain their answer.

Table 5.18

Explanation of type of Religious Education for non-Text & Tradition Students in VCE.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
All do Religion & Society Units	6	12.8
Religion & Society Units 3/4	6	12.8
Religion & Society Units 1 and/or 2	9	19.1
Combination of Religion & Society & School Based Units	14	29.8
Other	12	25.5
Total	**47**	**100**

Table 5.19 indicates the year levels at which these non-Texts & Traditions units were offered.

Table 5.19

Year Level at which non-Text & Tradition units Taught.

	Frequency	*Percentage of respondents*
Year 11 & 12	18	75
Year 12 Only	1	4.2
Year 11 Only	3	12.5
Year 10	2	8.3
Total	**24**	**100**

In order to obtain a more complete picture of the place of scripture in Years 11 and 12, RECs were asked if their non-Texts & Traditions students completed any units of work or topics in scripture.

Table 5.20

Topics on Scripture in Years 11 & 12.

	Frequency	*Percentage of respondents*
Religion & Society	10	33.3
Religion & Society and Themes	6	20
Themes	10	33.3
Other	4	13.3
Total	**30**	**100**

Influence of Texts & Traditions on the Teaching of Scripture in Years 7 to 10

RECs were asked whether the teaching of Texts & Traditions (T & T) in Years 11 & 12 had influenced the teaching of scripture in Years 7 to 10.

Table 5.21

Influence of the Teaching of T & T on the Teaching of Scripture in Years 7 to 10.

	Frequency	Percentage
Preparation for VCE T&T	5	23.8
As introduction to exegesis	6	28.6
Future influence	3	14.3
Other	7	5.5
Total	**21**	**100**

The General Use of Scripture in Religious Education Classrooms by RECs and RE

Teachers of Year 7 to 10.

Introduction

In order to develop the picture of scripture use, Religious Education Co-ordinators and teachers of religious education in Years Seven to Ten were asked about the frequency of scripture use with their own students in the religious education classrooms. They were asked to respond to questions concerning how often they actually used scripture, sections of the bible used, factors influencing their use of scripture, whether they used the actual bible itself or a paraphrase, and the frequency with which students brought a bible to class. It was intended that this general description of scripture use could be compared with the specific personal practice indicated later in the research.

Table 5.22 depicts the group associations between the Religious Education Co-ordinators and the Teachers of Religious Education for the categorical variables concerned with the general use of scripture. Significant associations were found for the frequency of the use of scripture, explanations for these frequency, some sections of the bible used and some of the factors influencing these sections of the bible used.

Table 5.22

Teacher Group Associations on the General Use of Scripture in Religious Education Categorical Variables.

Variable	Type of Respondent REC'S compared to RET'S
Frequency of use of scripture	Significant Association
Explanations as to frequency of use	Significant Association
Sections of the bible used	Significant Association for Pentateuch, Historical Books, Prophetic Books & Acts of the Apostles only
Factors influencing sections of bible used	Significant Association for "Appropriate to the theme" & "Teacher confidence" only
Use of bible itself in class	Non Significant Association
Explanation of use of bible in class	Non Significant Association
Required students to bring a bible to class	Non Significant Association
If "No" how often	Non Significant Association
Explanation of "No" answer	Non Significant Association
Why use scripture with students	Non Significant Association

Significant Association = $p < .05$, Non-Significant Association = $p > .05$.

Frequency of Use

Religious Education Co-ordinators

Table 5.23

RECs: Frequency of Use of Scripture in the Classroom.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
Every day	12	20
Twice a week	19	31.7
Once a week	15	25
Once a fortnight	9	15
Once a month	5	8.3
Total	**60**	**100**

Respondents were then asked to explain their answers, and table 5.23 indicates

their explanations:

Table 5.24

RECs' Explanations as to Frequency of Use of Scripture with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
In Religion & Society	2	3.5
In Texts & Traditions	5	8.8
Within a topic/unit	30	52.6
For prayer and/or reflection	5	8.8
Comment	15	26.3
Total	**57**	**100**

Religious Education Classroom Teachers Years 7 to 10.
Table 5.25

RE Teachers: Frequency of Use of Scripture.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
Every day	2	3.7
Twice a week	8	14.8
Once a week	23	42.6
Once a fortnight	13	24.1
Once a month	6	11.1
Seldom	2	3.7
Total	**54**	**100**

Table 5.25 indicates religious education teachers' explanations for their frequency of use:

Table 5.26

RE Teachers' Explanations as to Frequency of Use of Scripture with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
In Texts & Traditions	1	1.9
Within a topic/unit	33	63.5
For prayer and/or reflection	2	3.8
Comment	16	30.8
Total	**52**	**100**

Sections of the Bible Used

Introduction

Religious Education Co-ordinators and teachers of religious education in Years Seven to Ten were asked to indicate how often they used the different sections in the bible. In the questionnaire the bible was presented in ten different sections:

> The Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy),
> Historical Books (i.e. Joshua, Samuel, Kings etc),
> The Prophets,
> The Psalms,
> Wisdom Books (Proverbs etc),
> Gospels,
> Acts of the Apostles,
> Letters of Saint Paul,
> The Pastoral Letters (i.e. James, Peter, John, Jude) and
> Revelation.

For each section respondents were asked to rate their frequency of use: 1 for never, 2 for seldom, 3 for once a term, 4 for monthly and 5 for weekly.

Religious Education Co-ordinators

Figure 5.4 indicates the responses of Religious Education Co-ordinators as a percentage of those who responded to that question:

Figure 5.4

RECs-Sections of the Bible, Frequency of Use (percentage of respondents).
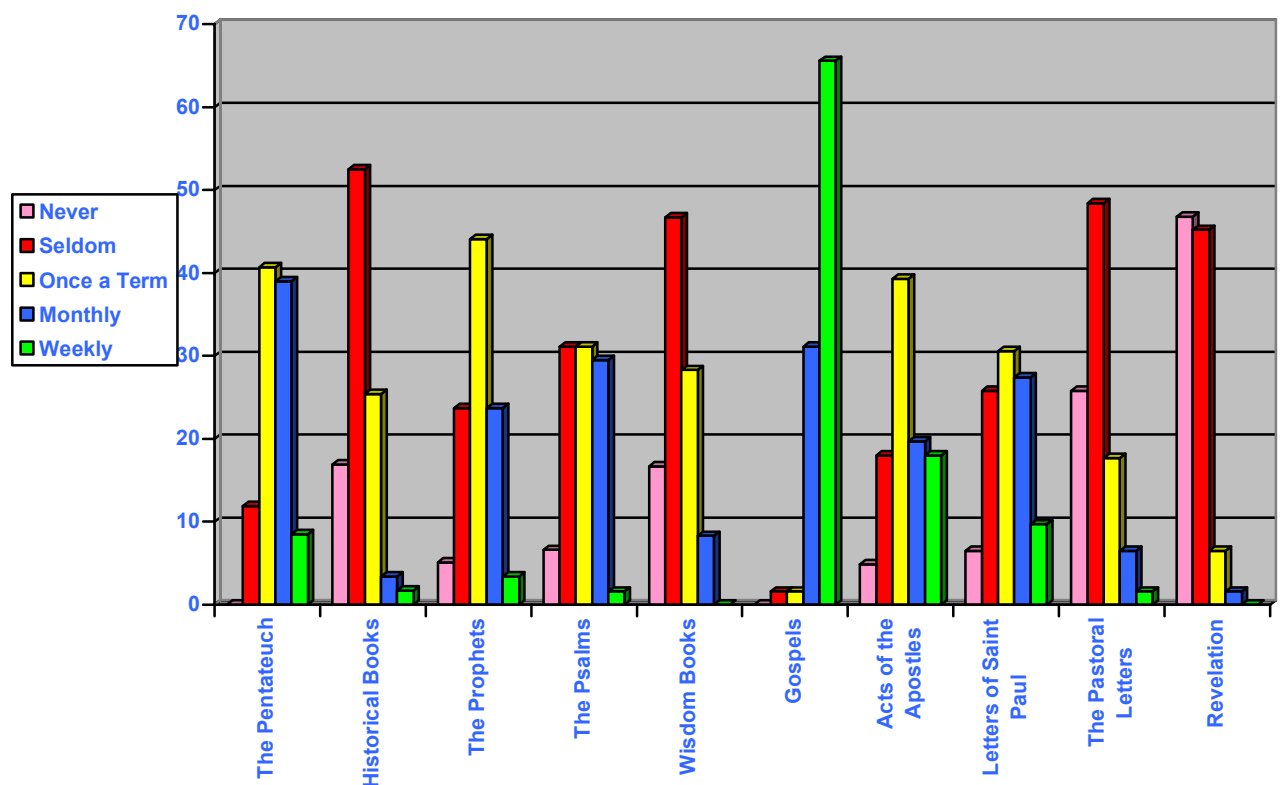
Religious education teachers of Years 7 to 10

Figure 5.5 indicates the responses of religious education teachers of Years 7 to 10 as a percentage of those who responded to that question:

Figure 5.5

RE Teachers Years 7 to 10-Sections of the Bible, Frequency of Use (percentage of respondents).
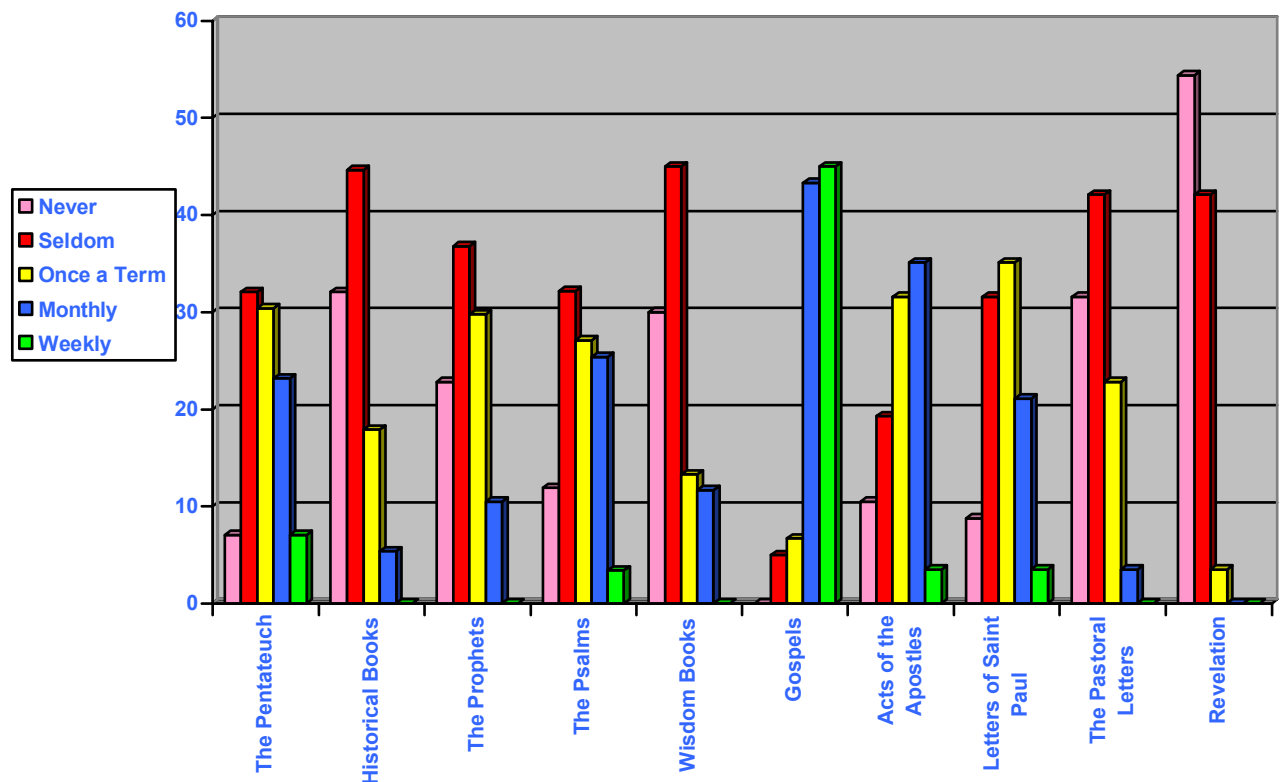
Factors Influencing Sections of the Bible Used

Introduction

Respondents were asked to indicate the factors influencing the sections of the bible that they had indicated as most frequently used. Six factors were suggested by the question: "Suggested by the Guidelines", "Appropriate to the theme", "Appropriate to the Liturgical Year or feast", "Teacher confidence/familiarity", "Personal appeal" and "Availability of teaching materials". A five point scale was used from 1-no influence, 2-little influence, 3-some influence, 4-moderate influence to 5-strong influence. Respondents were also invited to specify any other factors they deemed relevant.

Religious Education Co-ordinators

Figure 5.6 shows the responses of Religious Education Co-ordinators as a percentage of the total number of RECs who responded to this question:

Figure 5.6

RECs: Factors Influencing Sections of the Bible most Frequently Used.
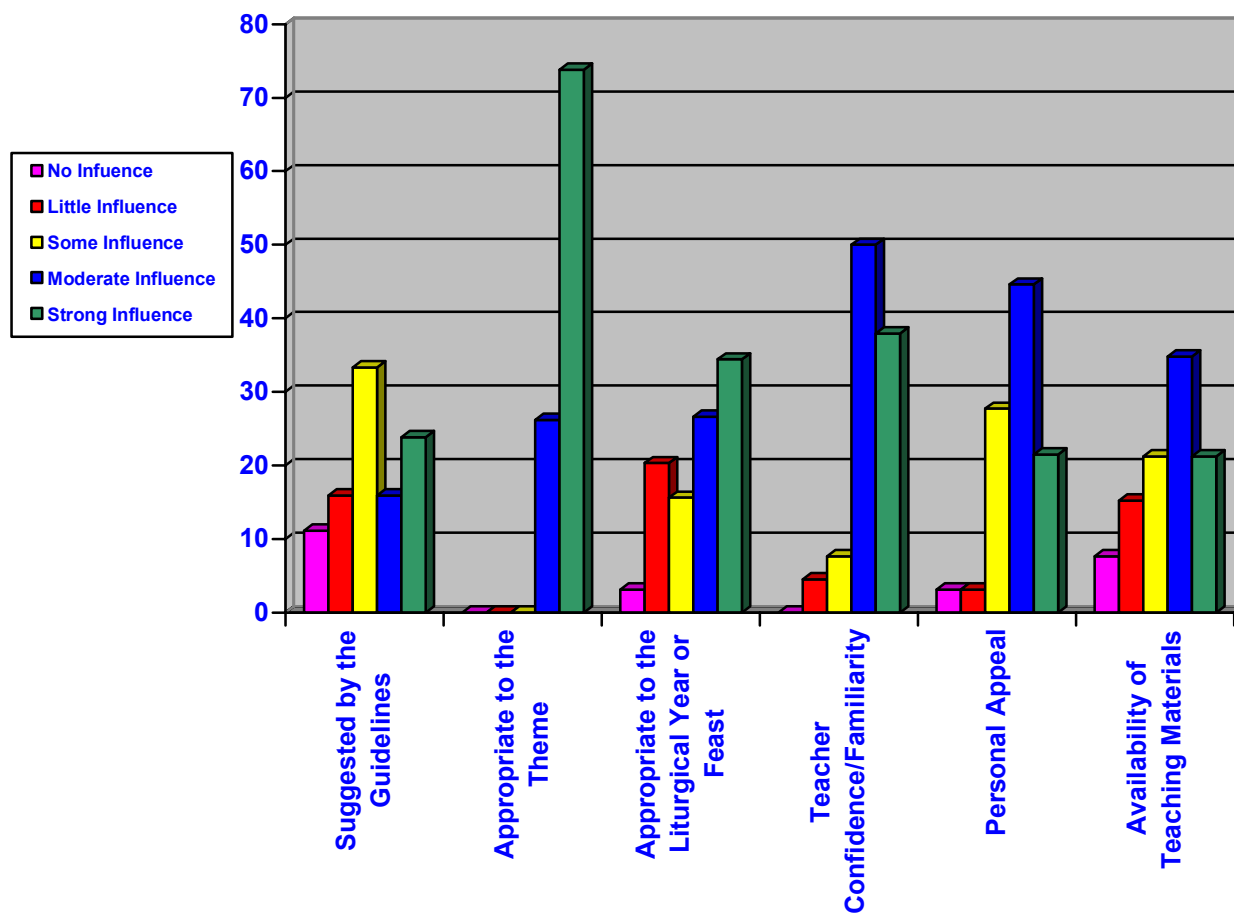
Religious education teachers of Years 7 to 10

Figure 5.7 shows the responses of RE teachers as a percentage of total RE teachers who responded to this question:

Figure 5.7

RE Teachers of Years 7 to 10: Factors Influencing Sections of the Bible most Frequently
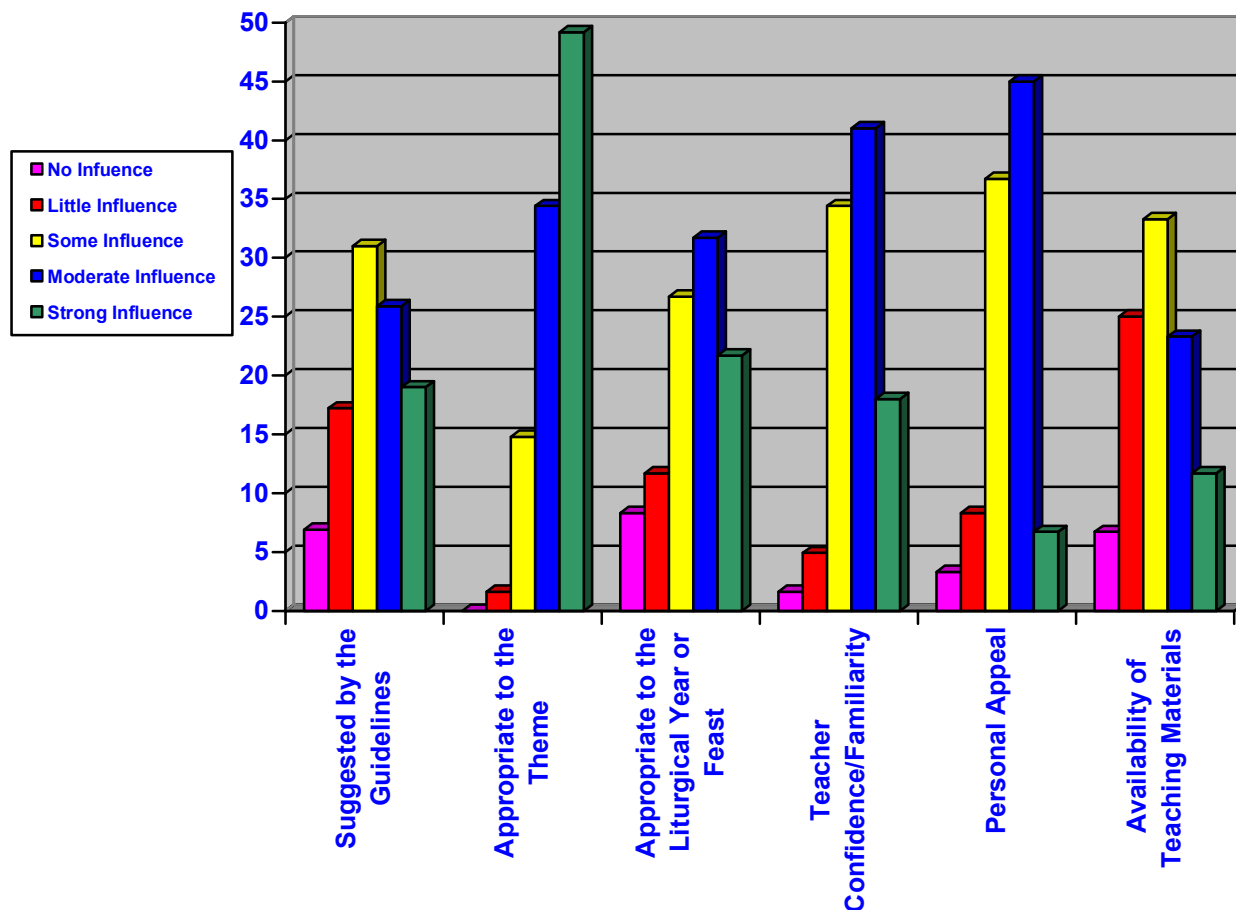
Used.

Using the Bible in Class

Introduction

Respondents were then asked to indicate whether they actually used the bible itself with students, whether they required students to bring a bible to class each lesson and if not, how often they did require students to bring a bible to class.

Religious Education Co-ordinators

In all 66 of the 67 RECs responded to this question, with 92.5% of respondents indicating that they used the bible itself with students, and 6% indicating that they used excerpts from the bible with students. Respondents were then given the opportunity to explain their answer. A further 46 took this opportunity with 35 (74.5%) indicating that they also used excerpts from the bible and paraphrases, two (4.3%) indicating that they also used videos which depicted scripture stories and ten (21.3%) indicating a variety of alternatives such as commentaries, dramatised versions of the bible and magazines.

Sixty five RECs responded to the question concerning whether they required students to bring a bible to class each lesson. In all 36 (55.4%) indicated "Yes" and 29 (44.6%) indicated "No". Those who indicated "No" were then asked to indicate how often they did in fact require students to bring a bible to class. They were given four responses to choose from — weekly, fortnightly, monthly or seldom — and asked to explain their answers. Twenty three of the 29 responded to this question. Three (13%) indicated weekly, nine (39.1%) indicated fortnightly, five (21.7%) indicated monthly and six (26.1%) indicated seldom and thirty then explained this further. Seventeen (56.7%) indicated that the frequency of students bringing a bible to class depended on the topic, three (10%) indicated that a class set was used (i.e., a set of text books purchased by the school for use in the classroom) and ten (33.3%) made a comment on the frequency of students bringing a bible to class. Comments included: "I usually have a copy myself and use the passages needed for the lesson", "In the past the Bible was over-used and created a very negative situation whenever students were called upon to use it", "They use the text about 50% of the time and

another format on hand-outs as well", "We rarely refer to it" and "It will depend upon the teacher, however students are expected to have their bible handy".

Religious Education Teachers of Years Seven to Ten

Fifty six of the 61 RE teachers responded to this question with 87.5% of respondents indicating that they used the bible itself with students and 10.7% indicating that they used excerpts from the bible with students. Twenty six took the opportunity to explain their answer further, with 65.5% indicating that they also used excerpts and paraphrases, one (3.8%) indicating that they also used music such as "Godspell" and "Jesus Christ Superstar"[17] and eight (30.7%) indicating a variety of alternatives such as stories and parables written in the first person, song, or the electronic bible. Others just chose to comment on their use of the bible with statements such as, "We read straight from the Bible", "Photocopied passages with questions", and "Modern day stories/videos".

A group of 59 RE teachers responded to the question concerning whether students were required to bring a bible to class. Thirty two (54.2%) indicated "No" and twenty seven (45.8%) indicated "Yes". Those who indicated "No" were then asked to indicate how often they did in fact require students to bring a bible to class. They were given four responses to choose from: weekly, fortnightly, monthly or seldom and asked to explain their answer. Twenty-four of the thirty two responded to this question. Ten (41.7%) indicated weekly, five (20.8%) indicated fortnightly, four (16.7%) indicated monthly and five (20.8%) indicated seldom. Thirty-five then explained this further. Eighteen (51.4%) indicated that it depended on the topic,

seven (20%) indicated that they used a class set of bibles and ten (28.6%) made other comments. These included: "Sometimes I may read; sometimes if I use Role-play the Narrator uses my copy", "Much of their work/reading material is prepared for them on hand-outs", 'The topic/unit such as "skills for Adolescence" requires discussion, problem solving, role-plays etc, at times scripture from Bible is not easy to apply', "I expect students to have them at every class unless otherwise asked", "We sometimes need to use the bible unexpectedly", "I would like students to reflect on the stories of the Bible and realize that interspersed in those stories is their own-part of our heritage", "On a regular basis-seldom-unless the unit requires it. I then use excerpts for prayer or a specific request to bring bible to class the next period" and "I would advise students in advance if they would need to bring their bible to class-to avoid them carrying it around when they don't need to".

<div align="center">Reasons for the Use of Scripture in the Classroom – RECs & RETs</div>

<div align="center">*Introduction*</div>

Religious Education Co-ordinators and teachers of religious education in Years Seven to Ten were asked an open ended question, "Why do you use Scripture with students?" No prompts or suggestions were given, as it was hoped that the question would allow respondents to indicate the underlying theology, philosophy and/or ideology driving their use of scripture with students. This could then be verified against the specific examples of classroom practice that respondents were to give later in the questionnaire. Up to six responses were recorded per respondent.

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[17] "Godspell" and "Jesus Christ Superstar" were popular musical versions of the "Jesus story" produced on the stage and on film in the 1970s.

Religious Education Co-ordinators

Table 5.27

RECs' Responses to, "Why Use Scripture with Students?".

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
To reinforce topic or theme	15	7.2	22.7
To enhance personal faith or experience	40	19.2	60.6
To develop biblical literacy	24	11.5	36.4
Because scripture is foundation and source of the faith	66	31.7	100
To facilitate prayer and liturgy	12	5.8	18.2
Other	51	24.5	77.3
Total	**208**	**100**	

Religious education teachers of Years 7 to 10

Table 5.28

RE Teachers' Responses to, "Why Use Scripture with Students?".

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
To reinforce topic or theme	17	14.4	29.3
To enhance personal faith or experience	25	21.2	43.1
To develop biblical literacy	10	8.5	17.2
Because scripture is foundation and source of the faith	27	22.9	46.6
To facilitate prayer and liturgy	7	5.9	12.1
Other	32	27.1	55.2
Total	**118**	**100**	

Personal Practice of RECs & RE Teachers

Introduction

Religious Education Co-ordinators and religious education teachers of Years Seven to Ten were asked about their personal classroom practice in the use of scripture with students. The RECs were asked to nominate a year level that they were currently teaching, whereas RE teachers of Years Seven to Ten were instructed by the

questionnaire to answer for a given year level. With this year level in mind, respondents were then asked to list up to five passages of scripture that they had used with students this year, and then to nominate one passage they had used with students in the past month.

A series of questions were then asked about the passage that had been nominated as used with students in the past month. These questions sought information about why the passage was chosen, the teacher's understanding of the passage, his or her aims in using this passage, how it was communicated to the students, and the learning activities employed. Information was also sought about the books and resources used by the teachers in their own preparation, and the materials used to present this information to students. Finally, information was sought about how the teachers related this to the students' experiences.

Table 5.29 depicts the group associations between the Religious Education Co-ordinators and the Teachers of Religious Education for the categorical variables concerned with their personal classroom practice in the use of scripture with students. Significant associations were found for the passages of scripture used this year, why the passage was chosen, their understanding of the passage, the books/resources used in their own preparation of the passage, how they relate this passage to their students' experience and some additional comments made at the end of the questionnaire.

Table 5.29

Teacher Group Associations on the Personal Practice of RECs and RETs Categorical Variables.

Variable	Type of Respondent REC'S compared to RET'S
Passages used this year	Significant Association
Passage used in last month	Non Significant Association
Why passage chosen	Significant Association
Understanding of passage	Significant Association
Aims in using passage	Non Significant Association
How passage communicated to students	Non Significant Association
Learning activities employed	Non Significant Association
Books/resources used in own preparation	Significant Association
Book/curriculum materials used in presenting	Non Significant Association
How related to student's experience	Significant Association
Other comments - Positive	Non Significant Association
Other comments - Negative	Significant Association

Significant Association = p < .05, Non-Significant Association = p > .05.

Year Seven

Passages of Scripture Used this Year and in the last Month

A total of ten RECs and 13 RETs indicated that they would answer these questions on personal practice in relation to Year Seven. Table 5.30 indicates their responses to the request to indicate up to five passages of scripture that they had used with their Year Seven students this year:

Table 5.30

Year Seven-Scripture Used this Year.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Matthew	26	24	113.8
Mark	10	9.2	43
Luke	31	28.5	136.5
John	6	5.5	20.8
Acts of the Apostles	3	2.7	33
Paul's letters	2	1.8	10
Genesis	17	15.5	74.6
Exodus	6	5.5	25.4
Hebrew Scripture other than Gen & Ex	8	7.3	35.4
Total	**109**	**100**	**492.6**

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, six of the ten RECs indicated a gospel, with four indicating a passage from the gospel of Luke and two a passage from the gospel of Mark. Four indicated a passage from the Hebrew Scriptures with two indicating a passage from the book of Genesis, one form the book of Exodus and one from the book of Ruth.

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, nine of the 13 RETs indicated a gospel passage with four indicating a passage from the gospel of Luke, three a passage from the gospel of Matthew and two a passage from the gospel of John. Four indicated a passage from the Hebrew Scriptures, with two indicating a passage from the book of Genesis, one from the book of Exodus and one from the first book of Kings.

Why Chosen

Respondents were then asked why the passage they nominated was chosen for use with their class**.** Table 5.31 indicates their responses (up to two reasons were recorded per respondent):

Table 5.31

Year Seven, Why Scripture was Chosen for Use with Students.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
To support theme/topic	14	56	60.75
To enhance personal faith/experience	2	8	8.85
To develop Biblical Literacy	4	16	18.85
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	4	16	16.5
Syllabus	**1**	**4**	**3.85**
Total	**25**	**100**	**108.8**

Understanding of the Text

Table 5.32 indicates responses to the question, "What is your understanding of the text chosen for study with students?" This question was asked in order to gain further evidence of why scripture is used with students and in particular to see if teachers' understanding of the text reflected a modern biblical understanding.

Table 5.32

Year Seven, Understanding of Text Chosen.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Thematic understanding	15	71.4	72.3
Summary of text	6	28.6	27.7
Total	**21**	**100**	**100**

Aims in Using the Text

Further clarification of the use of these passages was sought with the question, "What were your aims in using this passage with your students?" It was expected that there would be a similarity between responses to this question and those given to the question on why the passage was chosen for use, as well as with the general question asked earlier about why the respondents used scripture with students.

Table 5.33 indicates the responses of those who completed this section in relation to Year Seven. Up to four aims were recorded per respondent:

Table 5.33

Year Seven, Aims in Using Selected Passage with Students.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
To support theme	21	42.8	90
To develop biblical literacy	6	12.2	26.5
To enhance personal faith	16	32.8	71.9
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	6	12.2	24.3
Total	**49**	**100**	**212.7**

Communication of Text

Respondents were then asked how they communicated their passage of scripture to the students. Table 5.34 indicates their responses and up to four aims were recorded per respondent:

Table 5.34

Year Seven, Communication of Scripture

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Read	18	35.3	79.6
Discuss	10	19.6	40.8
Role Play/Drama	2	3.9	10
Teacher Explanation	8	15.7	35.4
Through Liturgy	1	2	5
Drawing/Art	3	5.8	13.9
Personal Experience	2	3.9	7.7
Exegetical Analysis	1	2	3.9
Other	6	11.8	26.6
Total	**51**	**100**	**222.9**

Learning Activities Employed

In an attempt to gain a fuller picture of the methods employed in the classroom with scripture, respondents were asked to expand on their methods of communication

by the question, "What learning activities did you employ?" Table 5.35 indicates their responses, up to four responses per respondent were recorded:

Table 5.35

Year Seven, Learning Activities Employed

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Reading	4	7	17.7
Discussion	6	10.5	27.7
Role Play	4	7	16.5
Answering Question	9	15.8	41.5
Exegesis	2	3.5	10
Creative Responses	13	22.8	55.8
Other	19	33.4	76.5
Total	57	100	245.7

Resources in Respondents' Preparation

Respondents were then asked to indicate the resources/books they found useful in their own preparation for the use of the text that they had indicated. This question was designed to enable a fuller picture of how the teacher prepared for the class, and developed the learning activities and communication methods indicated earlier. This question could also be compared with the earlier question, where RECs were asked to indicate five of the most used resources available to teachers in the school for using scripture with students. Table 5.36 indicates their responses. Three respondents did not complete this section while up to four resources were recorded for the other respondents.

Table 5.36

Year Seven, Resources Used in Preparation.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Bible	5	11	28
Biblical Reference Texts	2	4.5	14.3
Biblical/theological books/articles	9	20	56.5
Guidelines	5	11	28
Student Texts	12	26.7	70
None	2	4.5	11.7
Other	10	22.3	48.2
Total	**45**	**100**	**256.7**

Book/Curriculum Materials Useful in Presenting Passage to Students

Further information was sought about classroom practice by asking respondents to indicate any books/curriculum materials that they found useful in presenting their passages of scripture to students. Table 5.37 indicates their responses. Up to four responses were recorded for the other seven respondents.

Table 5.37

Year Seven, Books/Curriculum Materials Found Useful.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Bible	3	10	14.9
Biblical Reference Texts	4	13.3	22
Student Texts	11	36.7	65.4
School produced texts	1	3.4	3.8
None	2	6.6	7.7
Own resources	2	6.6	7.7
Biblical/Theological books/articles	1	3.4	3.8
Other	6	20	29.7
Total	**30**	**100**	**155**

Students' Experience Related to Passage

In order to complete the picture of classroom practice, respondents were asked, "How did you relate your students' experience to this passage of scripture?" Table 5.38 indicates their responses. In all, five of the twenty-three respondents for Year Seven did not complete this section. Up to four responses were recorded for the other eight respondents.

Table 5.38

RE Teachers-Year 7, Relating to Students' Experience

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Questions/Discussion relating to students' personal experience	13	48.2	72.5
Questions/Discussion relating to global issues	3	11	17.5
Teacher explanation	6	22.3	36.3
Retell in contemporary situation	3	11	15
Prayer	2	7.5	10
Total	**27**	**100**	**151.3**

Year Eight

Passages of Scripture Used this Year and in the Last Month

A total of eight RECs and 19 RETs indicated that they would answer the questions on personal practice in relation to Year Eight. Table 5.39 indicates their responses to the request to indicate up to five passages of scripture that they had used with their Year Eight students this year:

Table 5.39

Year Eight-Scripture Used this Year.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Matthew	23	18	78.6
Mark	5	4	20.4
Luke	35	27.4	139.2
John	8	6.3	28.3
Acts of the Apostles	10	7.8	33.5
Paul's Letters	2	1.6	8.9
Genesis	26	20	104.6
Exodus	8	6.3	24.7
Hebrew Scripture other than Gen & Ex	9	7	34.6
Student's own choice	2	1.6	5.3
Total	128	100	478.1

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, six of the eight RECs indicated a gospel and three indicated a passage from the gospel of Luke, while there were single references to passages from the gospels of Matthew, Mark and John. One REC indicated a reference from the Acts of the Apostles, and one indicated a passage from the Hebrew Scriptures i.e., from the Book of Ruth.

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, a total of 15 of the 19 RETs indicated a gospel, with seven indicating a passage from the gospel of Matthew, five a passage from the gospel of Luke and two a passage from the gospel of John. One respondent indicated "Parable of the Sower" without indicating which gospel. Other Christian Scriptures quoted were from the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Two indicated passages from the Hebrew Scriptures – the books of Genesis and Isaiah. Of the seven references to Matthew's gospel four were to the Beatitudes (Matt 5: 1-12). Two of

the five references to Luke's gospel were to the Annunciation by Gabriel to Mary (Lk 1: 26-38).

Why Chosen

Respondents were then asked why the passage they nominated was chosen for use with their class. Table 5.40 indicates their responses and up to two reasons were recorded per respondent:

Table 5.40

Year Eight, Why Scripture was Chosen for Use with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To support theme/topic	22	78.6	76
To develop Biblical Literacy	1	3.6	6.3
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	4	14.2	21.4
Personal Experience	1	**3.6**	**6.3**
Total	**28**	**100**	**110**

Understanding of the Text

Table 5.41 indicates responses to the question, "What is your understanding of the text chosen for study with students?"

Table 5.41

Year Eight, Understanding of Text Chosen.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Modern biblical	1	5.6	6.3
Commentary	1	5.6	6.3
Thematic understanding	11	61	60
Summary of text	5	27.8	27.4
Total	**18**	**100**	**100**

Aims in Using the text

Table 5.42 indicates the responses of those who completed this section in relation to Year Eight, up to four aims were recorded per respondent:

Table 5.42

Year Eight, Aims in Using Selected Passage with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To support theme	32	54.3	111.3
To develop biblical literacy	2	3.4	5.3
To enhance personal faith	16	27	69
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	5	8.5	22
Class control	1	1.7	2.6
Other	3	5.1	21.5
Total	59	100	231.7

Communication of Text

Respondents were then asked how they communicated their passage of scripture to the students. Table 5.43 indicates their responses, up to four responses per respondent were recorded:

Table 5.43

Year Eight, Communication of Scripture.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Read	19	31	64.5
Discuss	11	18	29
Relate to personal experience of student	3	5	8
Role play/drama	8	13.1	35.5
Teacher Explanation	4	6.5	10.5
Exegetical analysis	3	5	11.5
Through Liturgy	3	5	15.2
Drawing/Art	1	1.6	6.3
Other	9	14.8	34.5
Total	61	100	215

Learning activities Employed

Respondents were asked to expand on their methods of communication by the question, "What learning activities did you employ?" Table 5.44 indicates their responses, up to four responses per respondent were recorded:

Table 5.44

Year Eight, Learning Activities Employed.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Reading	6	10.7	23
Discussion	10	17.9	37.2
Role Play	6	10.7	19.4
Answering Question	4	7.1	14.1
Audio Visual	1	1.8	6.3
Creative Responses	9	16	38
Other	20	35.8	67
Total	**56**	**100**	**205**

Resources in Respondents Preparation

Table 5.45 indicates the responses of RECs and RETs to questions about the resources they used in preparing to teach the particular text. Two respondents did not complete this section while up to four responses per respondent were recorded:

Table 5.45

Year Eight, Resources in Preparation.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Bible	9	21.4	36.4
Biblical Reference Texts	1	2.4	3
Biblical/theological books/articles	3	7.1	15.5
Guidelines	1	2.4	3
Student Texts	13	31	61.4
None	3	7.1	12.2
Personal Knowledge	2	4.8	5.9
Other	10	23.8	39.4
Total	**42**	**100**	**176.8**

Book/Curriculum Materials Useful in Presenting Passage to Students

Table 5.46 indicates RECs responses. Three respondents of those who completed this section for Year Eight did not complete this question. Up to four responses were recorded for the other respondents:

Table 5.46

Year Eight, Books/Curriculum Materials Found Useful.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bible	10	27	35.3
Student Texts	11	29.7	54.5
None	1	2.7	7.2
School produced texts	2	5.5	6.3
Other	13	35.1	48.7
Total	37	100	152

Students' Experience Related to Passage

Table 5.47 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses, four of the twenty-seven respondents for Year Eight did not complete this section. Up to four responses were recorded for the other twenty-three respondents:

Table 5.47

Year Eight, Relating to Students' Experience.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Questions/Discussion relating to students' personal experience	18	64.2	84.4
Questions/Discussion relating to global issues	4	14.3	20.6
Teacher explanation	5	17.9	15.6
Prayer	1	3.6	3.2
Total	28	100	123.8

Year Nine

Passages of Scripture Used this Year and in the Past Month

In all eight RECs and 20 RETs indicated that they would answer these questions on personal practice in relation to Year Nine. Table 5.48 indicates their responses to the request to indicate up to five passages of scripture that they had used with their Year Nine students this year:

Table 5.48

Year Nine-Scripture Used this Year.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Matthew	14	12.1	57.7
Mark	15	13.1	51
Luke	23	20	97.5
John	8	7	40
General Gospel Reference	3	2.6	8.8
Acts of the Apostles	2	1.7	5.9
Paul's Letters	6	5.2	24.3
Other Christian Scripture	4	3.5	15
Genesis	13	11.3	58
Exodus	8	7	33.5
Psalms	4	3.5	11.8
Prophets	3	2.6	8.8
Ecclesiastes	2	1.7	5.9
Other Hebrew Scripture	10	8.7	49.3
Total	115	100	467.5

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, six of the eight RECs indicated a gospel, with two indicating a passage from the gospel of Matthew while there were two references to the gospel of Luke and two to the gospel of John. One indicated a reference from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and one from the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Scriptures.

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, eight of the 20 RETs indicated a gospel, with six indicating a passage

from the gospel of Luke and one each from the gospels of Matthew and Mark. Other Christian Scriptures quoted were St. Paul's Letters (five references) and the book of Revelation. Four indicated passages from the Hebrew Scriptures, that is, the books of Genesis, Exodus, Psalms and Sirach. Two respondents did not answer this question.

Why Chosen

Respondents were then asked why the passage they nominated was chosen for use with their class. Table 5.49 indicates their responses and up to two reasons were recorded per respondent:

Table 5.49

Year Nine, Why Scripture was Chosen for Use with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To support theme/topic	19	70.4	73.6
To enhance personal faith/experience	2	7.4	9
To develop Biblical Literacy	3	11.1	11.8
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	3	11.1	11.8
Total	27	100	106.2

Understanding of the Text

Table 5.50 indicates responses to the question, "What is your understanding of the text chosen for study with students?"

Table 5.50

Year Nine, Understanding of Text Chosen.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Modern biblical	1	5.3	7.2
Commentary	4	21	19.6
Thematic understanding	10	52.7	53.6
Summary of text	4	21	19.6
Total	19	100	100

Aims in Using the Text

Table 5.51 indicates the responses of RECs and RETs who completed this section in relation to Year Nine. Up to four aims were recorded per respondent:

Table 5.51

Year Nine, Aims in Using Selected Passage with Students.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
To support theme	28	49	109
To develop biblical literacy	5	8.8	21
To enhance personal faith	17	30	54.2
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	1	1.7	2.8
Other	6	10.5	16.7
Total	**57**	**100**	**203.7**

Communication of Text

Table 5.52 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses, up to four responses per respondent were recorded:

Table 5.52

Year Nine, Communication of Scripture.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Read	17	28.8	64.6
Discuss	9	15.3	38.9
Relate to personal experience of student	2	3.4	5.5
Role play/drama	2	3.4	5.5
Teacher Explanation	5	8.5	20.9
Exegetical analysis	2	3.4	9
Through Liturgy	2	3.4	5.5
Drawing/Art	1	1.7	6.3
Other	19	32.1	77.1
Total	**59**	**100**	**233.3**

Learning Activities Employed

Table 5.53 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses, up to four responses per respondent were recorded:

Table 5.53

Year Nine, Learning Activities Employed.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Reading	4	6.3	10.6
Discussion	9	14.3	34.6
Role Play	5	7.9	13.1
Answering Question	7	11.1	33
Exegesis	2	3.2	5.3
Creative Responses	15	23.8	50.4
Audio Visual	1	1.6	6.3
Other	20	31.8	67.1
Total	**63**	**100**	**220.4**

Resources in Respondents Preparation

Table 5.54 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses, two did not complete this section while up to four resources were recorded for the other respondents:

Table 5.54

Year Nine, Resources in Preparation.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Bible	9	20.5	36
Biblical Reference Texts	5	11.4	19.5
Biblical/theological books/articles	3	6.8	14
Guidelines	3	6.8	14
Student Texts	7	16	36
Personal Knowledge	4	9	33.4
School produced	1	2.3	8.4
None	2	4.5	2.3
Other	10	22.7	11.4
Total	**44**	**100**	**175**

Book/Curriculum Materials Useful in Presenting Passage to Students

Table 5.55 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses. Seven of the respondents did not complete this question. Up to four responses were recorded for the other respondents.

Table 5.55

Year Nine, Books/Curriculum Materials Found Useful.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bible	8	21.7	38.8
Biblical Reference Text	3	8	16.3
Student Texts	7	19	42.5
School produced texts	3	8	16.3
None	5	13.5	15.7
Own Resources	2	5.4	6.3
Biblical/theological books/articles	2	5.4	13.2
Other	7	19	35.7
Total	37	100	184.8

Students' Experience Related to Passage

Table 5.56 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses. In all nine of the 28 respondents for Year Nine did not complete this section. Up to four responses were recorded for the other respondents.

Table 5.56

Year Nine, Relating to Students' Experience.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Questions/Discussion relating to students' personal experience	14	61	76.2
Questions/Discussion relating to global issues	4	17.4	22.7
Teacher explanation	4	17.4	16.7
Prayer	1	4.2	2.1
Total	23	100	117.7

Year Ten

Passages of Scripture Used this Year and in the Last Month

Twelve RECs and six RETs indicated that they would answer these questions on personal practice in relation to Year Ten. Table 5.57 indicates their responses to the request to indicate up to five passages of scripture that they had used with their Year Ten students this year:

Table 5.57

Year Ten-Scripture Used this Year.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Matthew	13	16.5	79.2
Mark	9	11.4	62.5
Luke	23	29.1	125
John	6	7.6	37.5
Gospel: Beatitudes	1	1.3	4.2
Paul's Letters	6	7.6	33.3
James	1	1.3	4.2
Genesis	8	10	45.9
Exodus	3	3.8	12.5
Hebrew Scripture other than Genesis & Exodus	9	11.4	41.7
Total	**79**	**100**	**446**

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, seven of the 12 RECs indicated a gospel, with four indicating a passage from the gospel of Luke, while there were single references to the gospels of Matthew, Mark and John. There was one reference to St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. The Hebrew Scriptures were referred to by four respondents (two references to the book of Genesis and one each to the books of Exodus and the Psalms).

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, three of the six RETs indicated a gospel (one reference each for the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke). There was one reference to St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, making a total of four of the six relating to the Christian Scriptures. Two indicated passages from the Hebrew Scriptures and both were references to the creation stories in the book of Genesis (Gen 1:1-2:25).

Why Chosen

Respondents were then asked why the passage they nominated was chosen for use with their class. Table 5.58 indicates their responses.

Table 5.58

Year Ten, Why Scripture was Chosen for Use with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To support theme/topic	11	58	58.3
To develop Biblical Literacy	3	15.8	21
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	4	21	21
Credo of Jesus	1	5.2	4.2
Total	**19**	**100**	**104.5**

Understanding of the Text

Table 5.59 indicates responses to the question, "What is your understanding of the text chosen for study with students?"

Table 5.59

Year Ten, Understanding of Text Chosen.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Modern Biblical	2	12.5	14.5
Thematic understanding	10	62.5	56.4
Summary of text	4	25	29.1
Total	**16**	**100**	**100**

Aims in Using the Text

Table 5.60 indicates the responses of RECs and RETs who completed this section in relation to Year Ten. Up to four aims were recorded per respondent:

Table 5.60

Year Ten, Aims in Using Selected Passage with students.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
To support theme	16	47	71
To enhance personal faith	9	26.4	62.5
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	2	6	8.4
Fundraising	1	3	4.1
Biblical literacy	4	11.6	33.3
Other	2	6	16.7
Total	**34**	**100**	**196**

Communication of Text

Table 5.61 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses, up to four aims were recorded per respondent:

Table 5.61

Year Ten, Communication of Scripture.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Read	16	39	91.7
Discuss	6	14.6	33.3
Exegetical Analysis	2	4.9	8.4
Teacher Explanation	4	9.8	25
Relate to personal experience of student	1	2.4	4.2
Role play/Drama	3	7.3	12.5
Through Liturgy	2	4.9	12.5
Other	7	17.1	43.7
Total	**41**	**100**	**231.3**

Learning Activities Employed

Table 5.62 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses. Two respondents did not answer this question. Up to four responses were recorded for the other respondents.

Table 5.62

Year Ten, Learning Activities Employed.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Reading	6	17.6	40
Discussion	6	17.6	40
Answering Questions	4	11.8	26.7
Creative Responses	4	11.8	20
Role Play	2	5.9	10
Exegesis	3	8.8	21.7
Audio Visual	1	3	8.4
Other	8	23.5	40
Total	**34**	**100**	**206.8**

Resources in Respondents' Preparation

Table 5.63 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses. Five of the respondents did not complete this section and up to four resources were recorded for the nine who did.

Table 5.63

Year Ten, Resources in Preparation.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Bible	5	17.3	36.1
Biblical Reference Texts	3	10.3	16.7
Biblical/theological books/articles	7	24.1	52.8
Student Texts	6	20.7	36.2
Guidelines	2	7	16.7
Personal Knowledge	1	3.4	5.5
None	1	3.4	5.5
Teacher Manual on prayer	1	3.4	5.5
Video	1	3.4	5.5
Other	2	7	16.7
Total	**29**	**100**	**197.2**

Book/Curriculum Materials Useful in Presenting Passage to Students

Table 5.64 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses. Two of the respondents did not complete this question. Up to four responses were recorded for the other respondents.

Table 5.64

Year Ten, Books/Curriculum Materials Found Useful.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Bible	5	17.8	31.7
Biblical Reference Text	6	21.4	36.7
Student Texts	3	10.7	15
None	3	10.7	18.3
Biblical/theological books/articles	5	17.9	43.3
School produced	1	3.6	8.3
Other	5	17.9	45
Total	**28**	**100**	**198.3**

Students' Experience Related to Passage

Table 5.65 indicates RECs' and RETs' responses. Three of the respondents for Year Ten did not complete this section. Up to four responses were recorded for the other respondents.

Table 5.65

Year Ten, Relating to Students' Experience.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Questions/Discussion relating to students' personal experience	11	57.9	69.5
Questions/Discussion relating to global issues	3	15.8	16.7
Retell in contemporary situation	3	15.8	25
Teacher explanation	2	10.5	16.7
Total	**19**	**100**	**127.9**

Year 11

Passages of Scripture Used this Year and in the Last Month

Fifteen RECs indicated that they would answer these questions on personal practice in relation to Year 11. Table 5.66 indicates their responses to the request to indicate up to five passages of scripture that they had used with their Year 11 students this year:

Table 5.66

RECs: Year 11-Scripture Used this Year.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Matthew	7	10.6	50
Mark	3	4.5	21.4
Luke	22	33.4	157.1
John	8	12.2	57.1
Paul	1	1.5	7.1
1 John	1	1.5	7.1
Revelation	2	3	14.2
Genesis	9	13.6	64.3
Exodus	4	6.1	28.6
Hebrew Scripture other than Genesis & Exodus	9	13.6	64.3
Total	**66**	**100**	**471.6**

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, nine of the 15 respondents indicated a gospel, with five indicating a passage from the gospel of Luke while there were two references each to the gospels of Matthew and John. The Hebrew Scriptures were referred to by five respondents (two references to the book of Genesis and one each to the books of Micah, Isaiah and 1 Kings).

Why Chosen

Respondents were then asked why the passage they nominated was chosen for use with their class. Table 5.67 indicates RECs' responses. In all, two of the 15 respondents for Year 11 did not answer this question. One reason was recorded for each of the 13 respondents.

Table 5.67

RECs-Year 11, Why Scripture was Chosen for Use with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To support theme/topic	4	30.8	30.8
To develop Biblical Literacy	2	15.4	15.4
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	2	15.4	15.4
Required for T&T or R&S	4	30.8	30.8
To enhance personal faith	1	7.6	7.6
Total	**13**	**100**	**100**

Understanding of the Text

Table 5.68 indicates responses to the question, "What is your understanding of the text chosen for study with students?"

Table 5.68

RECs-Year 11, Understanding of Text Chosen.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Thematic understanding	6	46	46
Modern biblical	7	54	54
Total	**13**	**100**	**100**

Aims in Using the Text

Table 5.69 indicates the responses of RECs who completed this section in relation to Year 11 (up to four aims were recorded per respondent):

Table 5.69

RECs-Year 11, Aims in Using Selected Passage with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To support theme	10	29.4	66.7
To enhance personal faith	8	23.6	53.3
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	2	5.9	13.3
To develop Biblical literacy	11	32.3	73.3
To support teaching of T&T/R&S	3	8.8	20
Total	**34**	**100**	**226.6**

Communication of Text

Table 5.70 indicates RECs' responses. Only one respondent did not answer this question. Up to four responses per respondent were recorded for the other 14 respondents.

Table 5.70

RECs-Year 11, Communication of Scripture.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Read	8	21.1	57.1
Discuss	4	10.5	28.6
Exegetical Analysis	6	15.8	42.9
Teacher Explanation	4	10.5	28.6
Relate to personal experience of student	4	10.5	28.6
Role play/Drama	4	10.5	28.6
Through Liturgy	1	2.6	7.1
Other	7	18.4	50
Total	**38**	**100**	**271.4**

Learning Activities Employed

Table 5.71 indicates RECs' responses Only one respondent did not answer this question. Up to four responses were recorded for the 14 other respondents.

Table 5.71

RECs-Year 11, Learning Activities Employed.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Reading	4	12.1	28.6
Discussion	3	9.1	21.4
Answering Questions	3	9.1	21.4
Role Play	1	3	7.1
Exegesis	5	15.2	35.7
Creative responses	3	9.1	21.4
Audio visual	2	6.1	14.3
Other	12	36.4	85.7
Total	**33**	**100**	**235.7**

Resources in Respondents Preparation

Table 5.72 indicates RECs' responses. In all, two of the 15 respondents did not complete this section. Up to four resources were recorded for the nine who did.

Table 5.72

RECs-Year 11, Resources in Preparation.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bible	1	3.5	7.7
Biblical Reference Texts	7	24.1	53.8
Biblical/theological books/articles	10	34.5	76.9
Student Texts	4	13.8	30.8
Personal Knowledge	3	10.3	23.1
Other	4	13.8	30.8
Total	**29**	**100**	**223.1**

Book/Curriculum Materials Useful in Presenting Passage to Students

Table 5.73 indicates RECs' responses. In all two of the 15 respondents did not complete this question. Up to four responses were recorded for the other 13 respondents.

Table 5.73

RECs-Year 11 Books/Curriculum Materials Found Useful.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Bible	2	8.4	15.4
Student Texts	6	25	46.2
None	2	8.3	15.4
Biblical/theological books/articles	6	25	46.2
Own Resources	2	8.3	15.4
Other	6	25	46.2
Total	**24**	**100**	**184.8**

Students' Experience Related to Passage

To complete the picture of classroom practice, respondents were asked, "How did you relate your students' experience to this passage of scripture?" Table 5.74 indicates RECs' responses. Two of the 15 respondents for Year 11 did not complete this section. Up to four responses were recorded for the other 13 respondents.

Table 5.74

RECs-Year 11, Relating to Students' Experience.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Questions/Discussion relating to students' personal experience	12	60	92.3
Questions/Discussion relating to global issues	4	20	30.8
Prayer	2	10	15.4
Teacher explanation	2	10	15.4
Total	**20**	**100**	**153.8**

Year 12

Passages of Scripture Used this Year and in the Last Month

In all, 11 RECs indicated that they would answer these questions on personal practice in relation to Year 12. Table 5.75 indicates their responses to the request to

indicate up to five passages of scripture that they had used with their Year 12 students this year:

Table 5.75

RECs: Year 12-Scripture Used this Year.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Matthew	5	10	45.5
Mark	2	4	18.2
Luke	16	32	145.5
John	8	16	72.7
Parables in 3 Gospels	1	2	9.1
Paul	1	2	9.1
Genesis	11	22	100
Exodus	2	4	18.2
Hebrew Scripture other than Genesis & Exodus	4	8	36.4
Total	**50**	**100**	**454.7**

When asked to then nominate a passage of scripture used with students in the past month, seven of the 11 respondents indicated a gospel, with three each indicating passages from the gospels of Luke and John. There was one reference to the gospel of Mark. The Hebrew Scriptures were referred to by three respondents, all quoting the creation stories in the book of Genesis (1:1-2:25). One respondent did not indicate a passage used in the last month.

Why Chosen

Respondents were then asked why the passage they nominated was chosen for use with their class**.** Table 5.76 indicates RECs' responses. One of the 11 respondents for Year 12 did not answer this question. One reason was recorded for each of the other ten respondents.

Table 5.76

RECs-Year 12, Why Scripture was Chosen for Use with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To support theme/topic	2	20	20
Foundation/source of tradition	1	10	10
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	2	20	20
Required for T&T or R&S	5	50	50
Total	**10**	**100**	**100**

Understanding of the Text

Table 5.77 indicates responses to the question, "What is your understanding of the text chosen for study with students?"

Table 5.77

RECs -Year 12, Understanding of Text Chosen.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Modern biblical	1	11.1	11.1
Thematic understanding	5	55.6	55.6
Summary of text	3	33.3	33.3
Total	**9**	**100**	**100**

Aims in Using the Text

Table 5.78 indicates the responses of RECs who completed this section in relation to Year 12. One respondent did not answer this question. For the other ten respondents up to four aims were recorded per respondent.

Table 5.78

RECs-Year 12, Aims in Using Selected Passage with Students.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To support theme	7	35	70
To enhance personal faith	6	30	60
To develop Biblical literacy	6	30	60
To support teaching of T&T/R&S	1	5	10
Total	**20**	**100**	**200**

Communication of Text

Table 5.79 indicates RECs' responses. One respondent did not answer this question. Up to four responses per respondent were recorded for the other 14 respondents.

Table 5.79

RECs-Year 12, Communication of Scripture.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Read	7	30.4	70
Discuss	6	26.1	60
Exegetical Analysis	2	8.7	20
Teacher Explanation	2	8.7	20
Relate to personal experience of student	1	4.3	10
Other	5	21.7	50
Total	**23**	**100**	**230**

Learning Activities Employed

Table 5.80 indicates RECs' responses. One respondent did not answer this question and up to four responses were recorded for the 14 other respondents.

Table 5.80

RECs-Year 12, Learning Activities Employed.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Reading	1	5.3	11.1
Discussion	2	10.5	22.2
Answering Questions	3	15.8	33.3
Role Play	2	10.5	22.2
Exegesis	2	10.5	22.2
Creative responses	4	21.1	44.4
Other	5	26.3	55.6
Total	**19**	**100**	**211.1**

Resources in Respondents' Preparation

Table 5.81 indicates RECs' responses. In all two of the 11 respondents did not complete this section. Up to four resources were recorded for the nine who did.

Table 5.81

RECs-Year 12, Resources in Preparation.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bible	2	13.3	22.2
Biblical Reference Texts	1	6.7	11.1
Biblical/theological books/articles	6	40	66.6
None	1	6.7	11.1
Personal Knowledge	1	6.7	11.1
Other	4	26.7	44.4
Total	**15**	**100**	**166.5**

Book/Curriculum Materials Useful in Presenting Passage to Students

Table 5.82 indicates RECs' responses. In all, three of the 11 respondents did not complete this question. Up to four responses were recorded for the other eight respondents.

Table 5.82

RECs-Year 12 Books/Curriculum Materials Found Useful.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bible	3	23	37.5
Student Texts	1	7.2	12.5
Biblical reference texts	1	7.2	12.5
Biblical/theological books/articles	1	7.1	12.5
School produced texts	1	7.1	12.5
Own Resources	1	7.1	12.5
Other	6	46.1	75
Total	13	100	175

Students' Experience Related to Passage

Table 5.83 indicates RECs' responses. Three of the 11 respondents for Year

12 did not complete this section and up to four responses were recorded for the other

13 respondents.

Table 5.83

RECs-Year 12, Relating to Students' Experience.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Questions/Discussion relating to students' personal experience	7	43.8	87.5
Questions/Discussion relating to global issues	1	6.3	12.5
Prayer	2	12.5	25
Teacher explanation	6	37.5	75
Total	16	100	200

Other Responses

Religious Education Co-ordinators

One REC failed to indicate the year level referred to for personal practice and

his/her responses are recorded here. The five passages of scripture listed as used this

year with students were passages from the gospel of Matthew Chapter Five (The Beatitudes), the gospel of Luke Chapter Thirteen (Parables), the Acts of the Apostles Chapter Eleven (The Council of Jerusalem), the first book of Samuel Chapter Sixteen (Anointing of David) and the book of the prophet Ezekiel Chapter Two (Ezekiel's Call).

The passage chosen as used with students in the past month was the first book of Samuel 16: 1-13, the anointing of David. This passage was chosen to develop biblical literacy: "to illustrate the use of type of writing and context typically found in historical books". However, when asked to explain their understanding of the text a summary appears to be given: "This recalls the life of David as one of the great leaders of Israel. David – and Solomon represent the zenith of Israelite power before the era of division and exile".

The aim stated for using this passage appeared to support the enhancing of personal faith: "To get them familiar with the story of David, especially the idea of David as not just a political leader but an anointed King and the consolation that this has". The passage was communicated to students through comprehension questions, an illustrated handout and a role-play. The respondent used "Crotty's Books"[18] but indicated that no materials were useful in presenting the passage to students.

Religious Education Teachers

The letter to Principals accompanying the questionnaire specifically asked that the RE teacher survey be completed only by teachers from Years Seven to Ten.

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[18] see p. 208 for an analysis of Crotty's student text, "Introduction to the Gospels".

However, one RE teacher did complete the questionnaire for Year 11. His or her responses are recorded here.

The five passages of scripture listed as used this year with students were two passages from the gospel of Matthew, two from the gospel of Mark and a reference to St Paul's letter to the Colossians. All are references to Christian Scripture.

The passage chosen as used with students in the past month was Matthew 22: 34-40, the Greatest Commandment. This passages was chosen to support the theme being studied: "Appropriate to context: Ethics – Foundation for all law and morality". This thematic approach is reinforced by an understanding of the passage based on this theme: "Foundational and context of all law is a covenant relationship with vertical and horizontal dimensions (vertical – God and Creation, Horizontal – all creatures, especially human beings).

The aim stated for using this passage also supported the theme: "The sense of law engendering freedom – marking boundaries rather than providing exacting and obliging behaviour". The passage was communicated to students through reading and was then used in discussion and to write an essay as part of a work requirement i.e., it was used as an assessment task.

The respondent used the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1990) and lecture notes to prepare, but did not use any materials in presenting the passage to students. The respondent drew on the students' personal experience to help relate the passage to them.

Summary of Findings

The General Use of Scripture in Victorian Catholic Secondary Schools

Table 5.84 summarises the major findings concerning the general comments made by RECs and RETs of Years Seven to Ten regarding scripture use in Catholic secondary schools in Victoria in October, 1999.

Table 5.84

Summary of Responses on General Scripture Use.

Percentage of schools that require students to purchase a bible	95.5%
Percentage of schools that require students to retain their bible throughout their schooling	91%
Most frequently used translations of scriptures	Good News 67% NRSV 25.5%
Percentage of schools that teach units on scripture	86.6%
Major topics taught on scripture in Years 7 to 10	Introduction to the bible Hebrew scriptures Christian scriptures Gospels Thematic units
Main resources available	Student text 133.9%[19] Biblical reference texts 67.8% Teacher theology text 47.5% Bible 33.9%
Scripture in Years 11 to 12	Percentage of schools that teach Texts & Traditions 52.2%
Percentage of T&T units taught	Units 1&2 55% Units 3&4 12.5% All units 22.5%
Year levels at which T&T is taught	Year 11 only 41.4% Years 11 & 12 24.1% Year 12 only 20.7%
Non T&T students	67% of schools had students not doing any T&T
	45.2 % of schools had more than

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[19] RECs were asked to indicate up to five main resources used in the teaching of scripture. Therefore, 133.9% indicates that a number of respondents mentioned a "Student Text" more than once. On average, respondents mentioned a student text 1.3 times in their list of five items.

	90% not doing T&T
	28.6% of schools had 61% to 81 % not doing any T&T
Non T&T students do	other VCE units 89.8%
	R&S combined with school based 29.8%
	R&S units 1/2 19.1%; units 3/4 12.8%; units 1-4 12.8%
Year level taught	Year 11 and 12 75%; Year 11 only 12.5%; Year 12 only 4.2 %
Topics on scripture taught in Years 11 & 12	In R&S 33.3%, in themes 33.3% and in R&S combined with themes 33.3%

The Specific Use of Scripture by Respondents in their Own Classrooms

Table 5.85 summarises the major findings concerning the specific use of scripture by RECs and religious education teachers of Years Seven to Ten in their own classrooms in Catholic secondary schools in Victoria in October, 1999.

Table 5.85

Summary of Major Responses Concerning the Personal Practice of Respondents.

Scripture used with students this year	Gospels 60.4%
Scripture used with students in the past month	Gospels 64.45%
Major reason why passage was chosen	Support the theme or topic 61.3%
Major aim in choosing passage	Support the theme or topic 95.8%
Respondents understanding of passage chosen	Thematic understanding 57.1%
Major means of communicating passage to students	Reading 30.8% Discussion 16.8%
Major learning activities employed	Reading 23.7% Discussion 28% Answering questions 25.45% Creative 40.7%
How passage was related to students' experience	Related to students personal experience 95.9% Related to global issues 19.4%
Resources used in preparation	Student text 40.6% Biblical/theological articles 35.9%
Books/curriculum materials used with students	Student text 37.9% Bible 30.1%

All findings will now be scrutinised in the following two chapters, where particular patterns and issues that emerge from these findings will be the subject of discussion and analysis. Chapter Six will discuss and analyse data presented on general school practice while Chapter Seven will discuss and analyse data presented on the personal classroom practice of respondents.

CHAPTER 6: A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SCRIPTURE USE IN VICTORIAN

CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS – AN ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS (1)

Introduction

This chapter discusses and analyses the data presented in Chapter Five on

general school practice in the teaching of scripture as indicated by RECs and religious

education teachers (RETs) of Years Seven to Ten. This is data generated from the

questions concerning the influence of scripture in the life of respondents (2a)[20], their

confidence in using scripture with students (2b), how often they use scripture in

religious education (6a & 3a), the sections of the bible they use (6b & 3b), factors

influencing sections of the bible used (6c & 3c), whether they require students to

bring a bible to class and how often (6d, e, f & 3d, e, f) and the general question as to

why they use scripture with students (7 & 4). In the analysis of this data, conclusions

are drawn about perceptions of the nature of religious education in these schools, the

impact of modern biblical scholarship within their religious education curricula, why

scripture is used, the thematic use of scripture and the problem of fundamentalism.

Chapter Seven then compares this data with respondents' personal classroom practice

and leads to a complete drawing together of findings which is provided in the final

chapter.

Teacher Confidence with Scripture

Teacher confidence in using scripture with students is very high. Most

respondents acknowledged that their confidence was based on more than one factor,

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[20] The numbers appearing in brackets relate to the number of the relevant question in the questionnaires
sent to schools. Where two numbers are indicated, the first number relates to the question number in
the questionnaire sent to RECs (Appendix B), the second number relates to the question number in the
questionnaire sent to RETs (Appendix A).

with postgraduate study, personal devotion and professional experience being the most important.

Postgraduate Study

Postgraduate study was considered the single most important factor with 88.7% of RECs and 72.1% of RETs mentioning it as a reason for confidence:

> Scripture study as part of GDRE & B. Theol. (Female, 42 yrs)

> I'm fairly confident because of specific study at Masters level.
> (Female, 44 yrs with Masters of Religious Education)

As one would expect, specific postgraduate studies in biblical studies has been the key form of study that has given teachers this confidence:

> I have just completed a Theology Degree majoring in Biblical Studies
> and whilst no expert, I do feel capable and very interested in the topic.
> I feel if it were a book I had not studied (of the Bible) I would know
> how to study it properly and where to go to do it. (Male, 42 yrs)

It has led to an increased awareness, interest and knowledge of how to use the bible:

> I have become much more aware and interested, and therefore, more
> confident since studying scripture as an <u>academic</u> pursuit, and after
> visiting Biblical Lands (with CTC[21]). (Female, 58 yrs with B. Theol.)

> Having studied theology and how to interpret scripture has made it
> easier: 1) to locate in the Bible, 2) to use when the situation arises
> where you can apply it to life. (Female, 52 yrs with B. Theol.)

The importance of postgraduate studies of scripture is further reinforced by the fact that 72.7% of the 10.5% of RECs and 62.5% of the 28.5% of RETs who indicated a lack of confidence in using scripture with students indicated it was because of lack of education in scripture and in teaching scripture:

Scripture is a discipline within itself and full understanding can only be developed through thorough and in depth (and up to date) scholarship. (Female, 37 yrs)

My tertiary education and teacher training in a non-Catholic institute did not allow me to develop a breadth and depth of knowledge in scriptures. (Female, 26 yrs)

It was also noted that even a Graduate Diploma in Religious Education and a

Bachelor of Theology, have their limitations and teachers can still lack confidence in

particular aspects of scripture use with students:

I feel quite confident teaching the New Testament but not very confident with the Old. My studies mainly concentrated on New Testament & I feel I lack background in O.T. (Female, 53 yrs)

Our teachers generally need more thorough grounding in scripture. Even the amount covered in Grad Dip RE is not enough. (Female, 55 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

The direct link between postgraduate studies and teacher confidence was

clearly acknowledged:

It is difficult for some RE staff (particularly those with little training) to have the confidence to use it because they lack knowledge and skills in interpretation, especially the use of Hebrew Scriptures. Increased and continuation of religious education sponsorship. (Female, 33 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

I think the use of scripture is vital but am concerned at the number of teachers who don't feel competent in this area. I also think it is very important that we teachers of RE keep up to date with scripture scholarship. This is difficult for teachers who teach one RE class and their main method is in another area. (Female, 57 yrs with Masters of Religious Education)

[21] Catholic Theological College, Melbourne, Australia.

Personal Devotion

Sixty percent of RECs and 46.5% of RETs who indicated a confidence in the use of scripture with students, indicated that this confidence was increased directly by their personal devotion to god and the bible. This was an acknowledgement that for many teachers, teaching scripture is not just an academic exercise but that it grows from their personal lives:

> It is integral to my personal life. It is fundamental to my faith. It is the basis of my relationship with Christ. It was a major in my degree and my favourite area of study. (Female, 45 yrs with B. Theol.)

> I am confident about using scripture – it is part of my own spirituality. The Gospel is central to our very being. (Female, 57 yrs)

Personal devotion has certain inherent problems as a factor in giving teachers confidence in using scripture with students. In discussing personal devotion as a factor which increases confidence, teachers are invariably drawn to comment on their own personal faith. This draws the conclusion that teachers are closely linking their personal faith to their RE classroom teaching practice. While the discussion of the nature of religious education in the Catholic school that was presented in Chapter Two of this thesis does not preclude this, problems arise if teachers are using scripture for catechetical purposes arising from personal devotion, rather than for the educational purposes that a clear conceptualisation of religious education requires. This would be particularly so if personal devotion were the sole motivating factor, and not combined with appropriate postgraduate study. This further highlights the need for religious education teachers to have a clear concept of the nature and purpose of religious education, one that goes well beyond the devotional view and that acknowledges the need to engage the cognitive skills of the students as well as the affective skills.

Of further concern is the issue of fundamentalism. Personal devotion to scripture without a foundation in biblical studies, leaves the classroom teacher in a position where scripture may be presented to students without the context that historical-critical method brings to the bible. If the historical-critical method is not applied to assist students to understand the context of the particular text, teachers may impose a literal, fundamentalist view of scripture on their students. Later analysis of data from the teachers' descriptions of their teaching/learning processes may confirm this.

Professional Experience

For some, confidence with scripture had come with teaching experience:

Experience in my teaching over the past 5 years. (Female, 27yrs)

However, this was not seen as sufficient on its own. Time in the teaching profession had enabled these teachers to work with bodies such as the Victorian Board of Studies (VBOS)[22], to do postgraduate studies or to build up experience in the RE classroom:

> Teach Texts and Traditions 3/4 and unit 1. Have written exam for VBOS for John's Gospel. (Male, 36 yrs with 11 yrs teaching experience)
>
> The post graduate study that I have done and my experience teaching RE over the years. (Male, 37 yrs)

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[22] The Victorian Board of Studies was at the time of this research, 1999, the governing body that oversaw the administration and assessment of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). In 2001, VBOS became the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

Other

While postgraduate studies, personal devotion and professional experience are the key factors in teacher confidence in using the bible with students in the classroom, there were many other factors that could have negative effects on this confidence. The students' attitude to the bible made some teachers wary of using it:

> It is always a challenge to make scripture seem relevant in a student's eyes. The bias against scripture/Bible is often the biggest hurdle. (42yrs with B. Theol.)

The need to make the bible relevant in the modern world caused concern for some teachers:

> I feel confident with using the material. However, it is often a skill in creativity to provide an appealing unit that will get the students really involved with the work. It must be made relevant to their world/state of affairs. (Female, 29 yrs)

> To many it is irrelevant in the materialist world. (Female, 58 yrs completing Master of Theol)

The multi-faith nature of a modern RE class caused one teacher to lack confidence:

> Many students from other faith backgrounds. (Female, 54 yrs)

Lack of resources was a cause of concern to some:

> I feel reasonably confident but feel there is a lack of user friendly resources with the year levels I teach. (Female, 46 yrs)

> The need for a more better understanding of the Old Testament stories. Perhaps a text for teacher and student that could help understand and describe the scriptures in simple language…like a study guide. (Female, 35 yrs)

This call for better resources is at odds with the detailed list of resources respondents have given in this research. This research demonstrates that respondents

are aware of the variety of biblical commentaries, theological articles and books as well as good student texts available to teachers of scripture. Questions arise about why the respondents appear to be ignorant of these. It may be that the particular school is not resourced well in this area, or has not offered the appropriate support these teachers need to teach scripture in the classroom.

Summary

Certain factors have been found to add to teachers' confidence in using scripture with students. Postgraduate study is the single most important factor, however it is clear that many other factors also have an effect. Personal devotion and professional experience are central, but student's attitudes, faith background as well as the resources available have an impact on teachers as they teach scripture with their students. As has been noted, there are potential problems when personal devotion or experience are the only factors in a teacher's confidence with the use of scripture.

School Policy on the Use of Scripture with Students

Only one school of the sixty-seven that responded had a policy on the use of scripture. This lack of a policy raises questions such as: from what sources comes the justification for requiring all students in most Catholic secondary schools in Victoria to purchase a bible in Year Seven, and be required to retain it throughout their secondary schooling? Where do RE teachers gain their understanding of the underlying purpose of this strategy of bible usage? That is, how do RE teachers come to know why they are to use the bible in the RE classroom? Perhaps these teachers find direction in the written curriculum or through time and experience in the profession.

Other issues that a school policy on scripture could help address include: The criteria for deciding what translation students are required to purchase, strategies for encouraging its use throughout Years Seven to 12, the place of critical biblical scholarship within the RE curriculum (in particular a comprehensive sequential approach to scripture studies from Year Seven to 12) and a warning about the inappropriateness of a fundamental, literal approach to the bible with students.

A school policy would be the appropriate document in which to find direction for the school, the RE curriculum and RE teachers on all the above issues. Without this policy schools may find that their teachers of religious education will not use the bible in their classes at all, or if they do, these teachers may follow an understanding of why to use the bible with students that is not based on the use of the historical-critical method or of an educational understanding of the nature of religious education.

Biblical Translations Used

The purchase of a bible by students in Year Seven was required in 95.5% of schools. This is to be commended, as this allows students the opportunity to learn the structure of the bible and to develop the skills necessary for research and personal use in later years.

However, the translation purchased by students at the direction of their schools suggests some issues for consideration. Seventy percent of schools indicated that students were required to purchase, "*The Good News Bible*". *The Good News Bible* began with the American Bible Society publishing in 1966, *The New Testament in Today's English Version*. It was intended, "for people everywhere for whom English is either their mother tongue or a language they learn" (United Bible Societies, 1979,

p. vii).   Shortly after this the same principles were applied to a translation of the

Hebrew Scriptures. In the preface the translators indicated that they, "tried to avoid

words and forms not in current or widespread use" (United Bible Societies, 1979, p.

viii) and they acknowledged that there has been no attempt to:

> Reproduce in English the parts of speech, sentence-structure, word-order, and grammatical devices of the original languages. (United Bible Societies, 1979, p. viii)

Fitzmyer (1990) states that *The Good News Bible* was translated with a view to

those who have English as a second language, and therefore it is a paraphrased text.

As Fitzmyer says:

> It reflects what happens when linguists with little historical or theological sense work on a text as complicated as the Greek NT. (1990, p. 62)

Fitzmyer considers that *The Good News Bible* has become popular because,

"of the prevalent low level of comprehension of the English language" (1990, p. 62).

Fitzmyer (1990, p. 62) and Brown (1997, p. xxxvi) both urge caution when

using this translation. Brown explains that it is a free translation that represents,

> a choice already made by translators as to what *they* (author's emphasis) think an obscure passage means—they have built a commentary into the translated text. (1997, p. xxxvi)

It appears that this, the most common translation of the bible used in Catholic

secondary schools in Victoria, abrogates the principles of the development of critical

intellectual skills deemed appropriate for religious education and biblical exegesis

today (cf. Chapters One and Two). This is especially so considering that previous

research outlined in Chapter Three indicates the readiness of students for critical

biblical study.

It is important to understand why the "Good News" translation of the bible is so popular in Victorian Catholic secondary schools. Perhaps it is because of the purpose teachers have in mind when reading the bible with students. One can read the bible as a private devotional tool, have it proclaimed in a public worship setting or use it for careful reading or study (Brown, 1997, p. xxxv). As Brown explains, if it is read in a public worship setting there needs to be a solemn tone therefore colloquial translations may not be appropriate. In a private devotional setting an eye-catching, user-friendly style may be appropriate whereas for a study setting a more literal translation is needed (Brown, 1997, p. xxxvi).

This suggests some important issues for this research. The "Good News" bible could be used because its user-friendly style is better suited to the purpose of schools, in having students use a bible in the RE class. This indicates that the use of the bible in the classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools is more for catechetical rather then educational purposes. The use of the bible to develop within students intellectual critical skills, by using the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship in the classroom, appears to be secondary to the catechetical purpose if we take the widespread use of *The Good News Bible* as evidence. In other words the use of the bible is subservient to the prevalent understanding of the nature of religious education as catechetical rather than educational. If an educational approach to religious education was being used the emphasis would be more on the development of critical cognitive skills requiring the use of a more literal translation of the bible such as the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

Considering the high level of qualifications of the respondents, and the importance these respondents give to their postgraduate studies, questions are raised

about why this has not had an impact practically in such areas as the biblical translation students purchase or in teachers' understanding of the nature of religious education.

Scripture in Years Seven to Ten

Introduction

Figure 5.3 indicates that 86.6% of respondents indicated that units on scripture were taught in Years Seven to Ten. While all respondents indicated that specific units on scripture were used widely throughout Years Seven to Ten, the contents of these units varied. Figure 6.1 indicates that topics introducing the bible to students made up 19.6% of the units in Year Seven but were only a minor component at other Year levels (8.1% at Year Nine and 8.3% of non-Year level specific topics).

Figure 6.1

Major Topics Taught Specifically on Scripture Years Seven to 10.
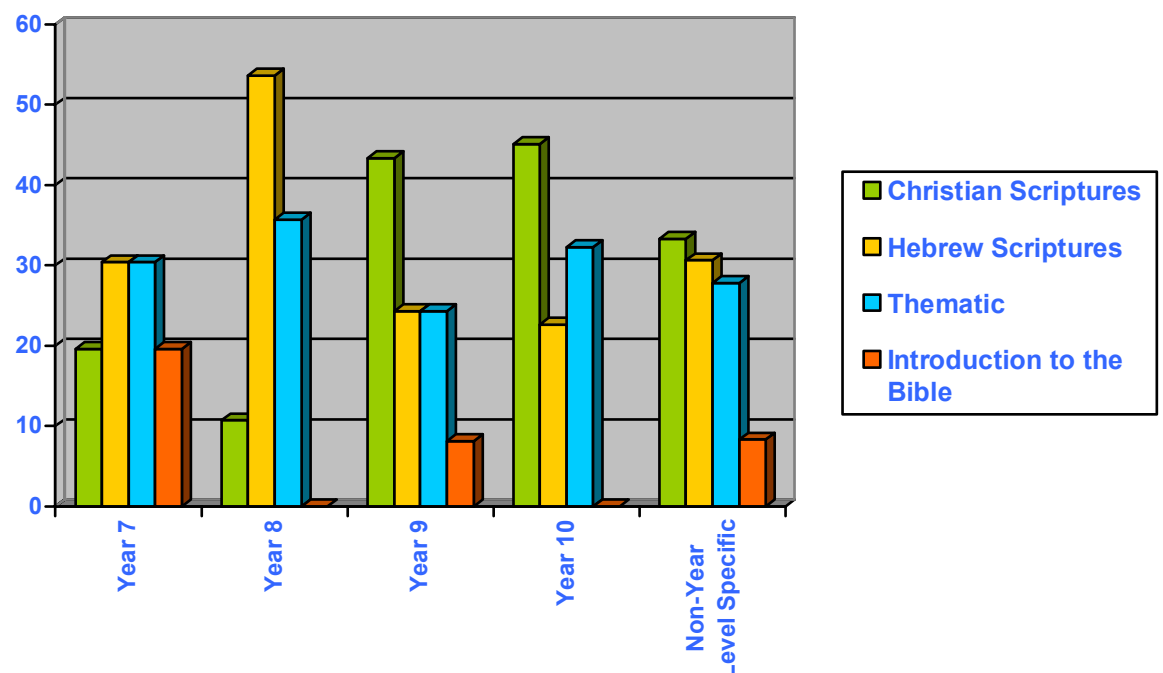
At Year Seven, topics on the gospels or other Christian Scriptures made up 19.6% and topics on the Hebrew Scriptures made up 30.4%. At Year Eight, Christian Scripture made up 10.7% of topics while Hebrew Scriptures made up 53.6% of the topics studied. Year Nine, on the other hand, was comprised of 43.3% Christian Scriptures (mainly the gospels at 35.1%) and 24.3% Hebrew Scriptures. At Year Ten, Christian Scripture comprised 45.1% of topics studied while Hebrew Scripture comprised 22.6%. The general, non-Year level specific topics comprised Christian Scriptures at 33.3% and Hebrew Scriptures at 30.6%. There was a small component of general biblical topics (8.3%) with the remainder made up of thematic topics (27.8%).

Hebrew Scriptures comprised 30.4% of topics at Year Seven, 53.6% at Year Eight, 24.3% at Year Nine, 22.6% at Year Ten and 30.6% in the non-Year level specific group. Christian Scriptures comprised 19.6% of topics at Year Seven, 10.7% at Year Eight, 43.3% at Year Nine (mainly the gospels at 35.1%), 45.1% at Year Ten and 33.3% of non-Year level specific topics.

Hebrew Scriptures

At Year Seven "Hebrew Scriptures" as described by the respondents included topics such as, "Background/Intro to OT", "Structure of the Hebrew Scriptures", "OT (Genesis, Exodus, Psalms)", "Hebrew Tradition – Stories of Patriarchs", "Genesis", "Exodus" and "Creation Stories – Gen 1&2". At Year Eight "Hebrew Scripture" included, "Hebrew Scriptures – characters e.g., Abraham. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Sara, Rachel", "The Hebrew Family", "OT – People & message", "Covenant", "Creation/Sin Stories", "Partriarchs" and "Prophets".

Year Nine topics as described by the respondents included "Genesis & Exodus in Creation & Law", "OT prophets (part of unit on ancient & modern prophets)", "Story of OT", "The Prophets" and "Travelling to freedom (Exodus)". Year Ten included "Social Justice & OT Prophets", "OT Themes – Covenant, Exodus, Law" and "Mythology – Genesis". Hebrew Scripture topics that didn't indicate a Year Level included "OT exodus to promised land", "Creation Stories", "Prophets", "People & Message of Hebrew Scriptures" and "Covenant in Hebrew Scriptures".

This suggests that the books of Genesis and Exodus are studied throughout Years Seven to Ten, through a study of creation stories, Patriarchs and the Law and the Covenant, and the Books of the Prophets. While it is important to develop and reinforce this material with students by repeating it throughout Years Seven to Ten questions are raised about the treatment of the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. The responses suggest that there is a neglect in Victorian Catholic secondary schools in Years Seven to Ten of the rest of the Pentateuch including the books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, as well as the Historical Books such as those of Joshua, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, the Psalms and the Wisdom Books such as the book of Proverbs.

Christian Scriptures

Topics on Christian Scripture taught at Year Seven included "Gospels", "Parable", "The Early Church", and "Jesus – NT studies" while more explanatory descriptions included, "Early Christian Communities – Acts" and "Background/Intro to NT". At Year Eight topics included "Gospel of Mark", "Luke's Gospel" and the "Structure of Christian Scripture".

At Year Nine Christian Scripture included "Gospels" such as Matthew, Mark and Luke or, "Background/Introduction to the Gospels" or, "Jesus – Luke's Gospel". There were also studies such as Acts of the Apostles: "Acts – Resurrection & early Church" and "Christian Communities – Acts" and the general study, "New Testament". At Year Ten topics such as, "A term long unit on Gospel of Luke", "Intro to Gospels – people, places, cultures, synoptic problem", "Passion Narratives – Mark with brief comparisons" or just Matthew, Mark or Luke were mentioned. More general topics included: "Jesus' Story", "Parables", "Apocalypse" and "Jesus & NT".

Christian Scripture topics that didn't indicate a Year level included reference to topics such as the Gospels and, "Parables – Miracles – Kingdom of God", ""Formation of NT – Background to the Gospels, "St. Paul – life & teachings – Acts & Letters", "NT – Gospels – Passion Narratives", "Emmaus Story" and "Mark's Gospel/Infancy Narratives.

The emphasis in Years Seven to Ten is clearly on the gospels through such topics as "Jesus' Story", "Parables" and just reference to "Matthew", "Mark" or "Luke". Also the Acts of the Apostles is mentioned throughout Years Seven to Ten as a topic studied. There is little reference to the rest of the Christian Scriptures in particular to John's gospel, to St Paul's letters, to the pastoral letters and to the book of Revelation. It could, however, be argued that the book of Revelation is not a suitable topic for secondary schools, because of its complex allegorical nature. As with the Hebrew Scriptures, the responses suggest a neglect of much of the Christian Scriptures in Victorian Catholic secondary schools. Combined with this neglect there appears to be constant repetition of passages from the synoptic gospels. Further

evidence will be presented on this in the following chapter, concerning the individual practice of respondents.

Introduction to the Bible

At Year Seven in particular there were a group of topics that could be categorised under the heading "Introduction to the Bible". This included statements such as "Biblical Overview", "Understanding the Bible", "Introduction to the Bible" and "Bible". More descriptive responses included, "Bible – purpose, structure, skills to allow students to use Bible in other units" and "The Bible – genre, literary, seasonal texts".

Introduction to the bible topics were also mentioned at Year Nine: "The Bible: A sacred library", "Intro to Scripture (overview of contents & structure of Bible)" and "The Bible – What is truth?/how did OT, NT evolve?". Mention was also made by those who did not indicate a Year Level: "Skills, story, Lit types – background info", "Intro to Hebrew & Christian Scriptures", "Literary styles" and "Intro to Bible".

The Use of Themes

In Year Seven thematic units included statements such as, "Commitment", "Myths (Creation), "Scripture in Catholic Tradition", "Jesus unit", "Seasonal celebration (Easter)", "Belonging/NT", "Celebrating the Word" and "Mary". Further information was needed if these were to be classified as scripture units.

At Year Eight topics included, "Scripture within context of other topics", "Celebrating the Word", "Women of Courage - begins with Mary (Magnificat espec) then Old Test & women etc", "Relationship of Peter & Jesus", "Social Justice",

"Eucharist", "Saints" and "A better world/Reign of God". At Year 9 this included reference to, "Prayer/Gospel", "Jesus & how to relate", "Ritual", "Creation", "Mystery & Wonder", "Justice & Jesus" and "Key themes – Creation/covenant/exile".

At Year Ten reference was made to: "Within context of all units of work", "Discipleship", "Justice", "Identity" and "Moral Responsibility & Decision making". In the topics that did not include a year level mention was made of: "Life & times of Jesus", "The Prophetic role of the Church", "Early Church", "Social Justice", "Valuing our World", "Lent", "Hope & Healing/Discipleship" and "Easter".

Thirty percent of topics at Year Seven were thematic in nature. At Year Eight, 53.6% of the scripture units studied were of the Hebrew Scriptures.   Thirty five percent of the topics at Year Eight appeared to be thematic in nature. At Year Nine thematic topics accounted for 24.3% of the units mentioned, while at Year Ten, 32.3% of topics were thematic in nature. The units named without indicating a Year Level included a thematic component of 27.8%.

This indicated some confusion about what constitutes a "unit specifically on scripture". It appears that for some respondents a significant use of scripture within a unit of work makes that unit a, "unit on scripture" even if scripture is only being used to support a theme. It was argued in Chapter Two of this thesis that a, "unit on scripture" involves the study of scripture using the historical-critical method and/or other exegetical approaches. While some of the topics mentioned here may well have had a focus that included a modern biblical approach, the category of "themes" was used to indicate topics that were not considered "specific units on scripture" as requested by the questionnaire. That is, the major thrust of the unit appeared to

support a theme rather than develop skills associated with the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship.

Certain issues are raised by the fact that such a large percentage of thematic units are seen as "units on scripture". Using the bible as a support for the teaching of a particular theme involves proof-texting, that is the taking of particular passages of scripture out of their biblical context and using them to prove or support the topic at hand. This ignores the context of the text which can only be discovered, for example, by careful study of the socio-economic situation at the time of writing, the structure of the text to discover the author's intention and audience, and through an understanding of the literary forms found in the text. Without this context a fundamentalist, literalist, and at best an uninformed interpretation can be placed on these passages.

There is an anomaly between the qualifications of the respondents and their extensive use of proof-texting. Descriptions of their qualifications indicate that the respondents are well aware of modern biblical scholarship and the dangers of fundamentalism. However, in general it can be claimed that they are not transferring their knowledge gained from scriptural study into the classroom. This situation may suggest something about their understanding of the nature of religious education, that is, the tendency of the respondents not to use critical-historical approaches even though they know of these, and to rely on proof-texting, indicates a view of religious education that is more catechetical than an educational approach to religious education.

Summary

Apart from the expected prominence of topics concerned with the introduction of the bible to students at Year Seven, there is an emphasis on the Hebrew Scriptures

in Years Seven and Eight and an emphasis on the Christian Scriptures in Years Nine and Ten. However there is also a consistently high level of thematic units taught at all Year levels Seven to Ten.

Problems have emerged indicating that the range of texts studied is very limited. Content appears to be mainly limited to the books of Genesis, and Exodus, some Books of the Prophets, the gospels and some study of the Acts of the Apostles. Problems have also emerged with a thematic approach to many aspects of bible study that include proof-texting and perhaps a fundamentalist approach to scripture.

The strong emphasis on thematic topics as "units on scripture" indicates either confusion in teachers' understanding of scripture study, or about the nature of religious education. On the other hand this may be evidence of teachers' understanding of a dual nature for classroom religious education i.e. educational and catechetical. If this is the case, the predominance of a proof-texting usage indicates a catechetical more than an educational approach, an understanding of religious education in the classroom that has certain difficulties in the context of the discussion in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Resources Available

Student Textbook

The student text was the most popular resource with 35.4% of the responses (seventy-nine references). "Student text" referred to textbooks written and designed for use by students in the religious education classroom. Texts referred to included: "Out of the Desert" books, "Introduction to the Gospels (Crotty)", "Living the Good News (MacDonald)", "Jesus, Mystery & Surprise", "Background to the Gospels", and "Studying the Gospels (Goosen & Tomilinson)", "Sacred Stories", "How to Read the

Old Testament" and "How to Read the New Testament (Charpentier)" and "A Time of Jubilee (Stead)". Others mentioned included: "Belonging", "Our People's Story", and "Journeys in Faith". General references were made such as: "Understanding Faith Series", "Texts by K. Engebretson", "Robert Crotty's Series", "Discovering the Bible Series (de Lacey, Turnek)", "MacDonald's books", and "M. Ryan's series".

The, "Out of the Desert" books published between 1997 and 2000 are based on the sequence of modules for the *Sydney Archdiocesan Guidelines*, "Faithful to God, Faithful to People (Morrissy, Mudge, Taylor, 1997, p. x). Book one (1997) has a strong focus on scripture with chapters on, "The Bible: Sacred Story", "the Hebrew Scriptures: An Overview" and "The Setting of the Gospels". Book three (1998) also has this strong focus with chapters on, "The Bible—A Sacred Library", "Hebrew Scriptures—Selected Texts" and "The Gospels".

Book one is designed for Years Seven and Eight and covers the origin, development and formation of the bible. It highlights key stories and figures in the Hebrew Scriptures as well as in the gospels. In this process, literary forms are explained (Morrissy, Mudge, Taylor, 1997, p. 12), as well as editing (p. 17) and historical settings (pp. 29, 47-59). Book three, designed for Years Nine and Ten students, gives a detailed account of literary forms (pp. 2-5, 18-19), inspiration (pp. 6-7), biblical translations and tools (p. 15), Hebrew history (Ch. 2) as well as a study of Jesus in the four gospels (Ch. 3). These texts are a commendable attempt at the use of modern biblical scholarship with secondary students.

Crotty's (1997), "Introduction to the Gospels" has eleven background chapters before it discusses each of the gospels in turn. These background chapters indicate Crotty's concern that a correct understanding of scripture is in place before a study of

the gospels is introduced. For this purpose he uses historical-critical biblical scholarship. Background chapters include material on geography, history, religious thinking and groups as well as the literary forms in the gospels.

The, "Growing Together in Faith" series edited by MacDonald (1992, 1993, 1995) states its aims as, "to involve students in a systematic and comprehensive examination of all the key elements of the Christian message" (MacDonald, 1992, p. vi). Books one and three have material on the study of scripture. In the notes to teachers in the Teacher Book for Book one teachers are cautioned about "Australianising" the bible and proof-texting (1992, pp. 180-181). The cognitive objectives listed in the Teacher Book for the chapter on the bible in Book one indicate the use of the historical-critical method. They include:

- recognise that the Bible was written down over a long period of time…
- explain that the Bible is a collection of many books.
- identify the range of literary styles in the Bible.
(1992, p. 186)

The Teacher Manual in Book three includes the following cognitive objectives in its study of scripture:

- describe the major background references to the gospels,
- identify the centrality of the Exodus theme in the Gospels,
- situate Jesus within a Jewish world of the time,
- describe how Mark's Gospel came to be written,
- describe Mark's Gospel as a story of Messiahship and discipleship.
(1995, pp. 6, 25)

"Background to the Gospels" edited by Eastman (1973) is a three volume set focusing on themes and issues to help students understand how to read the gospels. Topics include background material on, "Messianism", "Prophets", "Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees", "Samaritans", "Roman occupation", "Parables", "Titles of

Jesus", and "Resurrection beliefs at the time of Jesus". All of these contents are important material for a historical-critical study of the gospels.

Goosen & Tomlinson's (1994) student text, "Studying the Gospels: an introduction" is a revised and expanded edition of, "Jesus, Mystery and Surprise". It is an example of a student text that uses the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship to the fullest extent. It has a chapter outlining methods of historical-critical analysis such as source, form, redaction, and literary criticism among others (Ch. 2). It deals with each of the gospels by author, date, place, intended community, sources, structure, styles and theological slant (pp. 71-103). This is a most appropriate text for senior secondary students.

Similarly, Charpentier's (1982) student texts, "How to read the Old Testament" and "How to read the New Testament" take a strong historical-critical approach. As well as material on history and geography, they include material on literary genres and sources from the Pentateuch (How to read the Old Testament, pp. 25, 27). "How to read the New Testament" includes material on the background to the gospels such as the Roman Empire, literary genre and Paul and his letters (pp. 24, 20, 45).

Engebretson's student text for Year Seven and Eight, "Sacred Stories" (1991b) and "Belonging" (1992) were also mentioned. A third book by Engebretson, "People of the Book" (1991) which deals with an introduction to the bible and some Hebrew and Christian Scripture themes was not mentioned. "Sacred Stories" does deal with historical-critical method in its approach to scripture. Literary genre (1991b, p. 7), sources (p. 16) and sociological background and history are given (pp. 37-45).

"Belonging" (1992) does not deal with scripture at all, and this leads to questions about why it was identified as a student text in the area of scripture study.

This description of student texts does suggest a wide use of modern biblical scholarship, but it also indicates an over reliance on secondary resources. It appears that the students' bible is not the most important resource in the study of scripture. Considering the high level of biblical qualifications among respondents to this research, and their high level of confidence in using the bible with students, it is confusing that teachers are not using these skills directly with students and applying them through a direct use of the primary source. This over reliance on secondary resources may suggest that the development of historical-critical methods of modern biblical scholarship with students is not the main priority with these teachers, or perhaps that the confidence of teachers in teaching about the bible is not as high as they have claimed.

Biblical Reference Texts

"Biblical reference text" was the second most frequently cited resource available to teachers (17.9% of responses or 40 references). This category referred to resources generally used to help teachers in their understanding of a biblical text. Here reference was made to concordances, general biblical commentaries such as the Jerome Biblical Commentary (1990), biblical atlases and dictionaries, The Catholic Encyclopedia (2002) and study editions of the Bible.

From teachers' answers to the question concerning book and curriculum resources used with students, it is expected that an indication will be gained as to the extent these resources are used with students.

Teacher Theology Text[23]

The third most frequently cited resource was Teacher Theology Text (12.6% or 28 references). This referred to works of biblical theology by acknowledged writers in this field. This was a teacher reference section only. Included here were resources that were considered specific, detailed commentaries such as "The Old Testament (J. Priestly)", "Introduction to the New Testament (Brown)", "Living Voice of the Gospel (Moloney)" and "Luke-Introduction & Commentary (Morris)". References in this category also included general statements such as, "Teacher Text", "Inform articles", "Various books from reading theologians", "Michael Fallon's books", "Women's Commentary", and "Library".

These references are generally advanced theological work for the student studying *Texts and Traditions* Units 3 and 4, the tertiary student or the adult learner. This list includes many authors who use the historical-critical method in their work.

The Bible

The bible itself was mentioned twenty times (9% of responses) by 33.9% of respondents indicating that the use of the bible itself by students was seen as appropriate. One would have expected this figure to be higher considering that 95.5% of respondents' schools expected students to purchase a bible in Year Seven and 91% of schools expected students to retain it throughout their schooling. This low level of responses which indicated direct use of the bible, further emphasises the point previously discussed concerning an over reliance by respondents on secondary

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[23] The works of authors quoted here are not referenced. This is a list of respondents quotes, it is not a citing of authors used in this thesis. However, the authors quoted by respondents are all well known in the field of biblical studies.

resources. The development of critical skills by students using the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis requires use of the bible itself.

Teacher Notes and Other

"Teacher notes" was a minor category with eight references by 13.6% of respondents. Included here were statements such as, "Teacher notes", "Unit booklet devised by teams of teachers", "Our unit modules" and "Course documentation specifying texts to use". "REC/other staff" was referred to seven times and included statements such as, "Me – teachers most often use me as resource", "REC", "Other teachers within school" and "Peer co-operation". The Melbourne Guidelines (1995) were also referred to seven times.

"Other" included 34 responses from 57.6% of respondents. Here there were many individual references such as, "Parramatta Guidelines", "NZ series on RE", Religion & Society units in the VCE, "P.D. Days", "Liturgy notes", "Sunday Readings" dramatisation of the bible, the Brigidine Resource Person, inservicing and "My own degree notes at senior level". More general references included reference to A/V materials such as videos and CD Roms and Internet sites.

Summary

The use of biblical reference texts and biblical theology texts by religious education teachers together with the students' bible and the students' text book, give a picture of an extensive library of resources available and in use within Catholic secondary schools in Victoria for the teaching of scripture.

The list of biblical reference texts and teacher theology texts are impressive, yet to be expected if there is a serious commitment to biblical scholarship in Catholic secondary schools. However, the most important text for the study of scripture in the classroom is the students' text. This is backed up by the fact that 133.9% of respondents included them in their list of resources. That is, all respondents indicated use of the students' text with a further third indicated a second resource that was a student text.

This fact highlights the important issue of the over reliance on secondary resources and the apparent lack of use in the classroom of the students' personal bible, which the school itself requires the student to purchase. This may in fact indicate that contemporary biblical scholarship is not a priority for many teachers.

Senior Secondary

Prevalence of Texts and Traditions[24]

Table 5.16 indicates that 45.2% of respondents (19 responses) indicated that non-*Texts & Traditions* students made up over 90% of their VCE students. Twelve responses (28.6%) indicated that between 61% and 89% of students at Year 11 and 12 did not do *Texts and Traditions* while eleven (26.2%) indicated that the figure was below 60%. The minimum percentage of students not doing *Texts and Traditions* in their VCE was 5% recorded by one respondent, the maximum was 100% recorded by fourteen respondents. The average number of students not doing *Texts and Tradition* was 75.8%.

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[24] See ch., 1, pp. 28-29 for an outline and discussion of the VCE units Texts and Traditions.

Statistics from the Board of Studies (1999) indicate that of the 127,156 students enrolled in the VCE in 1999, 28,308 were in Catholic secondary schools. Of this figure 3,689 were enrolled in a *Texts and Traditions* unit or units. This is 13% of all senior secondary Catholic students enrolled in the VCE with the Board of Studies. Therefore, according to the Board of Studies figures it would appear that 87% of students in Catholic secondary schools in 1999 enrolled in the VCE did not do a *Texts and Traditions* unit. In this research REC's indicated an average of 75% of their students did not do *Texts & Traditions*. The figures from the Board of Studies and this research therefore indicate that education in the use of modern biblical scholarship through the *Texts and Traditions* units is having only a limited impact on senior students in Catholic secondary schools. Yet, as has been argued in Chapter Three of this thesis, this is the most appropriate time in their psychological and faith development for these skills to be developed in students. In order to investigate this issue further, this research sought information about the type of scripture studies done in Year 11 and 12 by students who do not do any *Texts and Traditions* units. It was considered possible that senior secondary students may be doing scripture studies through other streams in the whole religious education curriculum.

When Senior Students don't choose Texts & Traditions

Respondents who were RECs were asked to indicate what religious education students who don't choose Texts & Traditions undertake in the VCE years.

The most frequent (29.8% of responses) type of religious education for students who do not do *Texts & Traditions* in their VCE was a combination of units from the *Religion & Society* Study Design and school based units (Table 5.18). RECs indicated that students could undertake school based units with *Religion and Society*

such as, "…focus on teachings of Catholic Church…its tradition, liturgy and beliefs", "Community Ministry", "Social Justice/Bioethics", "Women in Church", "My spiritual self", "Sexuality/Relationships/Personhood/Social Justice", and "Music & Movement".

Religion and Society Units 1 and/or 2 was the second most frequent response with nine (19.1%) responses. Six respondents (4.7%) indicated that non-*Texts & Traditions* VCE students were offered a choice of all *Religion and Society* units while the same figures were indicated for *Religion and Society* Units 3/4 only.

These figures were confirmed with statistics from the Board of Studies (1999) which indicated that of the 28,308 students enrolled in the VCE in Catholic secondary schools in 1999, 12,698 were enrolled in a *Religion and Society* unit or units. This comprises 45% of all senior Catholic secondary students.

Twelve responses (25.5%) were categorised as "Other". This included VCE units other than *Religion and Society* such as *International Studies* and *Classical Societies and Cultures*, as well as school based programs not associated with choices about *Religion and Society*. Most respondents here just indicated that they offered "School Based" programs while one respondent indicated that the course offered was entitled, "'Meaning of Life' – including spirituality/relationships/commitment".

These non-*Texts & Traditions* units were offered mainly (75%) to both Years 11 and 12, with small numbers at either Year 12 only (4.2%) or Year 11 only (12.5%) (Table 5.19). Two respondents indicated that they offered their Year 10 students *Religion and Society* Unit 1 in one case and *Religion and Society* Unit 2 in the other.

In order to obtain a fuller picture of the place of scripture in Years 11 and 12, RECs were asked if their non-*Texts & Traditions* students studied any units of work or topics on scripture. Thirty RECs responded to this question (Table 5.20). Ten (33.3%) indicated that scripture was studied in the *Religion and Society* units, ten (33.3%) indicated that scripture was studied within a theme, six (20%) combined *Religion and Society* with themes, while four (13.3%) were categorised as "Other".

The ten respondents who indicated that scripture was studied in *Religion and Society*, indicated this with statements such as, "Ethics students do use the Bible sometimes", "R&S requires some aspects of scripture use", "R & S students use SS in units 1 & 2, 3 & 4", "In Rituals WR Yr 11, texts of Last Supper studied in detail". "In profile section Exodus account studied at length", "R & S 3 looks at Kingdom of God – explores both OT & NT" and "Use scripture in Ethics. "Overview of Jewish texts R & S 1", "scripture notions of marriage are used". Those relating to themes only, (33.3%), included comments such as, "All school based studies (Justice/Morals/Prayer) have scripture element", "Scripture values and passages are introduced as relevant to other units", "It's more of a case of supporting evidence or establishing the theological reference for the concepts. Little reference is made to Literary Forms or context of the text", "Genesis – Creation – image of God; Beatitudes – God is love; Forgiveness – NT; Kingdom of God/Life/ Death/Ress of Jesus (Salvation)" and "Scripture is used in Forgiveness – uses OT/NT passages".

Those who combined *Religion and Society* with themes (20%) referred to combinations of *Religion and Society* units with school based thematic topics, and the use of scripture in liturgies. Examples included, "In school based units there has been a focus on the Person of Jesus. This is additional to the Ethics unit being studied",

"Scripture is used in the Religion & Society Units. Students prepare scripture for class Masses & their end of year Mass" and "In Year 11 Scripture is an important part of Unit 1 and is used somewhat in Ethics. In Year 12 the scriptures are used in the 'Justice' and 'Spirituality' units although how much depends on the teacher". Those categorised as "Other" included statements not readily fitting into the categories already developed. This included comments such as, "In school based units a Gospel study is undertaken", "Scripture is basis of their theology at this level", "In R & S 1 look at texts used in Catholic church" and "In International Studies Scripture is basis for studying social justice issues".

These responses raise two significant issues. Firstly, the VCE *Religion and Society* Units are the prevalent mode of religious education for just under half of senior secondary students in Victorian Catholic schools. The other students study mainly thematic school based units. However, the *Religion and Society* units do not deal with scripture. Their focus is on the study of ritual, sacred texts, symbols, myths, social structure, codes of behaviour, religious experience and beliefs. While sacred texts are mentioned, there is no allowance within *Religion and Society* for historical-critical study of scripture. Indeed this is not the purpose of this study. Therefore the use of scripture in these units would be to support the theme or topic being studied i.e. ritual.[25] Together with the study of thematic topics it appears that scripture at the senior level is used mainly for proof-texting. This brings into question again the respondents' understanding of the nature of religious education i.e., catechetical or educational, and the anomaly of this with their high level of qualifications. Respondents appear to be using scripture to develop students' faith and ignoring the

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[25] See ch., 1, pp. 27-28 for an outline and discussion on the VCE units Religion and Society.

need to develop students' critical skills, yet these same respondents have been highly trained using these critical skills with scripture themselves.

Secondly, there appears to be no significant penetration of modern biblical scholarship other than *Texts & Traditions* into Years 11 and 12 within Catholic secondary schools in Victoria. In fact, students in Years Seven to Ten appear to spend more time than Year 11 and 12 students engaged in developing their skills in the area of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. Only a small proportion, perhaps 13% to 25%, of senior Catholic secondary students are exposed to modern biblical scholarship. Yet this is the stage of development when adolescents are most ready to undertake this study and to exercise their relevant critical intellectual skills.[26]

Effects of Texts & Traditions on Years 7 to 10

When repondents were asked whether the teaching of *Texts & Traditions* in Years 11 & 12 had influenced the teaching of scripture in Years Seven to Ten, 15 of the 67 respondents indicated that it had (15%). Recalling that 13% of students in Catholic secondary schools study *Texts & Traditions*, this effect would appear to occur wherever *Texts & Traditions* is taught.

Respondents who explained their answers (Table 5.21) indicated that the effects of *Texts & Traditions* had been seen in Years Seven to Ten in the areas of introducing students to biblical exegesis, and in preparation for students to undertake Texts & Traditions in Years 11 and 12:

> All Yr 10s do a term on Luke's Gospel using an excellent resource which provides a valuable background to the understanding of the

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[26] See ch., 3, pp. 70-78 on developmental psychology and student's readiness for critical biblical study.

formation of sacred scripture, authors, primary & secondary sources etc.

It has legitimized the study. Probably from a variety of influences, there have been the following themes: Bible as library; genres, literary forms, timeline, Hebrew characters, Gospels as portraits of Jesus as portraits of the community; avoidance of simple prooftexting treatment.

Particularly in Year 10 and to a certain extent in Years 8 & 7 there has been an emphasis on the structure of the texts, Literary Form & Comparison of Texts.

Yes, we endeavour in these years to give the students a solid background upon which to draw on for their VCE units

To some extent – to give (yr 7-8-9) – our Junior R.E. students a good grounding in scripture – Also to prepare for 'T & T 2 Narrative' in Yr 10

Teaching about the formation of scripture, literary form and the avoidance of proof-texting are all evidence of the historical-critical method of biblical studies. The impact on students of the introduction of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis, together with the avoidance of practices such as proof-texting, is most important as it introduces students to an appropriate understanding of the place of the bible in Catholicism and helps avoid a fundamental, literal approach to scripture.

The General Use of Scripture in Religious Education Classrooms by RECs and RE Teachers of Year 7 to 10

Frequency of Use

There is a statistical significant association ($p < .05$) in regard to the frequency of use of scripture between the RECs and the RE teachers of Years 7 to 10. RECs were more likely to use the bible every day or twice a week while RETs were more likely to use the bible with students once a week/fortnight or month. In all 48 (76.7% of respondents) RECs indicated they used scripture at least once a week, while 33

(61.1%) RE teachers indicated the same frequency of at least once a week. Similarities also occurred with the other frequencies. Nine (15%) RECs indicated they used scripture at least once a fortnight compared with 13 (24.1%) RE teachers. Five (8.3%) RECs indicated that they used scripture at least once a month compared with six (11.1%) RE Teachers, while two RE teachers indicated they seldom used scripture while there was no RECs in this category.

A significant association ($p < .05$) also occurred between the two groups in relation to their explanations for their frequency of use of scripture. Respondents' explanations for this use of scripture with students was more likely to be dependent on the topic or theme they were teaching if they were a RET whereas RECs explanations were more likely to do with the teaching of the VCE Units Religion and Society or Texts and Traditions. This is consistent with profile presented in chapter four were RECs predominantly taught at the VCE level compared to RETs who predominantly taught at the Year Seven, Eight and Nine levels.

Thirty RECs (52.6%) explained their frequency of use of scripture as related to the topic/unit being taught. That is, scripture was used regularly with students because biblical passages were required to support the topic or theme being taught. The figure for RE teachers was remarkably similar at 33 (63.5%). Comments indicating this thematic use included:

> Depends on area covered – I refer to scripture, but students may not actually study/exegete passages.
>
> It is used where it supports the info/concepts/content taught at the time.
>
> I often use it every day or at least once a week. Scripture has been tied to all our R.E. Units in some form or another – even in PD.

The topics on scripture in Years Seven to Ten included a significant component of thematic topics (30% in Year Seven, 35% in Year Eight, 24.3% in Year Nine, 32.3% in Year Ten and 27.8% with no Year level specified). With 52% of RECs and 63% of RETs who responded to the question explaining that their frequency of use of scripture was due to the topic or unit being taught, the issues raised earlier concerning an approach to scripture use that is proof-texting and potentially fundamentalist is further reinforced.

A second issue raised here is that there is a group of respondents who do not use the bible regularly with students at all. Five RECs and six RETs indicated that they used scripture with students only once a month, while two RETs indicated that they seldom used scripture with students. While this may only be a small proportion of respondents, this means that there are some students in the Catholic secondary education system who are not exposed to scripture within their religious education classrooms to any significant degree. An opportunity to develop these students' intellectual-critical skills has been missed as well as an opportunity to introduce students in a critical way to the sacred texts of Judaism and Christianity.

Sections of the Bible Used

Concerning sections of the bible used there was a statistical significant association between RECs and RETs ($p < .05$). RETs were more to use the Pentateuch with a frequency of "Never" or "Seldom" whereas RECs where more likely to use the Pentateuch on a "Weekly", "Monthly" or "Term" frequency. This type of association was also present with the Prophets and the Acts of the Apostles.

Limited Use of the Bible—Hebrew Scripture

Respondents' choice of "seldom" and "never" represent a limited use of the bible and in this analysis are added together. With "seldom" and "never" added together for the RECs, the Pentatuch totals 12%, the Historical Books 69.4%, the books of the Prophets 28.8%, the book of Psalms 37.7% and the Wisdom Books 63.4%. This gives an average of 42.3% for the Hebrew Scriptures. The figures for RETs of Years Seven to Ten are the Pentatuch 39.2%, the Historical Books 76.7%, the books of the Prophets 59.6%, the book of Psalms 44.1% and the Wisdom Books 75%. This is an average of 58.9%. This suggests that just under half of the RECs have indicated a limited use of the Hebrew Scriptures. This compares with just over half for the RETs, and together they form an average percentage of 50.6%.

"Once a term" could also be considered a limited use of the Bible, as it represents a rate of use of approximately once every two and a half months. "Once a term" can then be added to "seldom" and "never" to give a fuller picture of a limited use of the bible. Significant increases occur with all books of the Hebrew Scriptures. For RECs the use of the Pentatuch increased from 12% to 52.7%, the Historical Books from 69.4% to 94.8%, the books of the Prophets from 28.8% to 72.9%, the book of Psalms from 37.7% to 68.8% and the Wisdom Books from 63.4% to 91.7%. The overall average for a limited use of the Hebrew Scriptures by RECs increased from 42.3% to 76.2%. For RETs the Pentateuch increased from 39.2% to 69.6%, the Historical Books from 76.7% to 94.6%, the books of the Prophets from 59.6% to 89.4%, the book of Pslams from 44.1% to 71.2% and the Wisdom Books from 75% to 88.3%. This increases the overall average for a limited use of the Hebrew Scriptures for RE teachers from 58.9% to 82.6%. Together the averages for RECs and RETs increase from 50.6% to 79.4%. This suggests that the majority of those who

responded to the questionnaire indicated a limited use of the Hebrew Scriptures in up to 80% of cases.

Limited Use of the Bible—Christian Scripture

For RECs the addition of "seldom" and "never" totalled 1.6% for the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles 22.9%, the Letters of St. Paul 32.3%, the Pastoral Letters 74.2% and the book of Revelation 91.5%. This gives an average of 44.5% for a limited use of the Christian Scriptures by RECs. RETs had figures of 5% for the gospels, 29.8% for the Acts of the Apostles, 40.4% for the letters of St. Paul, 73.7% for the pastoral letters and 96.5% for the book of Revelation. This gives an average of 49% for a limited use of the Christian Scriptures by the RETs of Years Seven to Ten. This indicates that just under half of both the RECs and the RETs used the Christian Scriptures in a limited manner. The average for both groups together is 46.8%.

If "once a term" is added to these figures the averages increase significantly. For RECs the use of the gospels increases from 1.6% to 3.2%, the Acts of the Apostles from 22.9% to 62.2%, the letters of St. Paul's from 32.3% to 62.9%, the pastoral letters 74.2% to 91.9% and the book of Revelation from 91.5% to 98%. The average for a limited use of Christian Scripture by RECs increases from 44.5% to 63.6%. For RETs the gospels increase from five to 11.7%, the Acts of the Apostles from 29.8% to 61.4%, the letters of St. Paul's from 40.4% to 75.5%, the pastoral letters from 73.7% to 96.5% and the book of Revelation from 96.5% to 100%. The average for RETs increased from 49% to 69%. The average for both RECs and RETs increased from 46.8% to 66.3%. This suggests that among those who responded to this question, two thirds used the Christian Scriptures in a limited manner.

Frequent Use of the Bible—Hebrew Scripture

The responses of "monthly" and "weekly" represent a frequent use of the bible and can be added together. With "monthly" and "weekly" added together for RECs the Pentateuch becomes 47%, the Historical Books 5.1%, the books of the Prophets 27.1%, the book of Psalms 31.1% and the Wisdom Books 8.3%. This gives an average of 23.7% for frequent use of the Hebrew Scriptures for RECs. For RETs of Years Seven to Ten "monthly" and "weekly" added together give 30.3% for the Pentateuch, 5.4% for the Historical Books, 10.5% for the books of the Prophets, 28.8% for the book of Psalms and 11.7% for the Wisdom Books. This gives an average of 17.3% for frequent use of the Hebrew Scriptures by RETs. Overall, the average for all respondents is 20.5% for a frequent use of the Hebrew Scriptures. This indicates that one in five of all respondents used the Hebrew Scriptures regularly with their students.

The use of the Pentateuch by both the RECs and RETs is higher than their use of any other section of the Hebrew Scriptures. If the Pentateuch is excluded from the use of the Hebrew Scripture, a picture of the use of the other sections becomes clearer. The average use of the other sections of the Hebrew Scriptures is 17.9% for RECs compared with 23.7% for all the Hebrew Scriptures. For the RETs, the average use of the other sections of the Hebrew Scriptures is 14.1% compared with 17.3% for all the Hebrew Scriptures. This is a combined average of 16%. This indicates that less than one in five respondents use the sections of the Hebrew Scriptures other than the Pentateuch on a frequent basis.

Frequent Use of the Bible—Christian Scripture

With "monthly" and "weekly" added together for RECs, the frequent use of the gospels is 96.7%, the Acts of the Apostles 37.7%, the letters of St. Paul's 37.1%, the pastoral letters 8.1% and the book of Revelation 1.6%. This gives an average of 36.2% for frequent use of the Christian Scriptures by RECs. That is, on average just over one in three RECs use the Christian Scriptures on a frequent basis with their students. For RETs, frequent use of the gospels totals 88.3%, the Acts of the Apostles 38.6%, the letters of St. Paul 24.6%, the pastoral letters 3.5% and the book of Revelation 0%. This is an average of 31% for frequent use of the Christian Scriptures by RETs. That is, just under one in three RETs use the Christian Scriptures on a frequent basis with their students. Together with RECs, this forms an overall average of 33.6% for the frequent use of Christian Scripture.

The gospels are more frequently used than other sections of the Christian Scriptures. If the gospels are excluded from the use of the Christian Scripture, a clearer picture of the use of the other sections of the Christian Scriptures is seen. For RECs the average for the use of Christian Scriptures excluding the gospels is 21.1%, for RETs, 14.1%. Combined, the average for both RECs and RETs is 17.6%. This indicates that the use of the Christian Scriptures by the respondents, excluding the gospels was frequent in under one in five cases.

Summary of Overall Use of the Bible

The data suggests that there is a limited use of the Hebrew Scriptures by up to 80% of respondents, and a limited use of the Christian Scriptures by up to 66.3% of respondents. A frequent use of the Hebrew Scriptures was indicated by 20.5% of respondents and a frequent use of the Christian Scriptures by 33.6% of respondents.

Thus, a "monthly" or "weekly" use of the bible is indicated by up to one in three respondents. If the Pentateuch is excluded from the Hebrew Scriptures, and the gospels from the Christian Scriptures, the picture of frequent use is reduced further to 16% for the Hebrew Scriptures and 17.6% for the Christian Scriptures. A "monthly" or "weekly" use of the bible, excluding the Pentateuch and the gospels is indicated by less than one in five respondents.

It is fruitful to compare this limited use of much of the bible with the topics taught in Years Seven to Ten. The main topics taught from the Hebrew Scriptures were portions of the Books of Genesis, Exodus and some of the Prophets. If these topics are taught throughout Years Seven to Ten, it is curious that 80% of respondents indicated a limited use of the Hebrew Scriptures. Also, if the gospels are taught throughout Years Seven to Ten there is a great incongruity with the 66.3% of respondents who claim a limited use of the Christian Scriptures.

This comparison may well give an insight into how frequent scripture use in the RE class really is. While all the topics mentioned are taught throughout Years Seven to Ten, they are just one component of the whole RE curriculum. Much more is contained in a religious education curriculum than the teaching of scripture. A picture emerges of a generally infrequent use of scripture, because these scripture topics are not a continuous, ongoing part of the RE curriculum. The teaching of scripture has to compete with prayer and liturgy, the teaching of the Catholic Church's history and doctrine as well as social service/justice issues and the wide range of other topics that are covered in a religious education curriculum. The data indicates that in the religious education curriculum scripture is yet to find a comprehensive and appropriate place.

Factors Influencing Sections of the Bible Used

Respondents' explanations of the factors influencing sections of the bible most frequently used with students had satistically significant associations (p < .05) for, "Appropriate to the theme" and "Teacher confidence/Familiarity". In both cases RECs were strongly influenced by these factors whereas for RETs the influence of these factors was more likely to be of a "Moderate" nature.

With these associations in mind both RECs and RE Teachers consider "appropriate to the theme" as the most important factor in selecting scriptural passages for their students. 100% of RECs compared with 83.6% of RETs indicated a moderate or strong influence for "appropriate to the theme". This confirms the previous data presented on the prevalence of thematic topics taught in Years Seven to 12.

Both groups also agreed on the second most important factor, this being, "Teacher confidence/familiarity" with 87.9% of RECs indicating that it was a moderate or strong factor, and 69% of RETs indicating it was a moderate or strong factor in their selection of scripture for students. This is strongly supported by the data on teacher confidence presented earlier in this chapter. This data had suggested that this teacher confidence resulted from postgraduate study, personal devotion and professional experience.

In all, 60.3% of RECs indicated "no", "little" or "some influence" for "Suggested by the Guidelines", while 55.1% of RETs indicated a similar opinion. While *The Guidelines* have been discussed in Chapter One, two comments need to be made. Firstly, it appears that an important source document from the Melbourne

Catholic Education Office, *The Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* (1995) has a limited impact on the teaching of scripture in religious education classrooms.

Secondly, *The Guidelines* present scripture in a particular way. As Collins (1995, p. 23) states in his critique of *The Guidelines*, "the compilers would seem to have been influenced by the proof text syndrome: get the framework of your doctrine set, and then root around for apposite biblical quotations". The consequence of this for the Catholic school student is that, "a method of proof texting establishes itself for the student as a main use of the bible (Collins, 1995, p. 23). The data from this research concurs with the view of Collins. However, as *The Guidelines* have a limited influence with respondents to this research, this use of the bible for proof-texting is not due in large part to *The Guidelines* themselves.

In the case of "Availability of teaching materials", 43.9% of RECs considered this factor to be of "no", "little" or "some importance", while 65% of RETs had this view. This is supported by the previous data, which suggested that teacher confidence from postgraduate study, personal devotion and professional experience were key factors for teachers in teaching scripture. This data suggests that the major texts teachers relied on, was not "teaching material" but the student text book.

Once again a thematic use of scripture has emerged from the data. The data suggests that when teaching a unit of work in religious education, teachers look for scripture to support the topic being studied. This can be seen in the data presented here as well as in the thematic topics taught from Year Seven to 12. The conclusion can be drawn from this data, that teachers do not significantly consider the importance

of a modern biblical approach to scripture when teaching scripture in the religious education classroom.

Using the Bible in Class

Overall, RECs and RETs had similar practices in this area. Both the RECs and the RETs indicated that they used the bible, or excerpts or paraphrases of biblical texts, on a regular basis. However, other alternatives such as videos, music and role-plays were also used. In all, 55.4% of RECs and 45.8% of RETs indicated that they required students to bring a bible to class every lesson. Of those who did not, the figures for RECs and RETs were similar with 13% and 10% indicating "weekly", 39% and 20.8% indicating "fortnightly", 21.7% and 16.7% indicating "monthly" and 26.1 and 20.8% indicating "seldom". Those who chose to comment also had similar reasons, with 56.7% of RECs and 51.4% of RETs indicating that the bringing of a bible to class depended on the topic, and 10% of RECs and 20% of RETs indicating that they used a class set of bibles with students.

As previously discussed under, "resources available for the teaching of scripture", the use of the bible as the primary source for scripture studies is limited. Students are required to purchase a bible in most schools in Year Seven, yet it was only considered a resource available in nine percent of the listings given. This is further confirmed by the figures provided by this research, which suggest that only half of the respondents required their students to bring a bible to class every lesson. Of further concern is that one in four RECs and the one in five RETs indicated that they seldom required students to bring a bible to class. It would seem an inappropriate exercise for schools to require students to purchase a bible in Year

Seven and retain it, if it was likely that the students' RE teachers from Years Seven to 12 would not require them to bring it to class.

In addition, if all the topics listed previously on scripture are in fact taught throughout a student's secondary education it is suggested by the data that secondary sources are the main source of access to scripture.

Why RECs and RE Teachers of Year Seven to Ten Use Scripture with Students

Introduction

Table 6.1 outlines the reasons given by RECs and RE teachers in response to the question, "Why do you use scripture with students?":

Table 6.1

Total Responses to, "Why Use Scripture with Students?".

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
To reinforce topic or theme	32	9.8	25.8
To enhance personal faith or experience	65	19.9	52.4
To develop biblical literacy	34	10.4	27.4
Because scripture is foundation and source of the faith	93	28.5	75
To facilitate prayer and liturgy	19	5.8	15.3
Other	83	25.5	66.9
Total	326	100	262.8

All respondents gave two or more reasons for using scripture with students, and this indicates that they saw the reasons for using scripture to be multi faceted. The use of scripture fulfills many goals within the RE curriculum including catechetical and educational goals. Both RECs and RETs considered, "Because scripture is the foundation and source of the faith" as the prime reason (100% of RECs and 46.6% of RETs indicated this). Both also agreed on the second most frequent reason given with, "to enhance personal faith or experience" indicated by

60.6% of RECs and 43.1% of RETs. There was a slight variation with the third and fourth reasons. The third most frequent reason indicated by RECs was, "To develop biblical literacy" (36.4%) whereas RE teachers placed this reason fourth (17.2%). Fourth for RECs was, "To reinforce the topic or theme" (22.7%) whereas RETs placed this third (29.3%). Both placed, "To facilitate prayer and liturgy" fifth (18.2% for RECs and 12.1% for RETs).

Foundation and Source of the Catholic Faith.

All sixty-six RECs who responded to the question concerning why they used scripture with students and 46.6% of RETs (27 respondents) indicated in some way that scripture was used with students because it is the "foundation and source of the Catholic faith". Many gave answers such as, "Scripture and tradition are the mainstays of our faith", "Because it is the basis of our faith", "Foundation of the tradition to which they belong", "It is the basis of the Christian story", "Heart of the tradition" and "Contains our faith heritage". More detailed responses included:

> Scripture is very important to the teaching of RE as it is the story of <u>our</u> people, <u>our</u> journey, <u>our</u> faith-tradition. It is our story! It is written for us today and is just as relevant as it was to our predecessors. The key is helping our students realise this relevance. (Female, 38 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

> I believe that all our Christian Faith is based on Scripture, and is so important for our students to have a sound understanding of the origins of their faith. (Female, 55 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> Because it is a primary source of information on the characters, stories and values relevant to our faith and tradition. (Male, 37 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

> To enhance their understanding of the richness of our story and tradition. (Female, 40 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

These responses indicate that the main reason behind the use of scripture with students is a desire to educate them in the Catholic faith. This data suggests a desire

by these teachers to "pass on the faith", that is, pass on to students faith in god and the Catholic Church as they, the teachers have faith in god and the Catholic Church. These responses also suggest an assumption by the respondents that their students are of the same Catholic faith as they are, and that they wish to know about this Catholic faith.

Behind these assumptions also lies the predominant understanding of religious education that was discussed at length in Chapter One, that is, religious education as education in faith (catechesis). This understanding of religious education has as its natural context a community of faith, its basic form is pastoral ministry, and it also includes a free choice and a response. These contexts, it has been argued are not congruent with a religious education class in a school setting.

To Enhance Personal Faith or Experience

A predominantly catechetical understanding of religious education was further reinforced by 40 of the 66 RECs (60.6%) and 43.1% of the RETs (25 responses) who indicated that they used scripture to enhance the personal faith and/or experience of their students. These teachers believed that scripture could have an impact on students' spiritual lives, and that it was the place students would meet god:

> In schools we nurture personal growth and try to present the Jesus story as one which can invite connection and response in a lived faith. (Male, 58 yrs with Masters of Ministry and Bachelor of Theology)

> It is through Scripture & Sacraments that God is revealed to students. Through their study of Scripture, students may come to know God more fully and their relationship with God is strengthened. (Female, 37 yrs)

> To emphasise that it has relevance to their lives. To highlight a point that may be in the current news and to show how similar points are covered in the Bible. (Male, 34yrs)

> Scripture is the basis for understanding Jesus. The source of information of the development of our relationship with God. (Male, 41yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

Again, the data suggests that teachers see religious education as the place for catechesis.

To Develop Biblical Literacy

There were 24 responses (36.4% of respondents) from RECs and ten (17.2%) from RETs which indicated that scripture was used to develop an understanding of scripture within a context of modern biblical scholarship. Reasons included:

> To critique myths eg. Adam & Eve & so come to a more mature understanding. (Female, 42 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> To get away from fundamentalism. To get away from a Literary interpretive stance. To give students an appreciation of scripture as Literature & Story. To help them see scripture as "Story – Narration". To help them know the truth about scripture as Literature. (Male 50 yrs with Masters in Theology)

> Because I believe that it is essential for them to come to know Jesus Christ and understand him in the context of the writers who wrote about him. In order to understand the New Testament it is essential to have a grasp of the Old Testament. It is important that my students feel at ease in using the Bible and reading it as a document that is God's revealed word that must be interpreted in relation to the times in which it was written and its meaning for our lives today. I want to prepare them for those who will present a fundamentalist view to them and teach them the beauty and complexity of Christ's message of love. (Female, 45 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

It is of note that these respondents, who saw the development of biblical literacy as an important reason for using scripture with students, explained themselves in the context of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. They referred to literary form i.e., myth and narration, and to an understanding of the times in which it was written. As well as this, they saw modern biblical scholarship as a guard against fundamentalism. This suggests that there are religious education

teachers who have an awareness of the consequences of a lack of the use of the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship with students.

To Reinforce Topic or Theme

Reinforcing the finding of a thematic use of scripture were the 15 RECs (22.7% of respondents) and 17 RETs (29.3% of respondents) who indicated that one of their reasons for using scripture with students was to reinforce the topic or theme being taught. Statements in this area were very general:

> Scripture backs up the topic – the topic also brings scripture alive! (Female, 58 yrs, completing Masters of Theology)
>
> To study and broaden the topic. (Male, 45 yrs with Masters of Theology)
>
> To reinforce the message/content in focus. (Female, 27 yrs, completing Grad Dip in RE)
>
> As a starting point to a topic. (Female, 52 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)
>
> To introduce themes in RE. (Male, 39 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)
>
> …can give a great deal of clarity to the student's understanding of a concept. (Male, 34 yrs, completing a Bachelor of theology)
>
> To provide a Christian perspective on the themes being explored. (Female, 41 yrs, completing a Masters of Theology)

As has been discussed many times in this thesis, using passages of scripture to support or reinforce a theme being studied in religious education is proof-texting. If this is done without placing a passage of scripture within its socio-historical context, a fundamentalist approach to scripture is being used. Pope John Paul II (1993), *The Pontifical Biblical Commission* (1993) and Collins (1995) all warn of this inappropriate use of scripture.

To Facilitate Prayer and Liturgy

Twelve RECs (18.2% of respondents) and seven RETs (12.1% of respondents) indicated that they used scripture with students to facilitate prayer and liturgy. Reasons included: "As a starting point for prayer", "For prayer", "For prayer reflection" and "Liturgy is full of it". More detailed reasons included:

> …used for classroom mini Liturgies of the Word. A reading on a theme followed by reflection and prayer. (Female, 50 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

> To pray with – To meet with Jesus. To assist with Liturgies. (Female, 53 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> …It is also an excellent medium for prayer and for developing a relationship with God. (Female 55 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> Scripture provides an opportunity for individual reflection and prayer. (Male, 40 yrs)

This use of scripture within the liturgical life of a Catholic school is to be expected. However, if the RE classroom is used for this purpose a catechetical understanding of religious education is being emphasised. If religious education is to have a base in education rather than predominantly in catechetics, the more or less exclusive use of scripture to support prayer and liturgy, particularly in the classroom setting, is problematic.

Other

In all 51 responses from 77.3% of RECs and 32 responses from 55.2% of RETs were difficult to categorise and were placed in "Other". These included many statements that can be categorised as a comment on the Catholic Church's teachings or on the respondent's personal faith, rather than a reason for the use of scripture: "My students are generally interested in our scripture lessons", "Scripture is very important to the teaching of RE", "Important to the understanding of the will of God",

"It is Word of God", "It is the basis of all that I teach" and "It is interesting". Two

comments related to the need to use scripture for the purposes of teaching the VCE

Units *Texts and Tradition*. More detailed comments included:

> There is such truth, beauty and richness in it for their lives that we owe
> it to them to share it. Our Mission Statement holds that we are "Christ
> centred" and that here "Gospel values are given primacy". I personally
> believe that the sharing of these Sacred Stories may well be the main
> focus of the future Church with Eucharist somewhat less often than we
> are used to. (Female, 48 yrs currently completing a Bachelor of
> Theology)

> I find it rich and a valuable aspect of my own personal faith. (Female,
> 34 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> It critiques the Jesus of the Gospels and the Church of the Apostles and
> contrasts with what we have today eg. Plastic statue Jesus and some
> misinterpreted teaching on authority, sexuality, ministry etc. (Female,
> 42 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

Summary

The detailed reasons given by respondents for their use of scripture with

students, confirms the issues and concerns already raised by the research reported in

this thesis.   Reasons for using scripture with students tended to be concerned

predominantly with a catechetical understanding of religious education. Respondents

saw the need to use scripture, because it is the foundation and source of faith and it

develops the personal faith of students. While a minority of responses showed an

awareness of the need for modern biblical scholarship, particularly to guard against

fundamentalism, in fact there is evidence to suggest that students are being trained by

this catechetical approach to see scripture in a simplistic, fundamental way. Scripture

is seen as useful for proving particular themes or teachings rather than as valuable in

itself as a sacred text with its own detailed and complex context, knowledge of which

can help to illuminate the text for the student.

Conclusion

A number of issues have been raised in this chapter, through the discussion and analysis of data that has arisen from the general overview of scripture use in Victorian Catholic secondary school's religious education classrooms.

Positive findings include the fact that there is an extensive range of biblical reference texts, such as commentaries, available within schools. These are accompanied by biblical theology works by respected authors in the field of modern biblical scholarship. A third positive finding is the fact that 13% of Catholic secondary students in the senior years study *Texts & Traditions*. Where *Texts & Traditions* is studied, it has an effect on the introduction of biblical exegesis into religious education in Years Seven to Ten. Fourthly, within religious education in Years Seven to Ten, there is a significant number of topics taught that develop students' critical skills in the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. Students are introduced to the purpose, structure and literary styles within the bible. They study myth and the patriarchs in relation to the book of Genesis, law and covenant in relation to the book of Exodus, and miracles and parables in relation to the gospels as well as background information about time and formation of these books of the bible.

However, these positive factors are negated by the fact that schools do not have a policy concerned with the use scripture in the curriculum. In particular, a school policy on scripture use may promote modern biblical scholarship and give strategies for the use of the bible, as well as a rationale for students purchasing a bible in Year Seven. Modern biblical scholarship is also discouraged by most students' purchasing a *Good News* bible which is more suited to personal reflection rather than

serious study. The over-reliance on secondary sources such as students' texts, rather than the use of a student's bible, and the limited use of many sections of the bible, also negates the development of students' skill in relation to the historical-critical method. At the senior levels there appears to be no penetration of modern biblical scholarship except for the limited study of *Texts & Traditions*, which involves 13% of senior students in Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

A second issue to emerge from the data, is the limited use of many sections of the bible. The books of Genesis, Exodus and the gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles are taught throughout Years Seven to Ten. This is further compounded by the fact that only half of the respondents indicated that they required students to bring a bible to class for every lesson. Many indicated they seldom required students to bring a bible to class. Therefore, in studying these sections of the bible, many students were using secondary sources. Students were therefore not able to develop their skills in using the bible directly, and for these students the purchase of a bible in Year Seven appears to have been of little benefit.

A third issue is that of the extensive thematic use of scripture by teachers of religious education. Within the topics taught in Years Seven to Ten, and within the VCE Units *Religion and Society* and school based units at Years 11 and 12, scripture is used extensively as a method of proof-texting the themes taught. At the senior level, the data suggests that this is almost the only approach used with scripture. Any skills developed in the use of modern biblical scholarship in Years Seven to Ten, are negated by the thematic units taught alongside those units incorporating the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. At Year 11 and 12 the use of the historical-critical method, apart from the *Texts and Traditions* units appears to be

absent. This problematic use of scripture is further reinforced by the data that suggests that, for many respondents, the sections of the bible used with students and the bringing of a bible to class, depends on the theme they are teaching. A thematic use of scripture means that students are not given a context for a passage of scripture, and therefore access to the author's full message. In this situation, a literal, fundamental interpretation of the passage can arise.

Fundamentalism itself is the fourth issue to arise from the data. Teachers' confidence in the use of scripture, if based on their personal devotion alone, together with the extensive use of thematic topics, suggest a literal interpretation of scripture where the passage in question is not given its context within the appropriate book of the bible, nor in its historical setting. When asked directly why they used scripture with students, respondents indicated that they used it because scripture is the foundation and source of faith, as well as to enhance student's personal faith. It can be assumed from this that a modern biblical scholarship approach to the use of scripture is not in the forefront of the respondents' minds when they use scripture with students. Fundamentalism can easily develop in this atmosphere, if passages of scripture are then taken out of context and used to support a particular theme or topic being studied.

A final issue arising from the data, is the teachers' understanding of religious education, which underlies the teachers' use of scripture. This understanding underpins all the issues raised above. A catechetical understanding of religious education causes teachers to be predominantly concerned with students' personal faith development. This is reflected in respondents' need to use scripture because it is the source of the Catholic faith. If teachers' understanding of religious education were

concerned with religious literacy and the achievement of learning outcomes as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, the focus of their classes would be the development of knowledge and analytical skills. This would promote a more academically rigorous classroom, with less focus on the need to educate students in faith, to explain to them the teachings of the Catholic Church and to use scripture out of context, for this catechetical purpose. The use of the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship with its focus on the use of critical skills, would more likely occur in a classroom focused on an educational approach to religious education and yet at the same time meet any catechetical needs by sowing the seeds of faith.

CHAPTER 7: THE PERSONAL PRACTICE OF RESPONDENTS – AN

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS (2)

Introduction

This chapter discusses and analyses the data presented in Chapter Five on the personal classroom practice of RECs and religious education teachers of Years Seven to Ten (RETs). The personal classroom practice of respondents is used as the basis of this discussion, according to the passages of scripture they used during the year in which the research was conducted, and also in the month prior to answering the questionnaire. These are analysed according to reasons given for the choice of the particular passages, respondents' understanding of the text, their aims in using the text, their methods of communication of the text, the teaching/learning activities employed, the resources and materials used and the ways in which the passages were related to students' experience. The use of modern biblical scholarship in the teaching of the text is a focus of the analysis. This data is also compared with the general school practice suggested by RECs, that has been reported in Chapter Five and analysed in Chapter Six.

A statistically significant association (p < .05) was found for passages of scripture used this year. RETs were more likely to indicate passages from the gospels according to Matthew and Mark, the book of Exodus and other books from the Christian Scriptures. RECs on the other hand were more likely to indicate passages from the gospels according to Luke and John, the letters of Saint Paul, the book of Genesis and other books from the Hebrew Scriptures. This is consistent with the profile presented in chapter four where RECs were more likely to be teaching the

VCE. In particular the VCE units Texts and Traditions where the gospels according to Luke and John are prescribed for study by VCAA.

After respondents indicated one passage of scripture they had used with students in the last month they were asked a series of questions about this passage. Significant statistical associations (p < .05) were found for why the passage was chosen for use, their understanding of the passage, the books/resources they used in their own preparation and how they related this to their students' experience.

Concerning why the passage was chosen for use RETs were more likely to indicate a reason to do with the theme or topic being taught whereas RECs were more likely to indicate a reason to do with biblical literacy, the foundations of the Catholic faith, prayer or the teaching of the VCE units Texts and Traditions.

Concerning respondents' understanding of the passage they had selected for use with students in the past month RETs were more likely to give a summary of the text as their understanding whereas RECs were more likely to indicate an understanding based on a theme or based on modern biblical scholarship. This reflects the higher academic qualifications of RECs as outlined in Chapter Four.

In relation to how respondents' related the passage to students' experience RETs were more likely to ask students to retell the story in a contemporary situation or to give an explanation themselves. RECs, on the other hand, were more likely to relate the passage directly to the students' personal experience or to a global issue. This may well be a reflection of the levels taught by RETs compared to RECs where RETs more commonly teacher junior levels such as Years Seven to Ten while RECs

more commonly teacher at the VCE levels where in depth discussion is more likely to occur.

A satistically significant association ($\underline{p}$ < .05) was also found in relation to some general comments made at the end of the questionnaire. RETs were more likely to be concerned about the resources available for using scripture with students and their own limited knowledge in this area whereas RECs were more likely to be concerned with the fact that scripture was not being used enough with students, scripture is not exciting and that teachers are not confident in their use of it with students. This relects the role of the REC with schools and the fact that RETs were a less academically qualified group than RECs.

Passages of Scripture Used during Year in which the Research was Conducted and in the Previous Month

Table 7.1

Total Scripture Used this Year.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Matthew	91	16.5	72.2
Mark	46	8.4	36.5
Luke	151	27.5	120
John	44	8	35
Acts	16	2.9	12.7
Paul	19	3.5	15.1
Other Christian Scripture	8	1.4	6.3
Genesis	84	15.3	66.7
Exodus	31	5.6	24.6
Other Hebrew Scripture	60	10.9	47.6
Total	**550**	**100**	**436.7**

Table 7.1 shows that the most frequently cited reference was to the gospel of Luke with 151 references (27.5%), followed by the gospel of Matthew with 91 references (16.5%). The gospels together comprised 332 of the 550 references for

scripture used with students during the year (60.4%). There were some 16 references to Acts of the Apostles, 19 references to the letters of St. Paul and eight other references to Christian scriptures such as the first letter of John and the book of Revelation. Of the 550 references, 375 were to Christian Scripture (68.2%) and 175 (31.8%) were from the Hebrew Scriptures. The Book of Genesis was the most frequently cited reference from the Hebrew Scriptures (48% or 84).

Figure 7:1

Total Scripture Used by Year Level.
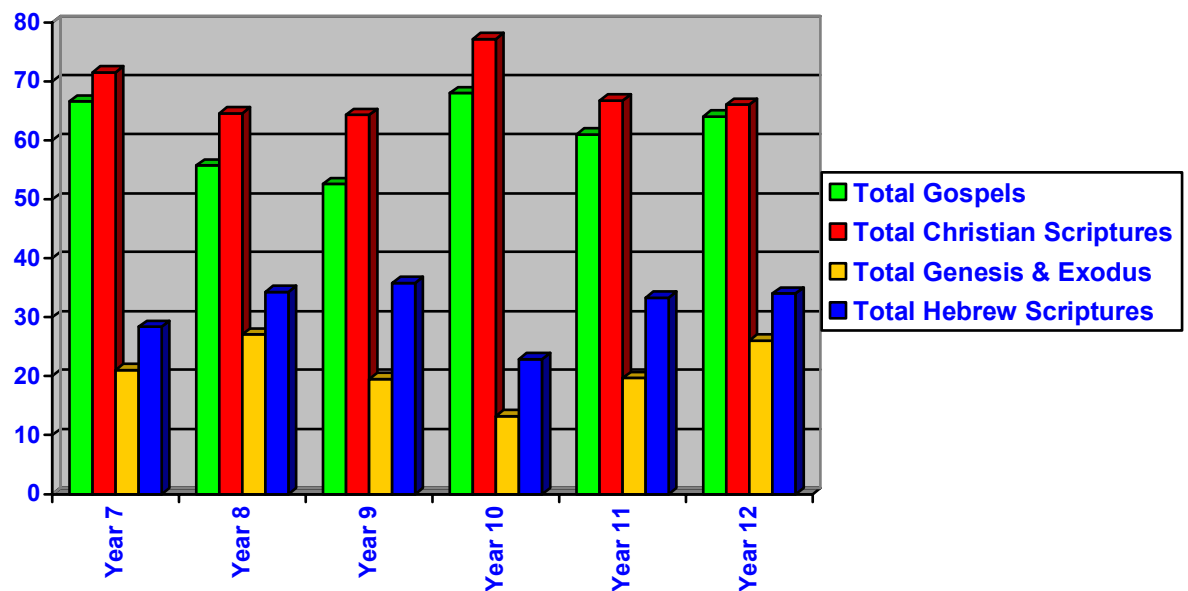
Figure 7.1 shows that across all Year levels Christian Scriptures and the gospels in particular were the most frequently used references. The gospels made up more than 50% of references in all cases. The total for Christian Scripture was above 60% in all cases. In the case of the Hebrew Scriptures, except for Year Ten, the books of Genesis and Exodus comprised 20% of references used during the year. Hebrew Scripture as a whole comprised over 30% of references except for Years Seven and Ten.

There was a remarkable similarity between the practice of RECs and RETs and between Year levels in regard to scripture passages that had been used by respondents. For both RECs and RETs, the most frequently used references during the year were the gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke across all year levels. At Year Seven, 63.2% of RECs and 69.9% of RETs referred to gospel passages, 56.3% of RECs and 55% of RETs at Year Eight, 53.8% and 51.2% respectively at Year Nine, 60% and 76% at Year Ten, 60.7% of RECs at Year 11 and 64% at Year 12. (Only RECs were asked to respond to personal practice for Years 11 and 12.)

Table 7.2

Total Scripture Used in the Past Month.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Matthew	19	16.1	16.1
Mark	7	5.95	5.95
Luke	37	31.4	31.4
John	13	11	11
Acts	2	1.7	1.7
Paul	9	7.6	7.6
Revelation	1	0.85	0.85
Genesis	15	12.7	12.7
Exodus	5	4.2	4.2
Ruth	2	1.7	1.7
1 Samuel	1	0.85	0.85
1 Kings	2	1.7	1.7
Psalms	1	0.85	0.85
Sirach	1	0.85	0.85
Isaiah	2	1.7	1.7
Micah	1	0.85	0.85
Total	118	100	100

Of the 118 responses about passages used with students in the past month, the gospel of Luke was the most frequently cited (37 references or 31.4% of all references). This was followed by the gospel of Matthew (19 references or 16.1% of all references) and the book of Genesis (15 references or 12.7% of all references). The gospels together comprised 76 references, which make up 64.45% of all

references. Other references to the Christian Scriptures included the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of St. Paul's and the book of Revelation. Christian Scripture generally comprised 74.6% of all scripture used with students in the past month. The Hebrew Scriptures comprised 25.4% of all references (30 references in total). With 15 references the book of Genesis comprised 50% of these references. The book of Exodus, with 5 references, comprised 16.7% of all Hebrew Scripture references and other Hebrew Scripture with 10 references comprised 33.3%.

Figure 7.2

Scripture Used in the past Month by Year Level.
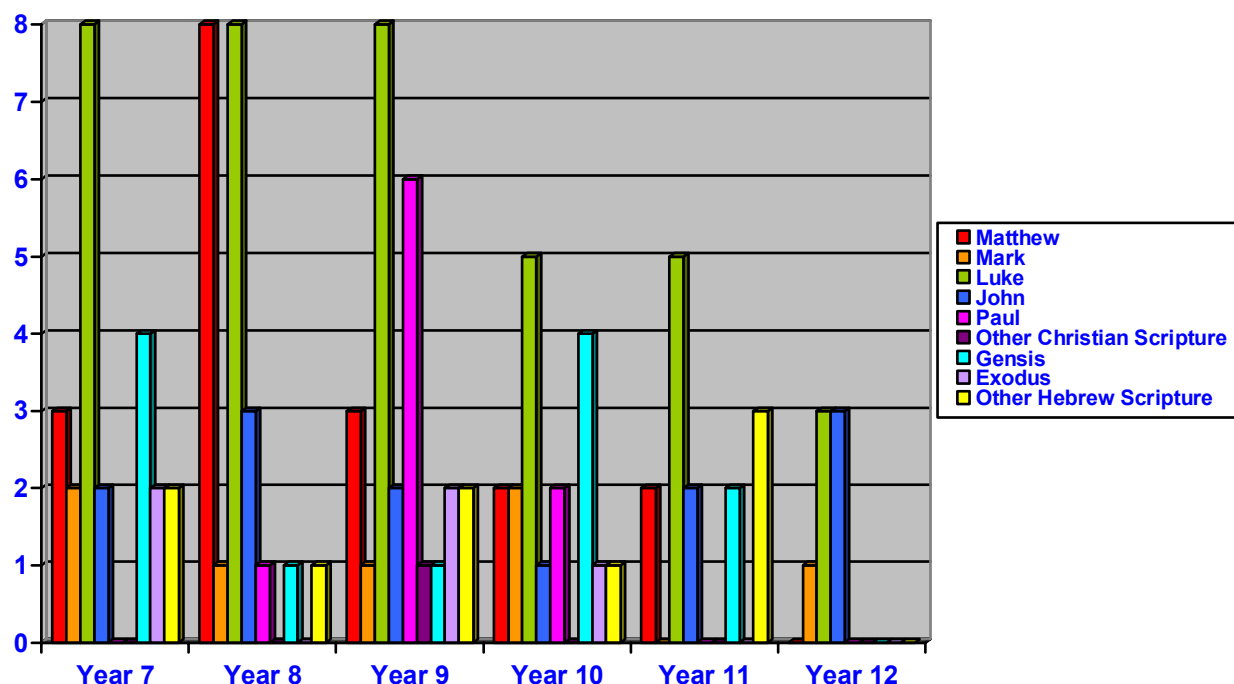
On a Year level basis the most frequently used references were in regard to the gospel of Luke with Years Seven, Eight and Nine having eight references each, Year Ten and 11 five references each, and Year 12, three references. Thus there was some variation in Year levels. Year Seven and Ten's second most frequent references were from the book of Genesis. For Year Eight, the most used references were from the

gospel of Matthew, Year Nine the letters of St. Paul's, Year 11 it was other Hebrew Scripture and Year 12, the gospel of John (equal with the gospel of Luke). The least frequently used references were other Christian Scripture at all levels except Year Nine. Other minor references included the book of Exodus at Year Eight. At Year 12, there were no other references apart from the Gospels of Mark, Luke and John. This may be due to the influence of the VCE Units *Texts and Traditions* and the chapters proscribed for study. Each year VCAA, formerly VBOS, indicates to teachers of *Texts and Traditions* the particular passages from the gospel of John or the gospel of Luke that they are to study with their students in preparation for the end of year examinations.

Both RECs and RETs at all Year levels referred to the gospels most frequently. At Year Seven there were six references to the gospels by RECs and nine by RETs. Both referred to the gospel according to Luke four times each (all different passages). Year Eight was similar with six references to the gospels by RECs (three to the gospel of Luke and one each to gospels of Matthew, Mark and John). RETs had fifteen references to the gospels and these included four references to the Beatitudes in the gospel of Matthew (5: 1-12) as well as to three other passages in the gospel of Matthew, five references to the gospel of Luke (including two to the Annunciation by Gabriel to Mary in Lk 1: 26-38) and two references to the gospel of John.

Year Nine was similar with six references to the gospels (two each to the gospels of Matthew, Luke and John) by RECs and eight by RETs (six to the gospel of Luke and one each to the gospels of Matthew and Mark). In Year Ten this continued with seven references to the gospels (four to the gospel of Luke and one each to the

gospels of Matthew, Mark and John) by RECs and three references by RETs to the gospels (one each to the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke).

References for Year 11 and 12 were only required from RECs, and included nine references to the gospels (five to the gospel of Luke and two each to the gospels of Matthew and John) compared to seven references at Year 12 to the gospels (three to the gospels of Luke and John and one to the gospel of Mark).

References were also remarkably similar in relation to the Hebrew Scriptures. They made up a small component of the passages used in the last month by both RECs and RETs at all Year levels. The book of Genesis was the most frequent Hebrew Scripture passage, particularly the creation stories in Chapters One and Two. The book of Exodus was referred to by most respondents followed by many single references to books such as Ruth, Psalms, Isaiah, Kings, Sirach and Ecclesiastes.

Figure 7.3

Comparison of Topics Taught on Scripture Years 7 to 10 with actual Passages Used

this Year and Frequency of Sections of the Bible Used.
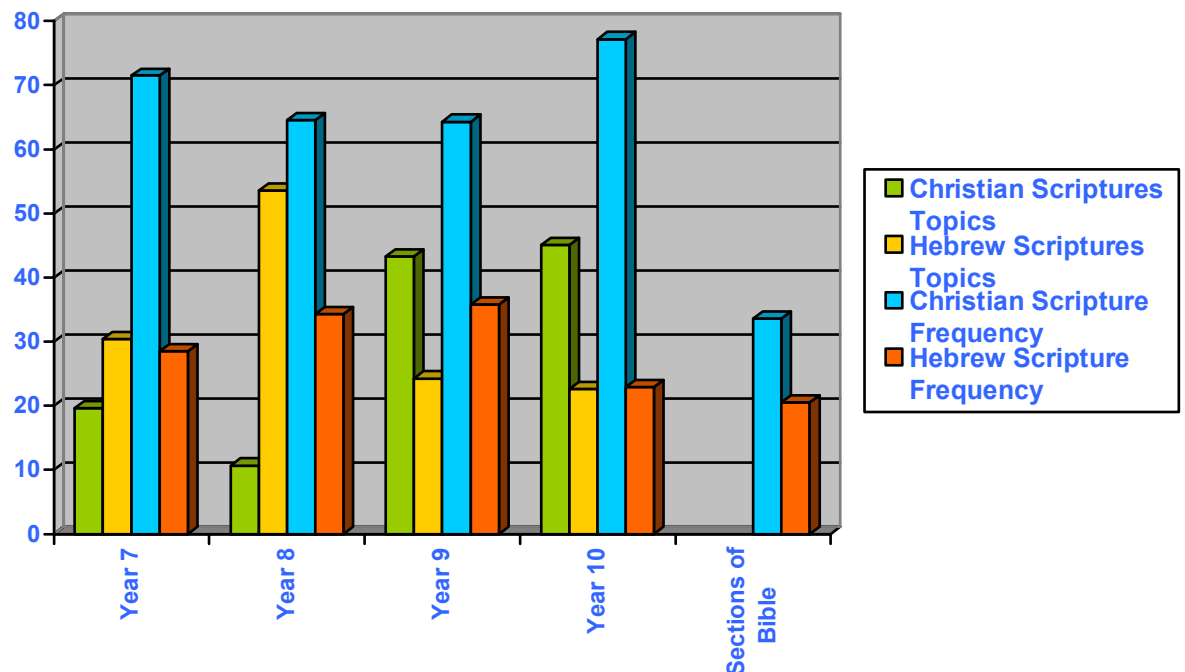
Figure 7.3 compares the topics taught by Year level from Figure 6.1, with passages indicated by respondents as used with students this year. Also for comparison purposes the figures for frequent use of sections of the bible as indicated by respondents are included. Figure 7.3 indicates a significant difference in the area of Christian Scripture used this year with Christian Scripture topics taught particularly in Years Seven, Nine and Ten. These are mainly the gospels. This difference is further highlighted by the percentage of respondents who indicated a frequent use of the Christian Scriptures and the Hebrew Scriptures. A third reinforcement of this difference is given by the passages used in the last month where most references are to the gospels.

Figures given for passages used during the year and in the previous month indicate a strong bias towards the Christian Scriptures, particularly the gospels than

was previously indicated. This may to due to two factors. First, it may be that this particular group of respondents is more confident with the gospels and other Christian books than other teachers of religious education, and therefore rely on the gospels more than is indicated by topics taught for Years Seven to Ten. Secondly, it may be that these respondents, when responding to this question asked by the survey quoted scriptures that more readily come to mind for Christians, that is, the gospels.

Overall, the picture given by Tables 7.1 and 7.2 and Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 is of the predominance of the Christian Scriptures, in particular the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. The use of the Hebrew Scriptures is limited to the book of Genesis, in particular the creation stories (1:1 – 2:25). This finding supports the data presented by Stead (1996b) in her research into Catholic primary schools in 1993. She concluded that up 83% of primary students' biblical education was from the gospels. Her conclusion that students experience a limited range of biblical narratives and literary styles is relevant here. This research into Catholic secondary schools in 1999 reports the same finding.

Why Chosen

Introduction

Table 7.3

Total: Why Scripture was Chosen for Use with Students.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
To support theme/topic	73	58.9	61.3
To enhance personal faith/experience	6	4.8	5
To develop Biblical Literacy	14	11.3	11.8
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	19	15.3	16
Required for T&T or R&S	9	7.3	7.6
Other	3	2.4	2.5
Total	**124**	**100**	**104.2**

In all, 61.3% (73 responses) of respondents indicated that they chose the passage indicated for use in the last month with students, "to support the theme or topic being taught". This was by far the most frequently cited reason. "To facilitate prayer and liturgy" was the second most frequently given reason with only 19 responses (16% of respondents). Minor reasons included, to enhance the personal faith of students (6 responses), to develop biblical literacy (14 responses) and because it was required for the teacher of the VCE units *Texts and Traditions* or *Religion and Society* (9 responses).

Thematic Reasons

The notion of using scripture passages to proof-text a topic was clearly evident. In quoting the passage, respondents indicated the topics it was used to support:

> Focusing on social justice issues especially in East Timor. [Turn the other cheek in Mtt 5: 38-42] (Male, 34 yrs completing Bachelor of Theology)

> In relation to a unit on Aboriginal Land Rights. [Naboth's Vineyard in 1 Kings 21] (Female, 53 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> As part of a unit on "Our Sexuality" emphasising the uniqueness of the human person. [Creation of male and female in Gen 1: 26-27] (Male, 60 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

> Discrimination topic. [The Women at the Well in Jn 4: 7-29] (Male, 42 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> It is used in a unit on self esteem/sexuality and highlights the uniqueness of the individual and their gifts yet our need to be part of a whole community with others. [Spiritual gifts-parts of the body in 1 Cor 12: 4-27] (Male, 46 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> We were exploring the topic of Outcasts in society. [The Good Samaritan in Lk 10: 25-37] (Male, 41 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

The problem with this approach to the use of scripture with students is that it can ignore the social and cultural customs relevant to the story as well as the literary

style used by the author. Where this occurs the use of the historical-critical method can be missing and as a result students may not move beyond a literal, fundamentalist approach to the bible. Stead came to the same conclusion in 1993 concerning Catholic primary schools in Victoria. She said:

> Interpretations placed on texts without any reference to critical biblical study were found to leave little scope for the development of students' interpretative skills and virtually no opportunity to prepare for or anticipate their confrontation with the contradictions apparent in the gospels or other biblical narratives. (1996b, p. 261)

To Enhance Personal Faith

Respondents were very clear in stating the catechetical aim of using scripture with their students in the past month:

> On the syllabus and a prescription for daily life – then, and just as relevant today. (Female, 54 yrs with Grad Cert in RE)

> To highlight ways to live as Jesus would like us to live. (Female with 20^+ years of teaching experience)

As stated before this predominantly catechetical approach is problematic due to its assumptions concerning student's personal freedom, doubtful readiness for such an approach and the need for the context to be a community of faith.

As discussed in Chapter One, while religious education is understood to have an affective dimension, the cognitive dimension concerned with students acquiring skills such as knowledge and analysis is considered necessary for religious education to have the same educational standards as other subjects in the curriculum. This may not occur to the extent that is necessary in Catholic secondary schools in Victoria if a catechetical approach is predominant.

To Facilitate Prayer and Liturgy

Scripture has a central place in Catholic liturgy and it is to be expected that scripture would be linked with liturgy in Catholic schools. Yet, if religious education is to be seen in the same academic light as other studies, an overuse of catechetical approaches to the use of scripture runs the risk that students will not learn the critical, analytical skills they need to understand scripture well. Liturgy can be considered to be directly linked with personal faith and expression and to use scripture in its service is a catechetical use of scripture in the classroom. Examples of responses included:

> It was chosen because of its relationship to the theme of their Eucharist – "The gifts of the generation". [in reference to 1 Kings 3: 5, 7-12, Solomon's prayer for wisdom] (Female, 46 yrs with Cert. in Basic Theology)

> It was chosen as the Gospel to be used at our class Mass. The theme, "we are all welcome at God's table". [in relation to Jesus at Simon's home in Lk 7: 36-50] (Female, 38 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

> Relevance to Class Mass theme – Forgiveness, Hope, Humility [in reference to Lk 15: 11-32, The Prodigal Son] (Male, 53 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> For a liturgy on the theme of loving others. [1 Cor 13: 4-13, Love] (Male, 37 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

The link between personal faith and liturgy is clearly seen in the above responses. Scripture use in liturgy is linked to themes such as "forgiveness" "hope" and "welcome". The use of biblical passages in liturgy is a catechetical use of scripture. It is acknowledged that teachers will use scripture in this way for preparing a class Mass, but it is the predominance given to this that is the problem. As has been shown in Chapter One of this thesis the classroom is not the most appropriate place for this to occur if religious education is to have the same educational status as other subjects in the curriculum.

To Develop Biblical Literacy

A focus of the research reported in this study is that of evidence of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. It was hoped that, in explaining why they chose particular passages of scripture to be used with students in the previous month, teachers would use the opportunity to indicate this. Many did, however as a proportion of all reasons the development of biblical literacy was a minor reason. It was hoped that students' ability to critically analyse scripture through a study of context, socio-economic background and literary form would be a priority if religious education is to develop into a study that cognitively challenges students.

Reasons that outlined such goals included:

We were comparing the creation myths and exploring the idea of literary forms in the Bible. [Genesis chapters 1-3, Year 7] (Female, 40 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

A working text to show similarities and differences between Gospels. [in relation to the empty tomb in all the parallels of the Synoptic Gospels, Year 9] (Male, 41 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

After having looked at other creation stories eg Babylonian Creation Myth – a comparison. [in relation to Genesis 1 & 2, Year 10] (Female, with Bachelor of Arts majoring in Biblical Studies and English)

The development of biblical literacy was strongly evident in Years 11 and 12

due to the teaching of the VCE *Texts and Traditions* Units:

To investigate the form of Infancy Narratives. [in relation to Lk 1, Year 11] (42 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

Clear connection with a situation within the Johannine community. [Jesus heals a blind man in Jn 9, Year 11] (Male, 36 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

Some respondents directly indicated this link to Texts and Traditions:

For the 4th Work Requirement for Narrative T&T interpretative essay. [The Passion narrative in Lk 22 & 23] (Female, 53 yrs completing Masters of Theology)

It is a selected passage/text for the exam (CAT 3). [Lk 3] (Male, 50 yrs
with Masters of Theology)

The influence of *Texts and Traditions* is limited by the fact that only 13% of

Catholic secondary students enrolled in the VCE study *Texts and Traditions*. As other

data presented in this thesis demonstrates, other VCE students are not exposed to

critical biblical study.

Summary

Figure 7.4

*Comparison of "Why Chosen" with General Reasons for Using Scripture with
Students (Tables 5.26 & 5.27).*
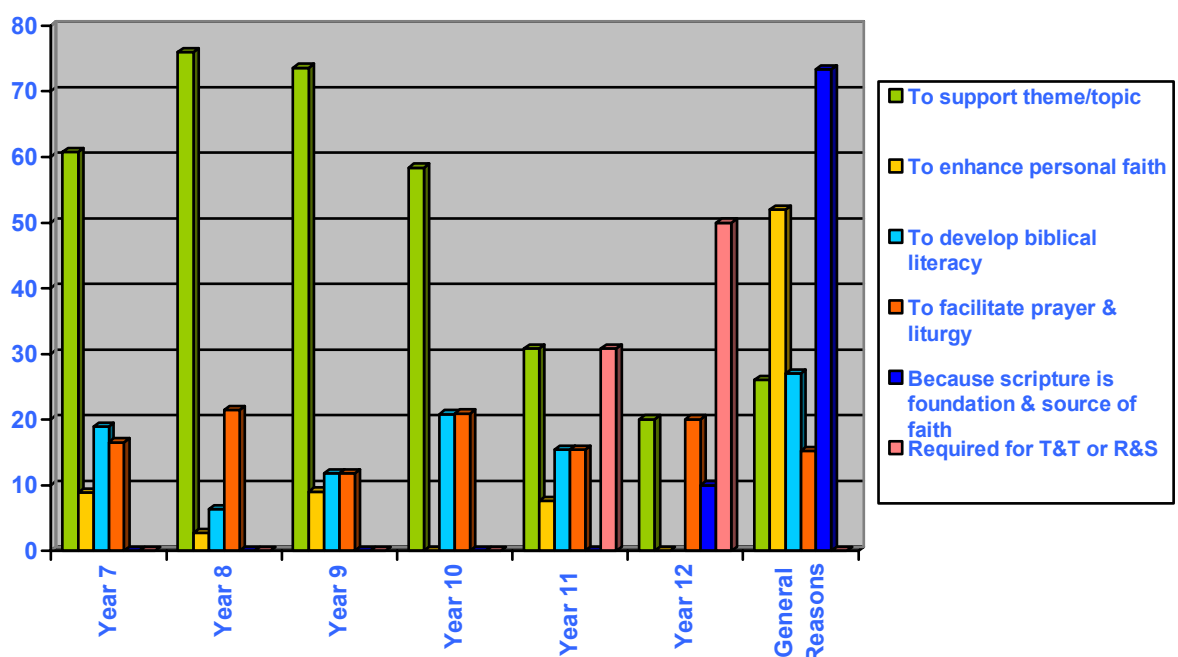
Figure 7.4 represents the average responses of RECs and RETs for Years

Seven to Ten and the RECs responses for Years 11 and 12 for why they chose the

particular passage they nominated as used in the past month. The final columns of

Figure 7.4 compares this to the general reasons given for using scripture with

students. It is immediately clear that the dominant reasons that both RECs and RETs

have for using the particular passage nominated with their students in the last month

was thematic, from Years Seven to Ten. At Years 11 and 12 a thematic reason was strong, but the dominant reason was concerned with the requirements of the state based units, *Texts and Traditions* and *Religion and Society*. Comparing these figures with the general reasons given, scripture as the foundation and source of the faith and the enhancement of personal faith were more dominant reasons than the thematic. However, all three reasons are linked. A thematic use of the bible is concerned with using passages to proof-text a theme. These themes have a strong link to key teachings of the Catholic Church i.e. Social Justice, Mary, Sacraments, Prayer, and as such are being used as the source of the faith and to enhance personal faith. They are in fact the one and the same purpose for the use of scripture with students. Thus Figure 7.4 shows a strong, dominant catechetical purpose for the use of scripture with students. This in turn can only occur in an environment where this is understood to be the purpose of religious education. Rossiter (1981, p. 24), Ryan (1999, p. 20) and Johns (1981, p. 28) all warn against this approach to religious education. Religious education cannot have the same status as other subjects within the curriculum while a predominantly catechetical approach is adopted.

Understanding of Text

Introduction

In relation to the passage of scripture respondents nominated as used with students in the previous month respondents were asked, "What is your understanding of the text?" This question was asked in order to gain further evidence of why scripture is used with students and also as a means of detecting an historical-critical use of scripture among teachers. This modern biblical understanding would be

expected in the light of the high level of qualifications in this area by respondents, and

the consequent high levels of confidence among respondents.

Table 7.4

Total: Understanding of Passage Used with Students in the past Month.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Summary of Text	30	26.8	26.8
Thematic Understanding	64	57.1	57.1
Modern Biblical Understanding	12	10.7	10.7
Other	6	5.4	5.4
Total	**112**	**100**	**100**

From Table 7.4 it can be seen that 57.1% of respondents (64 responses)

indicated their understanding of the passage in relation only to the theme or topic

being studied with students. Thirty respondents (26.8% of responses) were only able

to give an understanding of the text by summarising its content. A use of historical

criticism (a modern biblical understanding) was only indicated by twelve respondents

(10.7%).

Figure 7.5

Understanding of Passage Used with Students in the past Month: Total by Year Level.
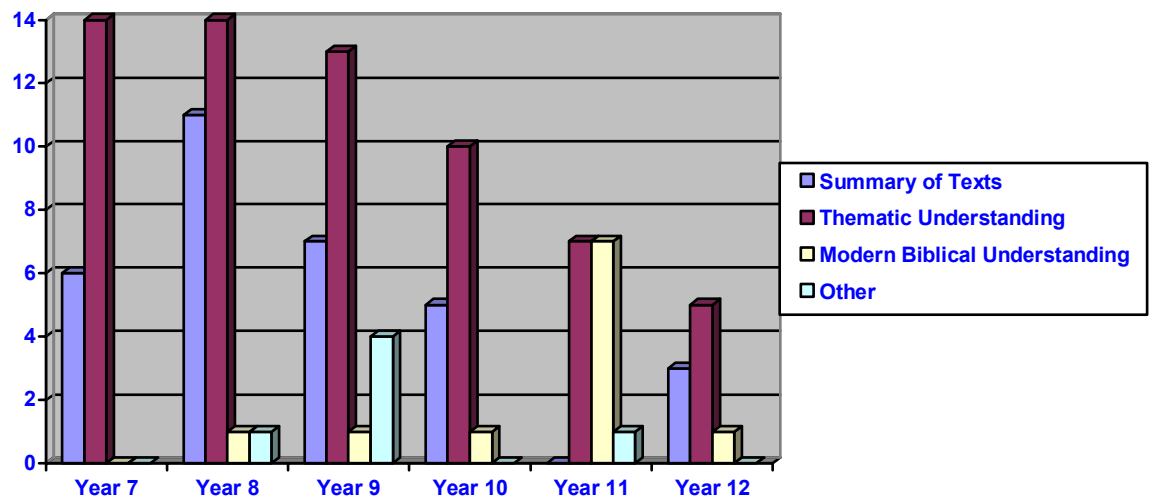
From Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.6 the predominance of a thematic understanding of the texts chosen for use with students can be seen. At Year 11 however, there is the emergence of a historical-critical use of scripture.

Figure 7.6

Understanding of Passage Chosen to Use with Students in the past Month.
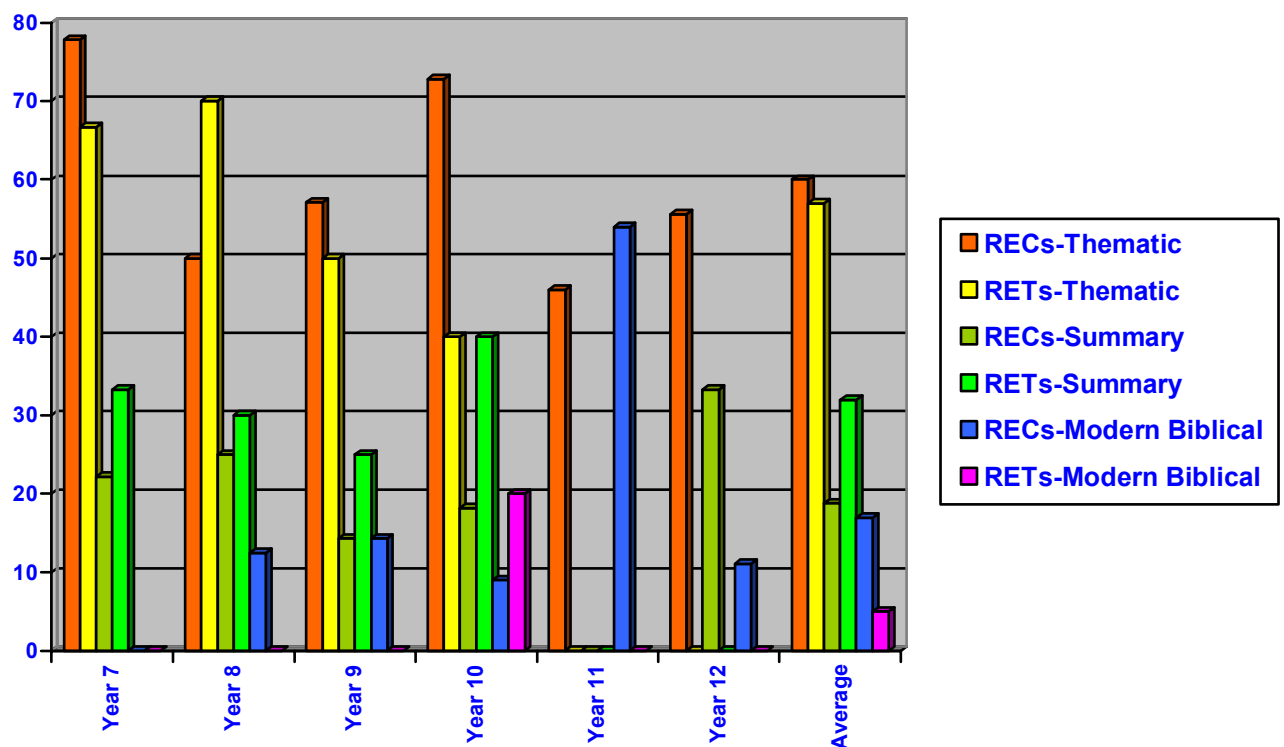
Summary of Text

At all Year levels (except RECs at Year 11) teachers summarised the texts as a way of indicating their understanding of the passage they had chosen for use with students in the past month. This was the case for an average of 26.8% of respondents. The largest number of respondents to do this was 33.3% of the Year 12 teachers (RECs), the lowest being the 14.3% of Year Nine RETs.

Examples of these summaries included:

After finally having a child, Abraham was prepared to sacrifice him for his God. [Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice in Gen 22: 12-13, Year 7] (Male, 35 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

Paul and Barnabas preach to the Gentiles who receive the Word of God. [Acts 13: 1-14: 28, Year 8] (Male, 43 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

Naughty people and good people live on earth, but when the apocalypse comes, the good will go to heaven and the sinners to hell. [in reference to the wheat and the weeds in Matt 13: 24-30, Year 9] (Female, 32 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

It outlines the discovery of the empty tomb following Jesus' crucifixion – the women, the meeting, the message and the reaction. [The resurrection of Jesus in Mk 16: 1-8, Year 10] (Male, 36 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

While it should be acknowledged that perhaps some respondents misunderstood the question, it would be difficult to believe that over one in four did (i.e. an average of 26.8%). This data suggests that many respondents could not explain a passage of scripture beyond its literal meaning. Yet, respondents to this research have high levels of qualifications, confidence and experience. Despite these qualifications it would appear that up to one in four respondents have literal, fundamental understandings of scripture. An explanation that considers a literalist understanding of scripture by respondents may explain the continuing phenomenon of proof-texting for thematic purposes that has occurred throughout this research.

A Thematic Understanding

A thematic understanding of the passage chosen was indicated by respondents

linking the passage to a particular theme or topic:

We were doing Justice issues in East Timor and in Australia (animal rights). It was a handy summary. It places God close but with a challenge. It is not simply wishy-washy religion. [Micah, Year 11] (Male, 45 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

As I use it, the forgiveness that we need to share as Christians is non-judgemental. We need to be unconditional lovers. [Women caught in adultery in Jn 8: 2-11, Year 9] (Female, 48 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

That god made us in the image of himself. What sort of person I am? God knows us. This passage helps look into that question and perhaps see what sort of persons we could be. God wants us to be fully ourselves. [Ps 139, Year 9] (Female, 52 yrs completing Bachelor of Theology)

At Year Eight the Beatitudes in the gospel of Matthew (5: 3-12), were used by

four RETs in a thematic manner:

The principles underlying Catholic Social Justice. (Female with pre-service qualifications in RE)

Being humble is valued in the eyes of God. (Female with pre-service qualifications in RE)

Humility, humbleness, equality etc "Social Justice"! (Female with pre-service qualifications in RE)

That sometimes good deeds may not be justly rewarded on this earth but they will always be rewarded in heaven. "Earthly" responsibilities and duties bring heavenly joy. I particularly like to emphasise number 7 and 9 which promotes tolerance, understanding and peace. (Female, 26 yrs no qualifications in RE)

At Year Ten RECs used a number of gospel passages in relation to the theme

of social justice:

Jesus' concern of the deliberate exclusion of the poor from their ability to fulfil their religious obligations due to the corrupt nature of the Priests within the Temple who were exploiting the merchants who in

turn exploited the poor by raising their prices thus, not permitting them to be able to afford the animals needed to be offered as Sacrifice (in brief). [Jesus cleansing the Temple in Jn 2:13-22] (Male, 34 yrs with Masters of RE)

Uselessness of material wealth. Earthly wealth and power means nothing in God's kingdom. [The rich man and Lazarus in Lk 16: 19-31] (Female, 42 yrs with Bachelor of Education in Religion and Theology)

The need to go out of ones way to help another person in need. [The Good Samaritan in Lk 10: 30-37] (Male, 37 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

That we all need to show mercy. [Good Samaritan in Lk 10: 25] (Male, 44 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

The passage expresses Jesus' special concern for the poor and marginalised. In his ministry of healing he challenges society's tendency to marginalise and discriminate against the less powerful. [The cleansing of the Leper in Mk 1: 40-42] (Female, 41 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

Over half of all respondents (58.6% on average) indicated a thematic understanding of the passage they had used with students in the previous month. Together with the thematic topics noted earlier, the general reasons for using scripture with students and the reasons for choosing their particular passage in the last month, it is clear that strong evidence has emerged that proof-texting is the major use of scripture in religious education classes in Catholic secondary schools.

Collins (1995, p. 23) warns against proof-texting suggesting that it is a fundamentalist use of the bible. Boys (1990, p. 12), Holm (1975, p. 95), and Hill (1991, p. 111) all raise the issue of fundamentalism linking it with the use of biblical passages for life themes. There is the danger that students who are presented with this approach to the use of biblical passages will not become aware of the human element in inspiration as well as the writer's style and genre.

A Modern Biblical Understanding (Historical-Critical Method)

While a thematic use of scripture has emerged strongly from the data, one in five respondents had a historical-critical understanding of the passage they had used with students in the past month:

> A proclamation text. [Empty tombs Gospel parallels, Year 9] (Male, 41 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> "J" story was something like a parable (with epic proportions). "P" a song of praise. Neither of the writers intended to describe what actually happened. Religious truth in these chapters. [Creation stories in Genesis chapters 1 & 2, Year 10] (Female, with Bachelor of Arts majoring in Biblical Studies and English)

Over half of the RECs at Year 11 indicated an historical critical understanding of the passage they had chosen. This was a much stronger level of understanding than at any other level, and reflected the teaching of the VCAA *Texts and Traditions* Units. The next highest was 20% of RETs at Year Ten. Examples of this historical-critical understanding at Year 11 included:

> That it is Jesus' preparation for His Galilean Ministry. Got into Genre, Themes, Purpose, Audience and the like. [Lk 3] (Male, 50 yrs with Masters of Theology)

> That Luke presented the Passion Narrative within the context of Jesus' death being brought about and centred around religious aspect. Jesus died for religious, not political reasons. [The Passion narrative in Lk 22 & 23] (Female, 53 yrs completing Masters of Theology)

> Probably post-resurrection story. Wavering faith of early Christians – fear of persecution. Disciples didn't recognize who Jesus was. [Jesus walks on the water in Mtt 14: 22-33] (Female, 52 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> Clearly expressed life of Johannine community in its dealings with Judaism after war of 70 AD. [Jesus heals a blind man in Jn 9] (Male, 36 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> The infancy narratives highlight the theological/christological perspective of the evangelist. It also incorporates O.T. passages/allusions and reflects concerns of the community. [Infancy Narratives in Lk 1] (42 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

Aims in Using Chosen Text with Students

Introduction

Further clarification of the use of these passages was sought with the question, "What were your aims in using this passage with your students?" It was expected that there would be a similarity with this question and the question about why the passage was chosen for use, and also with the general question about why the respondents used scripture with students.[27]

Table 7.5

Total: Aims in Using Selected Passage with Students.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
To support theme/topic	115	45.1	95.8
To enhance personal faith/experience	73	28.6	60.8
To develop Biblical Literacy	34	13.3	28.3
To facilitate prayer & liturgy	16	6.3	13.3
Required for T&T or R&S	4	1.6	3.3
Other	13	5.1	10.8
Total	**255**	**100**	**212.3**

The aims given for using the selected passage with students supported the reasons given for choosing the passage. As Table 7.5 shows, to support the theme or topic being taught was indicated by 95.8% of respondents (115 responses). However, a second major aim emerged, which was not indicated by "Why chosen". "To enhance personal faith" was indicated as an aim in using the passage by 60.8% of respondents (73 responses). This is supported by the reasons given in the general open ended question earlier, "Why do you use scripture with students?" As well as

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[27] See Tables 5.27 & 5.28, p. 156.

this, in response to the question about aims in using the passage, the development of biblical literacy had a stronger response (34 responses compared to 14 for "Why chosen"). This is partly due to respondents indicating up to four aims in using the passage. "To support the theme or topic being taught" was the primary reason given.

Figure 7.7

Aims in Using Passage: Total by Year Level.
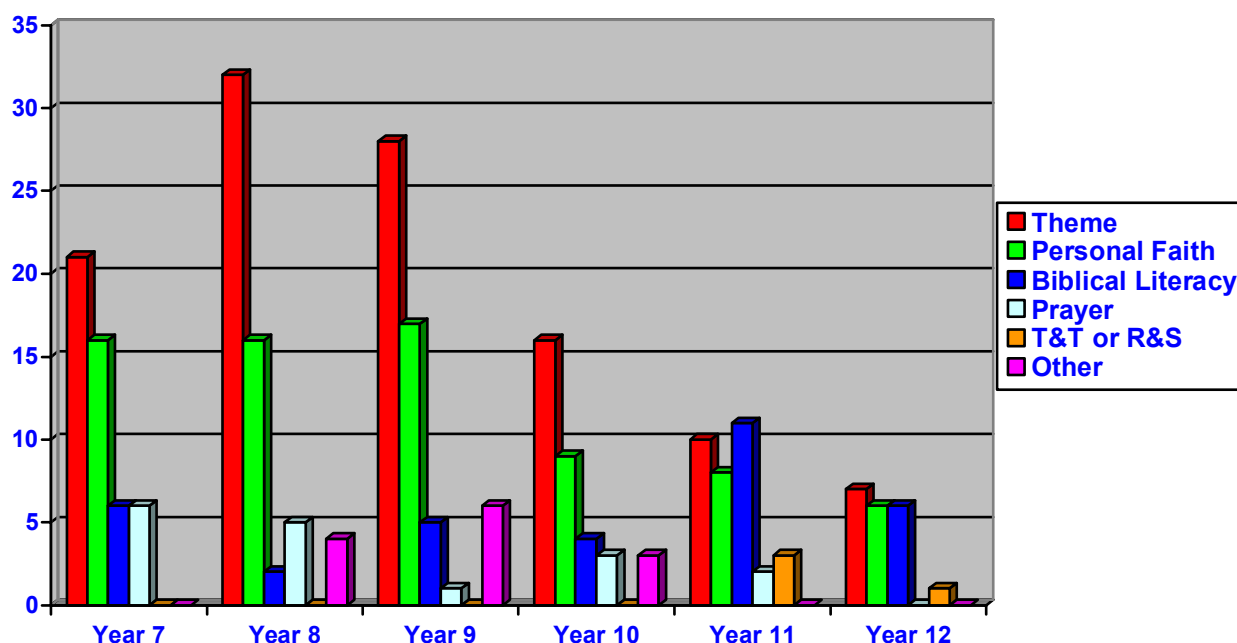
As Figure 7.7 shows, respondents from Years Seven to Ten have the supporting of the theme or topic as the major aim in using the passage with students. However, the enhancement of personal faith also emerges as a major aim. At Years 11 and 12, aims are more evenly spread. The supporting of the theme, personal faith and the development of biblical literacy are all indicated. The development of biblical literacy emerges more strongly at Years 11 and 12 because of the influence of the VCE *Texts and Traditions* Units.

To Support the Theme being Taught

An average 90% of RECs and RETs indicated that their aim in using the passage was to support the theme being taught. This was to be expected if responses were to be consistent with previous indications concerning why respondents used scripture with students, and this researcher's analysis of the number of thematic topics taught throughout Years Seven to 12 with scripture. Examples of respondents' comments concerning aims in using the passage with students that were thematic in nature included:

> The theme for the year: Is life after death – resurrection and life everlasting. ["I am the resurrection and the life" in Jn 11: 25, Year 11] (Female, 58 yrs completing Masters of Theology)
>
> - To show theological basis of ministry activity.
> - To show relation of liberation theology.
> - To show the nature of suffering and evil and its relation to fear and dehumanisation.
> - To show its relation to the kingdom belief.
>
> [Jesus is rejected at Nazareth in Lk 4: 16-19, Year 11] (Male, 39 yrs with no qualifications in RE)
>
> To provide a scriptural basis for our response in East Timor and for school fundraising. [Good Samaritan in Lk 10: 25, Social justice in Year 10] (Male, 44 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

As indicated by this last response, using scripture in a thematic way is about providing a, "scriptural basis" for the topic being taught. It is not necessarily concerned with the context of the passage or the message intended by the author. As has been shown, this can be a misuse of scripture which can lead to a literalist reading of the passage.

To Enhance Personal Faith of Students

The strong catechetical understanding of the nature of religious education that has become evident through this research, was further reinforced by the number of aims that concerned using the passage of scripture to enhance students' personal faith:

> To give them a greater appreciation of a love commitment. [Love in 1 Cor 13, Year 9] (Male, 48 yrs with Bachelor of theology)

> To have students appreciate how Jesus' teachings on how to live have moved away from the legalistic language of the 10 Commandments to a more invitational call to work towards "Gods Kingdom". [The Beatitudes in Matt 5: 3-10, Year 9] (Female, 50 yrs with Grad Dip in RE)

Particularly at the Year 11 and 12 level, this desire on the part of respondents to enhance students' personal faith was linked to students' personal experiences of the world around them. At the time of the research (late 1999) this included the situation in East Timor and the question of Aboriginal land rights. Both of these issues received wide publicity and discussion in the Australian media. Teachers' aims here included:

> To simply put forward how one responds to the needs of people and God in as simple form as possible. It was meant to "theologise' a situation (East Timor) and animal rights. [Micah, Year 11] (Male, 45 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

> To assist students' understanding of injustices done to indigenous peoples where appropriation of land is concerned and to help them understand that this violates justice in the O.T. sense. [Naboth's Vineyard in 1 Kings 21, Year 11] (Female, 53 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

At Year 12, respondents' aims to enhance students' personal faith was coloured by respondents' personal agenda for students:

- To present a balanced view of the issue of homosexuality as presented by scripture scholars.
- To challenge homophobia and help keep gay students safe.

[Towns that reject the disciples in Lk 10: 10-13, Year 12] (Female, 42 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

To promote their self esteem and Biblical links to Human Rights. [Creation in Gen 1: 1-2: 4a, Year 12] (Male, 39 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

To enable it to in some way encapsulate their Year 12 experience – and point them towards their future. [The vine and the branches in Jn 15: 1-11, Year 12] (Female, 52 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

To inspire them with confidence in their own life's work. [The resurrection in Jn 20: 1-18, Year 12] (Female, 55 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

This data suggests that teachers bring their personal faith and beliefs into the religious education classroom as they endeavour to enhance the personal faith of their students. This would further suggest that the catechetical aims within religious education classrooms across Victorian Catholic secondary education predominate.

To Develop Biblical Literacy

Compared to supporting the theme and enhancing personal faith, the development of biblical literacy was a minor aim in using passages from the bible with students in the previous month. However, particularly at the senior levels (Years 10, 11 & 12) this aim became more dominant:

For students to understand the deeper meanings of the text. (Layering).
- the richness of the text
- links to O.T.
- relevance to the experience of the Johannine community.
[The Samaritan Woman in Jn 4, Year 12] (Male, 41 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

To explore the nature of God and God's relationship with his creation. To teach them the complexity of the text and its need for interpretation in the light of the history that produced it. To explore the tension between science and Christianity to see if "truth" can be found in both. [Creation myths in Gen 1 & 2, Year 12] (Female, 45 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

- Understanding how the literary form is being used.
- Understand the christology that underlies the text.
- Identify the message for today.
- Identify the concerns of the community.

[Infancy Narratives. in Lk 1, Year 11] (42 yrs with Bachelor of Theology)

It was particularly impressive to see respondents challenging students in Year

Ten with the complexities of the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship:

To highlight similarities and differences with accounts in the other Gospels – Luke, John and Matthew. (The resurrection of Jesus in Mk 16: 1-8)

To explain how Jesus told stories in parables to convey very simple messages. (The parable of the great banquet in Lk 14: 16-24)

Aims Immediate
- To re-read this passage in the light of a diagram of Ancient Hebrew Cosmology (from Boadt).

Mid & Long Term
- To see the OT, especially Creation, in its cultural and historical context. (This is a familiar text).

Long-term, Overall
- To tackle what I see as a "compartmentalizing of knowledge and attitudes and beliefs – one belief in Science classes and another compliant (or overtly so) attitude in RE/ or refusal to consider the faith basis of Christian belief in this area. (Creation in Gen 1: 1-2: 1)

Figure 7.8

Aims in Using Chosen Text with Students in the past Month.
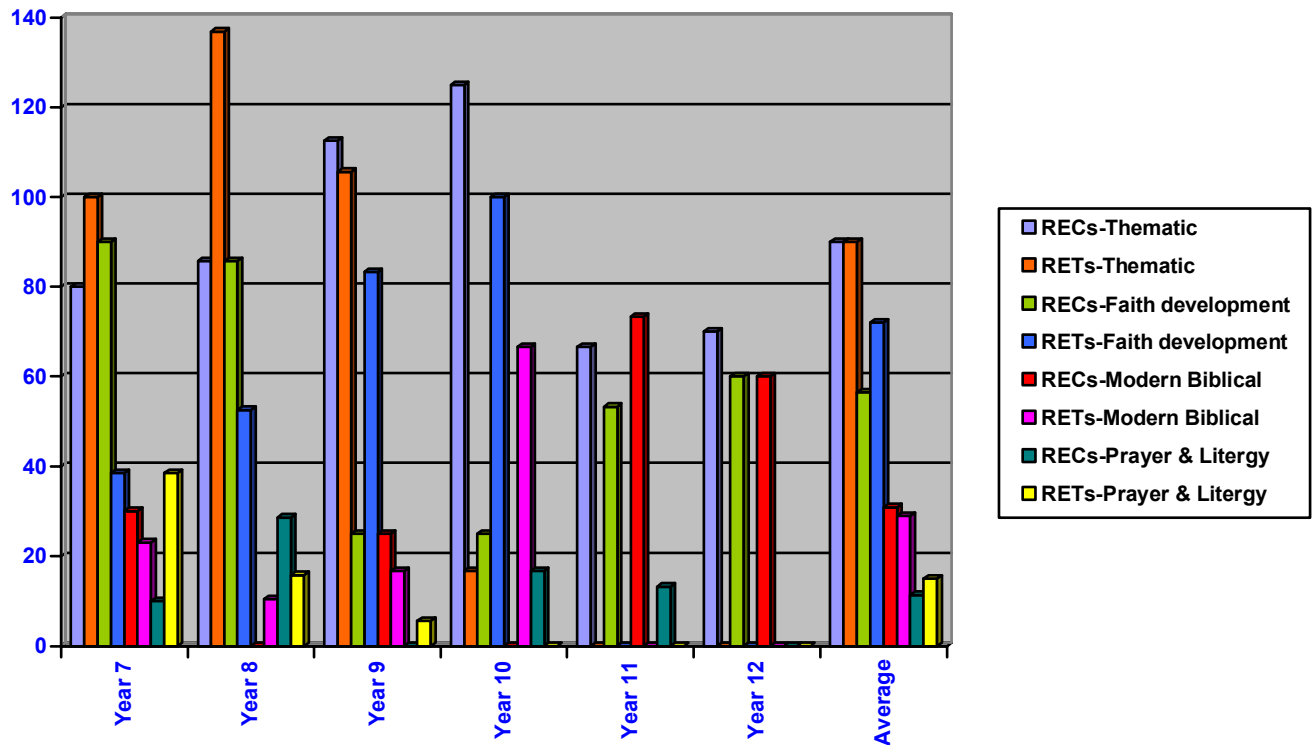
As for passages used in the last year, passages used in the previous month confirm the predominance of a thematic use of scripture in Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

Communication of the Text and Learning Activities Employed with the Text

Introduction

In the literature review in Chapter Three, teacher methodology in the use of scripture was discussed in detail. All manner of communication tools were discussed from the simple reading of the text, through to role play and drama, and the use of visual art, music, videos and computers. However, this chapter also highlighted more than all these methods of communication the importance of the use of the historical-critical method with students. Researchers were concerned that if critical methods of analysis were not used with students, that scripture use would be reduced to fundamentalism and proof-texting. The questions to respondents on how they communicated their chosen passage with students, and what learning activities they used with this passage, sought evidence concerning these issues.

Table 7.6

Total: Communication of Scripture.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Read	86	30.8	71.7
Discuss	47	16.8	39.2
Role Play/Drama	20	7.2	16.7
Teacher Explanation	27	9.7	22.5
Through Liturgy	9	3.2	7.5
Drawing/Art	5	1.8	4.2
Relate to personal experience	13	4.7	10.8
Exegetical Analysis	16	5.8	13.3
Other	56	20	46.7
Total	**279**	**100**	**232.6**

Table 7.6 indicates that reading and discussion were the most popular methods of communication of the passage to students (30.8% and 16.8% of responses respectively). However, there was a significant spread of other methods including drama and role-play, teacher explanation, liturgy, drawing and art and exegetical

analysis. This suggests the use of a number of methods within any one class to communicate the passage of scripture chosen for use with students. The data therefore suggests that teachers are aware of and use a variety of methods to suit the different learning styles within their classes when teaching scripture.

Figure 7.9

Communication of Scripture: Total by Year Level.
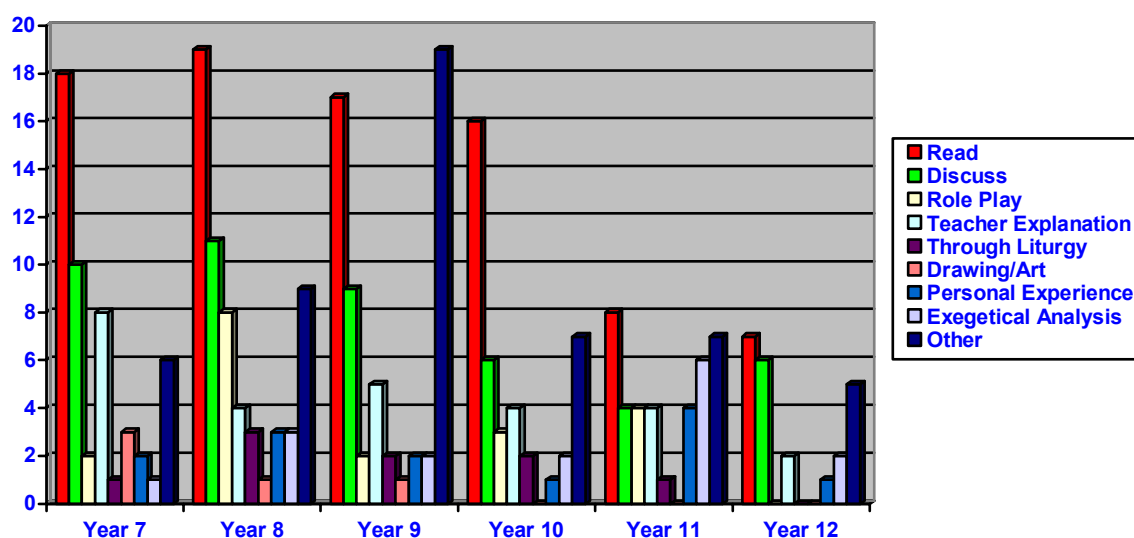
Figure 7.9 indicates that the use of reading and discussion are spread wide across Year levels. Teacher explanation and relating to students' personal experience also crossed all Year levels.

Table 7.7

Total Learning Activities Employed.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Reading	28	10.7	23.7
Discussion	33	12.6	28
Role Play	20	7.6	17
Answering Question	30	11.5	25.4
Exegesis	14	5.3	11.9
Creative Responses	48	18.3	40.7
Audio Visual	5	1.9	4.2
Other	84	32.1	71
Total	**262**	**100**	**221.9**

Table 7.7 supports the picture of methods used in communicating the passage to students. Reading and discussion at 23.7% and 28% of respondents respectively are major learning activities employed with students. However, Table 7.7 highlights creative responses (40.7% of respondents) and the answering of questions (25.45 of respondents) as activities of importance with students. Exegesis also has a role with 11.9% of respondents referring to it.

Figure 7.10

Learning Activities: Total by Year Level.
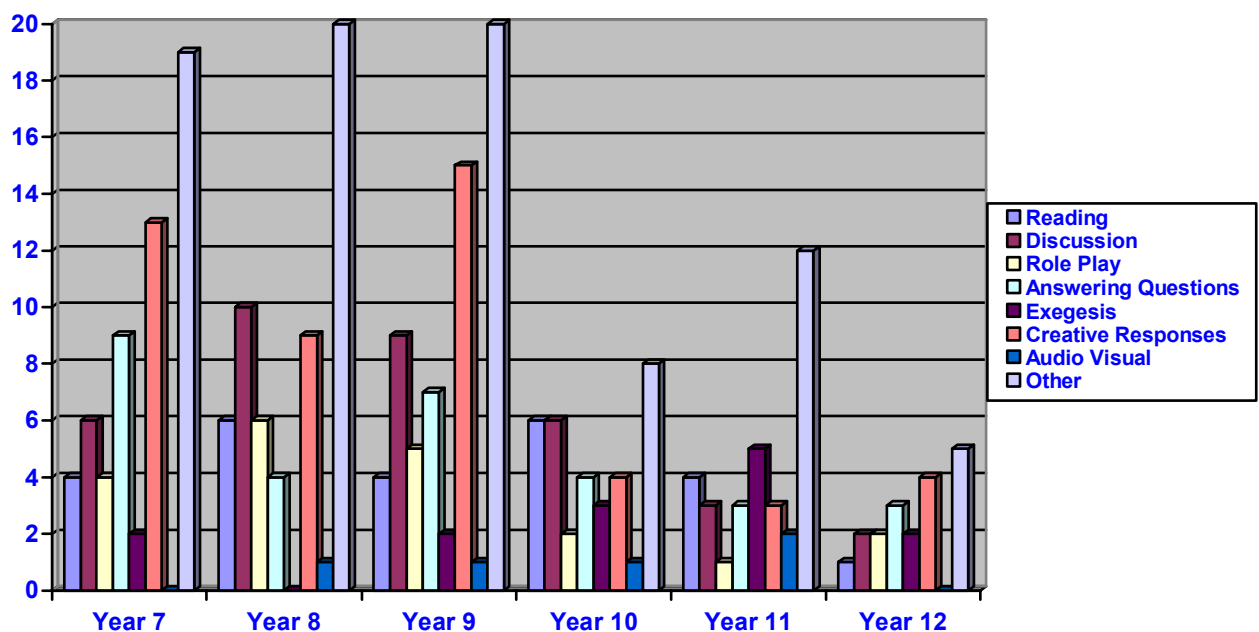
From Figure 7.10 it can be seen that reading, discussion, role play, the answering of questions and creative responses appear across all Year level.

At all Year levels both RECs and RETs employed many methods in the communication of their particular passage of scripture. At Year Seven, for example, activities included the re-telling of the passage, the production of a comic strip, the acting out of the story and group discussion:

We read the passage from Bible. In pairs, students re-told story to one another. I explained the cultural aspects of landholders, family farms, expected behaviour of the Father in their society, with diagram on board. Re-read the passage. (Lk 15-The Prodigal Son)

Read section in groups – these presented their section to the class. Students then presented a comic strip of a section of the story. (Joseph in Gen 37-47)

Read with expression from the Good News translation whilst students followed silently in their own copy. We had previously acted this story out in a class mass with blue cloth representing the sea and a small object the boat whilst it was being read. (Jesus stilling the storm in Mk 4: 35-41)

Had the students look it up\discuss in groups\report to the class. I structured questions that I put to them – we brain-stormed responses – I "guided" interpretation. It was really good. (Ruth Chp 1)

At Year Eight with reference to the Beatitudes in the gospel of Matthew,

Chapter five:

Discussion and feedback from the students as to their understanding of the text and examples of aspects of the text alive in society today.

Role play in the time of Christ. Modern role play in the 20th century. Historical context. Who were these people?

I read each Beatitude to the class, one at a time, and encouraged students to define the context in their own words. We discussed various senarios from everyday life which could illustrate each Beatitude eg East Timor and people like Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King.

Some of these methods of communication do show evidence of the use of

historical-criticism. At Year Ten for example, the historical settings of the passages

were explained by some respondents:

We read them together. Had a chart of Yahwhist and Priestly writers. (Creation stories in Genesis 1 & 2)

Read the account. Students imagined they were observers/described events – what they saw. Explain their perceptions. Re read the text, explain salient points, persons, groups involved. Explained Temple practices – link this to their observations – Hopefully a better understanding. Role play events. (Jesus cleansing the Temple in Jn 2:13-22)

At Year 11 the use of the historical-critical method in communicating the text was very clear. As has been previously stated, this is accounted for by the influence of the VCE units *Texts and Traditions* as they are designed for the purpose of using the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis with senior secondary students:

> Through reading the passage. Examining the various stages in the development of the Passion – major religious and political characters, venues, discussion, biblical commentaries and film – Interpretation of the Passion as portrayed in Jesus of Montreal.[28] (The Passion narrative in Lk 22 & 23)

> We actually discussed the Big Bang theory, then linked in to Genesis. Discussion on different kinds of "truth". (Creation stories in Genesis)

> We completed a dialogue reading of the passage. Students were also given background to the passage. Passage was also used in liturgy at conclusion of unit. (Naboth's Vineyard in 1 Kings 21)

> 1. We read it out loud in class.
> 2. I commented as we read the text.
> 3. We read commentaries on the text (J.B.C./Sacra Pegina etc).
> 4. I questioned them on key words, symbols, themes. Phrases of the passage.
> 5. Practice exam questions.
> 6. Go over practice exam questions in class.
> 7. Individual study on the text.
> 8. Looked at related scriptures.
>
> (Lk 3)

These communication techniques were reinforced with activities. Having students retell the texts in a contemporary situation was common in the junior Year levels:

> Re-write the passage in their own idiom. List things that hold us captive, blind us etc. (Lk 4:16-21, Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth, Year 7)

> Re-tell as picture story. Identify those in need in school/community – those teased/left out/lonely/disabled/poor etc. (The Last Judgement in Matthew 25: 31-46, Year 7)

---

[28] A contemporary Canadian film.

Rewriting prayer in contemporary language. Choosing one sentence/phrase to reflect on during silent prayer. (The Lord's Prayer in Mtt 6: 7-15, Year 8)

The use of drama and role play particularly at Year Eight was highlighted by respondents:

We role played interviews of Biblical women talking about their lives. (The Wedding at Cana in Jn 2: 1-11)

- Role play – students enacting situations where these aspects were demonstrated.
- Newspaper articles.

(The Beatitudes in Mtt 5: 1-19)

Students role-played this story (with use of a Narrator). We discussed the story and the impact of Jesus' actions 2000 years ago, and looked at present day implications. (Jesus at Simon's home in Lk 7: 36-50)

Teacher directed questions and discussion were key strategies used to bring the historical-critical method to bear on the text:

A mix of video, reading, reflection. Exercise question from NZ series "The Teaching of Jesus" which explores Reign of God, Kingdom parables, Awareness parable. (Matt 25: 31-46 The Last Judgement)

Use of maps. Cross scriptural referencing. Reference to world events – East Timor, Newspaper articles. (Lk 3: 21-4: 15, Jesus' Baptism, genealogy and temptation, Year 8)

As for communication of the text, the historical-critical method was more clearly expressed as a learning activity in the senior years:

Compared other forms of stories in the Gospel to explain the different styles of writing. i.e. miracles, pronouncement stories. (The parable of the great banquet in Lk 14: 16-24, Year 10)

I explained how the three little pigs was a story with some truth but not a real story. The walking with one's God was similar – a truth but not literal: Discussion of main issues and notes on the board. (Micah, Year 11)

Key questions (based on reading of commentaries of Gospel) developed to illicit responses from students. (The Samaritan Woman in Jn 4, Year 12)

As indicated in Chapter Three of this thesis, the data on communication and learning activities reflected a wide variety of methods. The main issue discussed in Chapter Three concerning teacher methodology, the use of historical-critical method, was addressed by the data. A number of respondents were concerned to include this method in their teaching of scripture. However, since it is included with and linked to respondents' use of other methods, it is difficult to extract evidence for the historical-critical method from the data. The historical-critical method is certainly used, particularly at the more senior levels, and is generally a teacher directed activity with the use of various other resources such as commentaries.

This data needs to be seen in the light of the previous data on topics taught, why passages were chosen for use and the respondents' understanding of the text. With this data in mind, the issues previously addressed on fundamentalism and proof-texting which researchers whose work was reviewed in Chapter Three raised, are not clearly put to rest by this data on communication of the texts and learning activities employed. That is, the data on communication of the texts, while including use of the historical-critical method, indicated a variety of other modes of communication, which could be linked to the use of scripture for thematic purposes.

Students' Experience related to Passage

Overview

Completing the discussion of methods used in presenting the selected passage to students, is data regarding how the respondents related the passage to the students' personal experience.

Table 7.8

Total Relating to Students' Experience.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Questions/Discussion relating to students' personal experience	75	56.4	76.5
Questions/Discussion relating to global issues	19	14.3	19.4
Teacher explanation	23	17.3	23.5
Retell in contemporary situation	6	4.5	6.1
Prayer	10	7.5	10.2
Total	**133**	**100**	**135.7**

Table 7.8 shows that 95.9% of respondents related the passage to students' personal experience through discussion, which for 19.4% of respondents included reference to global issues particularly those with a social justice theme such as poverty and discrimination. Teacher explanation, the retelling of the story in a contemporary setting and prayer were also used.

Figure 7.11

Relate to Students' Experience: Total by Year Level.
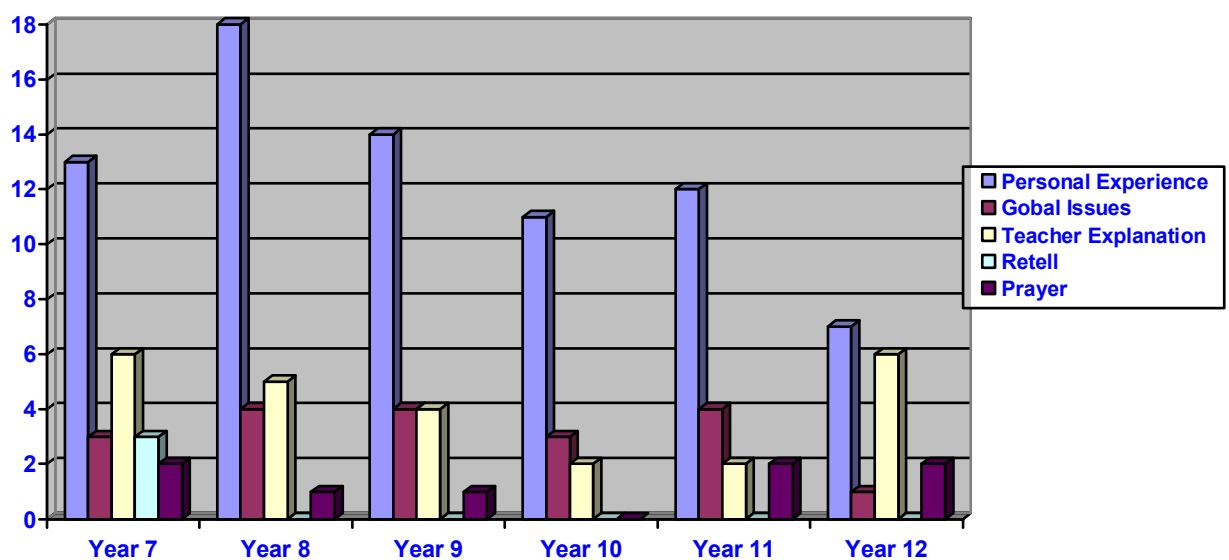
Figure 7.11 indicates that this discussion of student's personal experience including global issues crossed all Year levels. Teacher explanation and prayer as minor methods of relating to students' experience also crossed all Year Levels. The retelling of the story in a contemporary setting was confined to Year Seven.

Relating to students' Personal Experience

The data suggests that teachers are keen for scripture to be a catalyst for classroom discussion. To facilitate this aim teachers set questions that called on their students to draw on their personal experience and make links with the selected passage:

> With questions – with reference to all women we researched we noted common points of behaviour and expectation and compared this for women today – the boys could easily relate to their sisters/mum etc. (in reference to a study of Ruth and O.T. representations of woman, Year 7)

> Using everyday situations and examples from their own life and TV soaps, students found the Ten Commandments easy for comparison. (in reference to the Ten Commandments in Ex 20: 1-17, Year 7)

> They had all been to a wedding. They understood the importance of celebration and the role their Mothers have on their own lives. (The Wedding at Cana in Jn 2: 1-11, Year 8)

> The idea is to re-discover an awareness of the uniqueness of the human person in the image and likeness of God. Students' shared moments of the mystery and wonder of their own growth. (Creation of male and female in Gen 1: 26-27, Year 10)

By Year 12, these personal experiences of students are not necessarily happy ones but can be deep experiences that need to be reflected upon to discover the meaning of life:

> It came in the context of discussion about God. Is God mystery or is God immanent? We talked about the nature of paradox. We talked about the death of one of the students last year and the possibility or not of miracles. (Creation myths in Gen 1 & 2)

Basing one youth's story about the inhospitality of the Catholic parish, simply because he was gay. (Towns that reject the disciples in Lk 10: 10-13)

Global Issues and Other

The global issues teachers linked to their study of the selected passage were generally concerned with social justice:

Current world events – particularly Indonesia/Timor crises, and current spate of "boat people" arrivals. Discussion on equality, freedom, opportunities. (in reference to the study of the Prodigal son in Lk 15: 11-32, Year 8)

Students check through newspapers, mags etc. for examples of injustice and discrimination. (The Good Samaritan in Lk 10: 30-37, Year 9)

We related it to the experience of the East Timorese on this occasion and that we could assume either the priest's role/response or Samaritan.
(in reference to The Good Samaritan in Lk 10: 30-37, Year 10)

Minor means of relating the passage to students' experience included prayer:

Invited their reflection upon the year and its meaning. Then chose a Gospel passage that would reflect this spirit. They were able to lead the process of enacting the passage and the whole liturgy of the word. (The vine and the branches in Jn 15: 1-11, Year 12)

Their involvement in Poor Mans (sic) Masses and donations to St. Vincent De Paul Lentan Projects and Foster Child sponsorship. (social Justice in Isaiah 58: 6-7, Year 8)

We sat in our Chapel and prayed the First Joyful mystery – "The Annunciation". I asked the students if anyone had experienced an incident where somebody turned up out of the blue and had a request for them, we discussed. (The Annunciation in Lk 1: 26-38, Year 7).

Retelling the passage in a contemporary situation:

I asked them to write their own creation myth to answer the questions we have about how we come to be. (Genesis 1-3, Year 7)

And teacher explanation:

Through reflection on the story in that we must not first see the details as good and interesting, but make them relevant to our everyday life –

show the face of Christ to all with whom we come into contact: classroom, school yard, at the bus stop etc. Thank God for the people the students have mentioned, who are Good Samaritans. (The Parable of the Good Samaritan in Lk 10: 25-37, Year 7)

Conclusion

By engaging the students in this manner respondents were attempting to make scripture relevant to students' lives. While engaging students this way is important in their learning process, from the data previously gathered by this research, this engagement can be linked to a thematic and catechetical purpose. In other words, teachers are relating the scripture passages to students' personal lives for the purpose of faith development. Considering respondents' indications as to why they use scripture with students, this is to be expected. However, this use of scripture in the religious education classroom is contentious. Scholars who favour the use of literary critical method and reader response criticism (see Chapter Two of this thesis) would suggest that this is appropriate. Literary critical method which focuses on the implied reader (a believer) suggests that the text is subjective and is designed to bring about a growth in self-understanding on the part of the reader.

As shown in Chapter Two of this thesis reader response criticism goes even further suggesting, that students of scripture must go beyond historical criticism so that the reader can take account of the meaning of the text for him or herself. In this understanding, the response of the reader determines the meaning and significance of the text.

In the context of literary critical method and reader response criticism, it is important to relate scripture passages to students' personal experiences. However, scholars who propose the use of the historical critical method would take issue with

this. They claim that the message of the original author could be lost without reference to the historical/social setting in which the texts was written. They indicate that the text has a meaning that may not be discovered if historical-critical method is not used. These scholars would also be concerned that the text could then have a different meaning according to who is reading the passage, and could also lead to a literalist interpretation.

However, despite the concerns of the scholars of the historical-critical method, the use of the literary critical method and reader response criticism together with the historical-critical method would allow teachers' and students' concerns to impinge on the text. This approach, which takes into account the use of three different methods of modern biblical scholarship, allows an important interaction between the text and the reader to occur. As the PBC says, it is important that approaches to biblical criticism other than the historical-critical method are used in the interpretation of the biblical text (1993, pp. 132-135).

Resources in Respondents' Preparation and Books/Curriculum Materials Used in Presenting the Passage to Students

Introduction

Respondents were asked to indicate the resources/books/curriculum materials they found useful in their own preparation for the use of the text that they had indicated, or for use in presenting the text to students. This was designed to enable a fuller picture of how the teacher prepared for the class and developed the learning activities and communication methods indicated earlier. This data could also be compared to the earlier question to RECs asking for an indication of up to five of the most used resources available in the school for using scripture with students.

Overview

Table 7.9

Total Resources in Preparation.

	Frequency	*Percentage of Responses*	*Percentage of Respondents*
Bible	31	15.1	29.2
Biblical Reference Texts	19	9.2	18
Biblical/theological books/articles	38	18.5	35.9
Guidelines	11	5.4	10.4
Student Texts	43	21	40.6
None	9	4.4	8.5
Personal knowledge	11	5.4	10.4
Other	43	21	40.6
Total	**205**	**100**	**193.6**

The student's text (40.6% of respondents) was the most frequently cited resource used by respondents in their own personal preparation for presenting their passage of scripture to students. Biblical/theological books or articles was the second most cited resource (35.9%) with the bible itself being used as a third resource (29.2%). Other minor resources included biblical reference texts (18%) and the *Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* (1995) and respondents' personal knowledge (both at 10.4% of respondents). Overall, nine respondents indicated that no resources were used in their preparation of the passage.

Figure 7.12

Resources in Preparation: Total by Year Level.
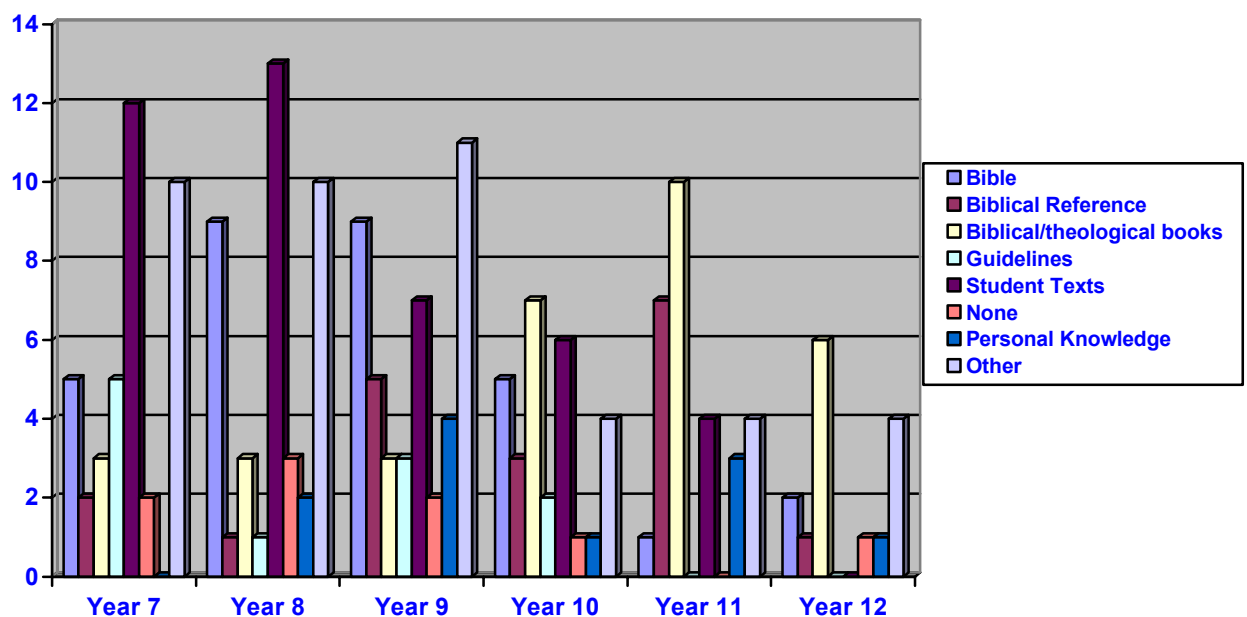
Figure 7.12 shows that the student's text is the predominant resource in Years Seven and Eight, followed by the bible itself. In Year Nine the bible was used more widely than the student's text. At Years Ten, 11 and 12 biblical/theological books and articles become the major resource. However, the second most frequently cited resource differed from level to level. At Year Ten the second most cited resource was the student's text followed by the bible. At Year 11 it was biblical reference texts followed by the student's text while at Year 12 other than biblical/theological books or articles all other references were minor.

Table 7.10

Total Books/Curriculum Materials Found Useful.

	Frequency	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Respondents
Bible	31	18.2	30.1
Biblical Reference Texts	14	8.3	13.6
Student Texts	39	23	37.9
School produced texts	8	4.7	7.8
None	13	7.6	12.6
Own resources	7	4.1	6.8
Biblical/Theological books/articles	15	8.8	14.6
Other	43	25.3	41.7
Total	**170**	**100**	**165.1**

When asked to indicate what books or curriculum materials respondents found useful in presenting the passage to students, the student's text was most frequently cited (37.9% of respondents). This is similar to resources used in respondent's own preparation (40.6%). The bible was the second most frequently cited material (30.1% of respondents) followed by biblical/theological books or articles (14.6%) and biblical reference texts (13.6%). Eight respondents referred to school produced resources, seven to their own materials while 13 indicated that no materials were helpful in presenting the passage to students.

Figure 7.13

Books/Curriculum Materials Used: Total by Year Level.
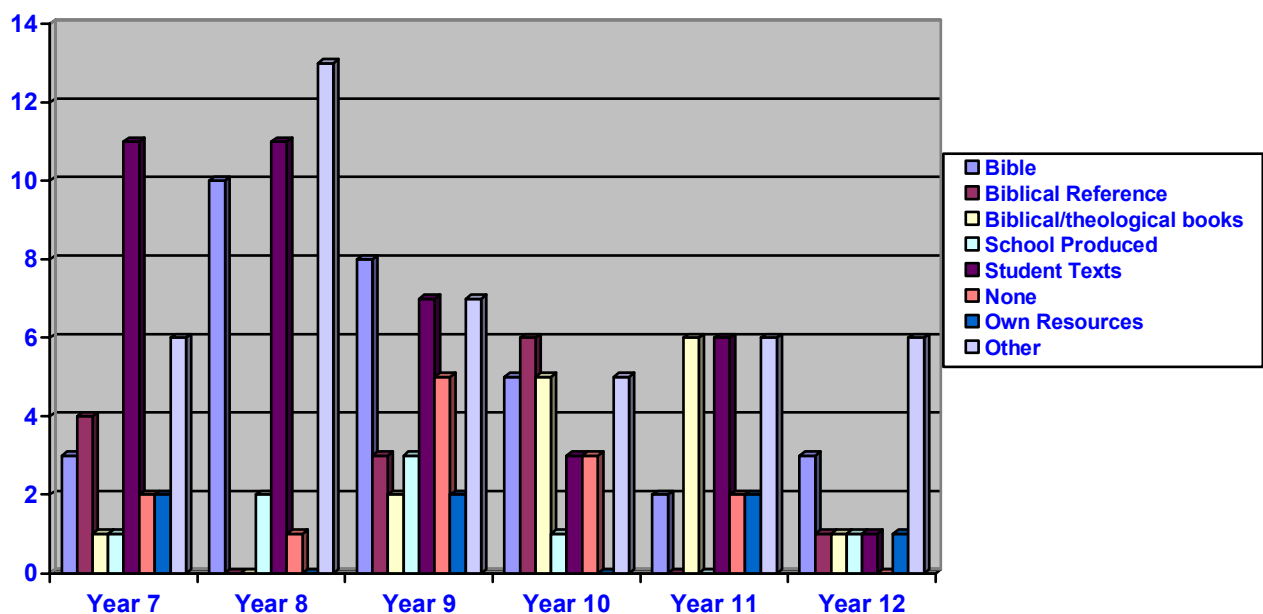
Figure 7.13 showed that the most frequently cited materials for presenting the passage to students was the student's text in Years Seven and Eight (if "Other" is excluded). At Year Nine it was the bible closely followed by the student's text. At Year Ten the bible, biblical reference texts and biblical/theological books or articles were evenly spread. At Year 11 it was biblical/theological books or articles and the student's text while Year 12 was evenly mixed.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from these figures. Firstly, there is a strong similarity between resources used by teachers in their own preparation and books/curriculum materials used with students. The student text is the most popular in both cases (40.6% and 37.9% of respondents respectively). This confirms the data presented in Chapter Six where the student text was shown to be the resource most frequently referred to by RECs when listing resources available in their schools for the teaching of scripture (35.4% of references by 133.9% of respondents).

Secondly, the bible itself was a resource used by 29.2% of respondents in their own preparation and by 30.1% of respondents with their students in presenting the passage they had selected. This suggests that less than one third of respondents actually used the bible personally or with their students when preparing or presenting the passage they had selected. When compared to resources available, these figures are confirmed, as 33.9% of respondents had indicated the bible as a resource available. Again, the conclusion reached is that there is a lack of use of the primary source when teaching scripture with students.

Thirdly, while biblical reference texts and biblical/theological books or articles are a minor component of the resources and materials used as they were in resources analysed in Chapter Six of this thesis, they are more prominent in the senior years of Ten, 11 and 12 (see Figure 7.12). This may be due to the influence of *Texts and Traditions* and the recognition by the teachers of these units of the need to engage students in the use of their critical intellectual skills as they become more cognitively able. Chapter Three of this thesis established that developmental psychology recognises that older adolescent children can think conceptually and are able to their critical intellectual faculties.

Fourthly, nine respondents indicated that they did not use any resources in the preparation of their text, and thirteen respondents indicated that they found no books or curriculum materials helpful in the presentation of the passage to students. Perhaps these respondents did not understand the question, or for other reasons declined to answer it. However, since some of these respondents did take the time to write "none" this may not be the case. It appears that this group of respondents did not feel the need to consult any resource. Many reasons can be considered as to why this

would be the case. It could be that their qualifications and experience in this area are such that they are confident and sure in how to use their selected passages with students. While this may be the case, it could also be that personal familiarity with the passage from a faith perspective gives them this confidence. This type of confidence may well be misplaced as it reflects a catechetical knowledge and use of the passage. These respondents may not be engaging students' critical intellectual skills at all. Since the data presented in this thesis suggests that the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis is predominantly being used with senior students only in the VCE units *Texts and Traditions* this may well be the case.

Conclusion

The personal practice of RECs and RETs supports the conclusions discussed in Chapter Six on the general practice in Catholic schools in Victoria with the use of scripture with students.

There is evidence of the practice of modern biblical scholarship using the hisorical-critical method, but like the general practice discussed in Chapter Six it is limited in scope. Respondents did indicate the development of biblical literacy as a minor reason in choosing their particular passage for use with students. Some indicated an historical-critical understanding of the passage as well as indicating the development of biblical literacy as an aim in using the passage. There was also some use of the historical-critical method in learning activities and communication methods used. However, like the conclusions discussed in Chapter Six, these were minor and limited in scope.

The over-reliance on the student text was clear in the data. It was the most popular resource used by teachers in their own preparation for presentation of the

scripture passage to students, as well as the most popular material actually used with students. This was further highlighted by the data, which suggested that, only one-third of respondents actually used the bible with students when presenting their selected passage.

The data also supported the conclusion discussed in Chapter Six that very limited sections of the bible where being used with students. Over 60% of all passages cited as used during the year with students were from the gospels, particularly the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Similarly over 64% of all references cited as used with students in the past month were from the gospels. The gospel according to Luke was particularly popular with 31.4% of all references.

Respondents' reasons for choosing their passage for use with students, their aims in using it and their understanding of the passage overwhelmingly indicated a thematic use of the passage. Respondents clearly had in mind an understanding of scripture in the context of a theme rather than of the author's intention, and they sought to link scripture to that theme. Linking the data presented in this chapter with the discussion in Chapter Six indicates that this is done to proof-text or support the theme being taught.

This thematic use of scripture together with respondents' attempts to link scripture to students' personal and global experience is further evidence of the fundamentalist or literalist use of scripture. The findings indicate that scripture is being used in a literal, non-critical manner. While those who advocate reader-response criticism suggest that this is appropriate, those who favour an historical-critical method do not. Reader-response criticism avoids the intentions of the author

by neglecting the socio-economic environment at the time of writing and does not address an understanding of literary forms in use at the time.

All the above issues reinforce the point made in Chapter Six that a catechetical understanding of the nature of religious education is predominant among religious education teachers throughout Catholic secondary schools. A thematic use of scripture linked to students' experiences highlights the desire of teachers to enhance students' faith experience. Chapter One of this thesis established that the religious education classroom is not the most appropriate place to use a predominantly catechetical method of instruction if religious education is to have the same status as other academic subjects, and if an educational approach to religious education is taken seriously. The reasons for choosing the passage and the way it was used with students would be more appropriately expressed in educational terms not catechetical terms. Contemporary theory in religious education suggests that teachers need to have in their minds and in their courses of study, cognitive knowledge and skills as outcomes to be achieved in the teaching of religious education. Passages of scripture should be selected for use with students having in mind these cognitive outcomes.

Finally, some links need to be drawn between this research and earlier research discussed in Chapter Three. Madgen (1993), Carswell (1995) and Stead (1996b) all indicated that their Australian research led them to the conclusion that scripture was used with a thematic, catechetical use in mind, not a critical use. This research has taken Stead's (1996b) research into other levels of the school system and has come to the same conclusion. While teachers' rationale for the use of scripture with students was seen to be multifaceted, a catechetical approach was dominant. Together with the above researchers, a picture emerges of scripture use from

Preparatory to Year 12 that is based on an understanding of the nature of religious education as catechetical, an understanding which has been shown to be of limited value for the contemporary Catholic school and one which leads to an inadequate approach to the teaching of scripture.

From Preparatory to Year 12 there is a limited and repetitive selection of scripture passages used for thematic and catechetical purposes. Combined with a limited use of the students' personal bible, and an over reliance on secondary sources such as the students' text in secondary schools (Children's bibles in primary schools, Stead, 1996b, p. 190) the bible itself can be lost from students' use.

The only other research on Australian Catholic secondary schools was a minor study by Hartley (1999). This did suggest that teachers were using modern biblical scholarship in their classrooms, and this research supports this to some extent. There are particular topics taught throughout Years Seven to Ten that use historical-critical method to engage students with the text. However, this is far outweighed by the use of scripture for catechetical purposes. In Years 11 and 12 the research reported in this thesis indicates that except for the small percentage of students studying *Texts and Traditions* (13%) the use of the historical-critical method of biblical study is almost non-existent. This means that in Victorian Catholic secondary schools, at the senior levels, when students are most able to engage scripture critically, up to 87% of the students are not given this opportunity.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The aims of this thesis were to present a picture of the incorporation of scripture into the religious education program of Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999, and in particular the incorporation of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship; to investigate how and to what extent VCE *Texts and Traditions* Units One to Four have been adopted by senior Victorian Catholic secondary students and the influence of this study on Years Seven to Ten religious education curricula; and to extend the work of Stead (1996b) into the use of scripture in Victorian Catholic primary schools. This chapter draws together the data generated in this thesis, to summarise findings and make recommendations about religious education and the use of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis in Victorian Catholic secondary schools. It also identifies the delimitations and significance of the research and makes suggestions for future research.

Key Findings

In Chapter One, the educational and literary context of this research was established as an understanding of "religious education" as a subject within a school's curriculum having the same status and educational standards as other subjects. It was argued that religious education should require the development of knowledge and skills just as for any other subject at the particular age level. Within the religious education curriculum in the teaching of scripture, teachers are exhorted to take into account critical biblical scholarship, and in particular the PBC encourages the use of the historical-critical method. The review of literature in Chapter Three established that developmental psychology considers that adolescents have the required cognitive skills to do biblical research. Adolescents are able to use their critical intellectual

faculties to learn about the historical, cultural and literary forms of scripture, to be taught about biblical inspiration and to research the theological message behind biblical texts. These activities are appropriate within an educational theory of religious education as described in Chapter One.

Finding One

The research reported in this thesis demonstrated that there is an apparent commitment by Victorian Catholic secondary schools to the use of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. This is evidenced by the following facts:

- The presence of an extensive range of biblical resources in schools such as commentaries and works of biblical theology by respected authors in this field.

- The fact that thirteen percent of senior students in these schools study the VCE Units Texts and Traditions, which is based on a critical study of the bible.

- The fact that the schools where students study Texts and Traditions, this VCE study has affected the curriculum content of religious education with regard to the teaching of scripture, by causing the historical-critical method of biblical studies to be introduced into the religious education courses in Years Seven to Ten.

- The fact that students in Years Seven to Ten are introduced to some extent to the purpose, structure, literary styles and the social, economic and religious customs behind biblical passages. Students to some extent do study the structure of the bible, inspiration and the formation of the scriptures. They do to some extent study literary styles such as narrative, miracle, parables and myth.

Finding Two

Any positive impact of a commitment to historical-critical study of the bible is undermined since the data presented in this thesis suggests that any critical use of the bible is limited. This is evidenced by the following facts:

- Schools did not have policies on the use of scripture within the curriculum or on the translation of the bible to be purchased by students,

- They generally required students to use a translation of the bible not suitable for critical study, that is *The Good News* bible.

- They over-relied on secondary sources. The students' text was the resource most favoured by respondents for students to gain access to passages of the bible. Therefore, many students were not able to develop skills in using the bible directly.

- This was further reinforced by the fact that only half the respondents required students to bring a bible to class every lesson, and only one-third of respondents actually used the bible with students when presenting a passage from the bible to students.

- At the senior levels of Year 11 and 12, except for the 13% of students who studied the VCE Units, *Texts and Traditions*, the data indicated that there was no penetration of the historical-critical method into other religious education courses of study. Almost all passages cited for use with senior students were used in a proof-texting manner.

- Sections of the bible used with students in Years Seven to Ten were limited to the gospels and the books of Genesis and Exodus, and many of these passages were used with students to proof-text a theme or topic to be taught. The large majority of scripture passages were being used in a literal, non-critical manner. When no

context is given to a passage of scripture, there is the danger that a literal, fundamentalist use of scripture may arise.

Finding Three

The research reported in this thesis has suggested that a predominantly catechetical view of religious education leads to a simplistic, proof-texting approach to the use of scripture in the classroom. This was evidenced by the following facts:

- The data indicated that teachers of religious education were concerned with students' personal faith development and the need to reinforce the teachings of the Catholic Church. This caused them to most often take a literalist, proof-texting approach to the teaching of scripture and to ignore the requirements of critical biblical study. This was apparent even with the many teachers who were aware of critical biblical scholarship through their own postgraduate study.

- The data indicated that the reasons why the respondents chose passages of scripture for use with students, that their aims in using a passage and their understanding of a passage of scripture were all linked to a thematic, catechetical understanding of religious education. That is, respondents wished, when using scripture with students, to reinforce the teachings of the Catholic Church and to enhance the students' personal faith experience.

Finding Four

The research reported in this thesis has been particularly influenced by and linked to the research of Stead (1996b) in Catholic primary schools in Victoria in 1993. This research supports the conclusion of Stead (1996b, pp. 260-262) that there is a limited use of many sections of the bible. This was evidenced by the following facts:

- The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke formed over 60% of references cited as used in the past year with students and 64% of passages cited as used with

students in the past month. Like that of Stead (1996b, p. 261), this research found that the gospel of Luke, with 31.4% of references cites as used with students in the past month, was the most frequently cited reference.

Finding Five

This research supports Stead's (1996b, pp. 261-262) conclusion that students have not moved beyond natural literalism in their knowledge of the bible. This was evidenced by the fact that:

- Passages of scripture cited by respondents as used with students were given a thematic context rather than their context in the appropriate book of the bible, or in their historical, social, cultural or religious setting.

In summary, the problems identified by Stead (1996b) still exist, in particular in the Catholic secondary education system.

Recommendations Arising from the Research

Recommendations are made with regard to a religious education curriculum, the Religious Education Co-ordinator, the professional development of religious education teachers and the students.

Religious Education Curriculum

It is recommended that:

- schools develop a policy on the use of the bible within a religious education curriculum;

- a religious education curriculum be developed within schools based on an outcomes approach with cognitive and affective outcomes. This more readily provides for an educational approach to the study of scripture;

- the use of the bible within a religious education curriculum be based on the use of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship;

- the use of the bible within a Year Seven to Twelve religious education curriculum be developed that is sequential and covers a wider range of texts from the bible;

- biblical studies courses be developed based on the historical-critical method for students in Years 11 and 12;

- a thematic, proof-texting use of the bible in religious education curriculum be reviewed with a view to reducing and limiting this use of the bible in conjunction with a more developed theory of religious education;

- a text based approach to the use of the bible within the religious education curriculum replace the thematic, proof-texting approach.

Religious Education Co-ordinators

It is recommended that Religious Education Co-ordinators:

- be responsible for the development of school policies on the use of the bible within the religious education curriculum;

- be responsible for a review of the thematic, proof-texting use of the bible within the religious education curriculum;

- review the translation of the bible that schools require students to purchase in Year Seven with a view to students purchasing a translation more suited to critical study;

- work with religious education teachers in their schools to: develop a school policy on the use of the bible within religious education, curriculum development including a review of a thematic, proof-texting use of the bible, biblical translations to be used with students and the actual use of the bible with students in class.

Professional Development of Religious Education Teachers

It is recommended that religious education teachers:

- undertake pre-service and professional development activities that challenge and critique their theories of religious education, and encourage teachers to critically review the distinctions between catechesis and religious education as they are drawn in Church documents such as the *General Catechetical Directory* (1997, Congregation for the Clergy);

- undertake professional development in the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship;

- receive training in the use of: appropriate translations of the bible for critical study with students and the actual use of a bible with students in class;

- become aware of the dangers of a literal, fundamental approach to scripture and the concerns of the PBC;

- become trained in an approach to religious education that emphasises knowledge and skills expressed as cognitive and affective outcomes.

Students

It is recommended that students:

- be trained in the use of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship in a sequential manner from Year Seven to Twelve having due regard for their age and psychological development

Delimitations of Research

The research reported in this thesis was delimited by the fact that this was an initial and exploratory study and also by the fact that the research was confined to Catholic secondary schools in Victoria, Australia. These are similar to those reported

by Stead (1996b, p, 265) in her research with Victorian Catholic primary schools in 1993. It should also be noted that the research was limited by its lack of direct observation of classroom teaching practice.

With no other research reported other than the minor work of Hartley (1999), concerning the use of scripture in religious education in Victorian Catholic secondary schools, it has not been possible to evaluate the data gathered in this thesis against other empirical research. Evaluation of the data has taken place through comparison with literature on the nature of religious education and the nature of modern biblical exegesis, and the literature concerning the use of the bible with both students in primary and secondary school.

The delimitation of the research reported in this thesis to Catholic secondary schools in Victoria, has allowed for conclusions to be reached and recommendations made that are specific to schools influenced and affected by *The Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* (1995) which are also used by the Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst diocese. Catholic schools from other states of Australia, and other religious schools such as Jewish or other Christian schools were not included in this research. Therefore, this thesis has not been able to report on any comparison of data between Catholic schools in other states of Australia which could be working from a different understanding of religious education and with different challenges. Also, it would have been of interest to this research to compare the conclusions and recommendations reached here with other religious schools to see what concerns they are dealing with in biblical education. These areas may well provide topics for future research.

The research method of self administering questionnaires did not allow for direct observation. Clarification of this research data with empirical evidence from direct observation of the use of the bible in religious education classes would have allowed for confirmation or discrepancies to emerge between what respondents to this research indicate that they do, and what direct observation of teaching practice might reveal. Again, further in-depth studies using observation techniques could provide areas for future research.

Directions for Future Research

The delimitations noted above indicate areas for future research. This research could profitably be repeated in other states of Australia. This would enable comparisons to be made between the practice of other Catholic secondary schools and the findings of the research reported in this thesis. It would shed light on whether the issues raised in this research, such as, the predominance of a catechetical understanding of religious education and a fundamentalist approach to the bible, are issues throughout Australia or whether they are just particular to Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

This research could also be repeated in schools of non-Catholic religious denominations. This would enable comparisons to be made with the data presented in this thesis. It would enable possible conclusions to be drawn as to whether the issues raised in this research for Catholic secondary schools in Victoria are general to biblical education, or are specific to Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

The need for empirical data from direct classroom observation has already been noted. A case study approach using an in depth study of the religious education

classroom of several Catholic secondary schools would enable comparisons to be made with the data presented in this thesis.

Finally, this research could be repeated periodically to monitor the development of biblical studies in Victorian Catholic secondary schools. This would enable developments of the issues raised in this research to be monitored and evaluated. Such research would discover whether changes in biblical translations used with students have occurred and whether religious education teachers' understanding of the nature of religious education has developed, with a corresponding development in their use of scripture in the classroom.

Conclusion

As noted by the PBC (1993, p. 133), the very nature of biblical texts means that the historical-critical method is needed to interpret them. This research has indicated that the study of scripture within the religious education curriculum of Victorian Catholic secondary schools has not taken on the historical-critical method to any large extent. This gives rise to serious concerns about the nature of religious education in these schools and about the problem of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism is a danger in Catholic secondary schools as it can lead students to a false understanding of the nature of god (PBC, 1993, p. 18) and to a simplistic view of scripture which they are likely to later reject.

The nature of religious education within Victorian Catholic schools is primarily viewed as catechetical, despite clear distinctions being made in Church documents between catechesis and religious education. Religious education if it is to have the same status as other subjects within the curriculum cannot remain predominantly catechetical in nature. Religious education must become

predominantly educational in nature. It must take on a critical approach to religious education that requires students to develop knowledge and analytical skills. Cognitive outcomes must be the basis of the religious education classroom. According to the research reported in this thesis this is not the case. Students are not developing their critical intellectual skills in relation to religious education.

APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire to Religious Education Teachers of Years Seven to Ten

---

1.   **(a)**   **Sex**   Female   Male

      (b)   **Age**: _____

      (c)   **Years of Teaching Experience:** _____

      (d)   **What year levels do you teach Religious Education to? (you may circle more than one)**

           Year 7   Year 8   Year 9   Year 10
           Year 11   Year 12

      (e)   **Do you have qualifications in Religious Education?**

           No - go to question 2.

           Yes - go to question 1 (f).

      (f)   **What is your qualification in Religious Education?**

Pre-service education at the Australian Catholic University	1
(i.e. Aquinas, Mercy or Christ Campus)	
Certificate of Religious Education	2
Graduate Diploma in Religious Education	3
Diploma of Theology	4
Degree in Theology	5

           Other - please specify:

           _____

           _____

           _____

           _____

2. **(a)** **What role has Scripture had in your life?**

	No Influence				Strong Influence
In your primary school education	1	2	3	4	5
In your home as a child	1	2	3	4	5
In your secondary school education	1	2	3	4	5
As a young adult	1	2	3	4	5
At present	1	2	3	4	5

(b) **Please rate your confidence about the use of Scripture with your students.**

Low			High	
1	2	3	4	5

Suggest reasons for your confidence or lack of confidence in this area:

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. **(a)** **How often do you use Scripture in the religious education of students you teach?**

Every day	At least twice a week
At least once a week	At least once a fortnight
At least once a month	Seldom

Please explain your answer?

_____

_____

(b) **From the following sections of the Bible please rate your frequency of use with your students i.e.1-never, 2-seldom, 3-once a term, 4-monthly, 5-weekly.**

The Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) ☐

Historical Books (i.e. Joshua, Samuel, Kings etc) ☐

The Prophets ☐

The Psalms ☐

Wisdom Books (i.e. Proverbs etc) ☐

Gospels ☐

Acts of the Apostles ☐

Letters of Saint Paul ☐

Letters to all the Christians (i.e. James, Peter, John, Jude) ☐

Revelation ☐

(c) **In relation to factors influencing the category(s) you selected as most frequently used with your students in 3 (b) above, please circle, for each statement, the appropriate response:**

	No Influence				Strong Influence
Suggested by the Guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate to the theme	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate to the Liturgical Year or feast	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher confidence/familiarity	1	2	3	4	5
Personal appeal	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of teaching materials	1	2	3	4	5

Other, please specify.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(d)   **When using scripture with students do you use:**

         The Bible itself   Excerpts from the Bible

         Paraphrases   Other (Please explain)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(e)   **Do you require your students to bring a Bible to class each lesson?**

         Yes (if yes go to question 4)

         No

(f)   **If no, how often do you require students to bring a Bible to class?**

         weekly   fortnightly   monthly   seldom

Please explain your answer?

_____

_____

_____

4.   **Why do you use Scripture with students?**

_____

_____

_____

5.   **Please list up to five passages of scripture you have used with students this year.**

(Please cite eg. Mark 10:46-52: the healing of blind Bartimaeus)

1.   _____

2.   _____

3.   _____

4.   _____

5.   _____

6.   **(a)**   **Nominate one passage of Scripture you have used with students in the past month.** (Please cite eg. Mark 10:46-52: The healing of blind Bartimaeus. It is appropriate to use one of the passages nominated in question 5)

_____

     (b)   **Why was this passage chosen for use with your class?**

_____

     (c)   **What is your understanding of the text?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(d) **What were your aims in using this passage with your students?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(e) **How did you communicate this passage of Scripture?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(f) **What learning activities did you employ?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(g) **What books/resources did you find useful in your own preparation of this text?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(h) **What books/curriculum materials did you find useful in presenting this passage to your students?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

(i) **How did you relate your students' experience to this passage of Scripture?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

7.   **Do you have any other comments to make about the use of Scripture in Catholic secondary education?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return this questionnaire and the consent form in the envelope provided.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX B
Survey Questionnaire to Religious Education Co-ordinators

1. **(a)** **Sex** **Female** **Male**

(b) **Age:** _____

(c) **Years of Teaching Experience:** _____

(d) **What year levels do you teach Religious Education to? (you may circle more than one)**

Year 7   Year 8   Year 9   Year 10
Year 11   Year 12

(e) **Do you have qualifications in Religious Education?**
No - go to question 1 (g).
Yes - go to question 1 (f).

(f) **What is your qualification in Religious Education?**

Pre-service education at the Australian Catholic University (i.e. Aquinas, Mercy or Christ Campus)	1
Certificate of Religious Education	2
Graduate Diploma in Religious Education	3
Diploma of Theology	4
Degree in Theology	5

Other - please specify:

_____

_____

_____

(g) **How long have you been at the school at which you are now employed?**

_____

(h) **Number of students in school:** _____

(i) **How many years have you been religious education co-ordinator?**

_____

2. **(a)** **What role has Scripture had in your life?**

	No Influence				Strong Influence
In your primary school education	1	2	3	4	5
In your home as a child	1	2	3	4	5
In your secondary school education	1	2	3	4	5
As a young adult	1	2	3	4	5
At present	1	2	3	4	5

(b) **Please rate your confidence about the use of Scripture with your students.**

Low   High
  1   2   3   4   5

Suggest reasons for your confidence or lack of confidence in this area:

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. **(a)** **Does your school have a policy about the use of scripture with students?**

    Yes   **No**

If **Yes** please attach a copy of the policy to the questionnaire, but remove any identification of the school.

(b) **What resources are available to teachers for teaching and using scripture with students? Please identify the four or five most used.**

1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____

(c) **Are students at your school required to purchase a Bible for Year 7?**

    Yes
    No (if no go to question 4)

(d) **Are they expected to retain this Bible throughout their secondary schooling?**

    Yes
    No, please explain:

    _____

(e) **What translation are they required to purchase?**

    _____

4. **(a)** **Does your school teach units specifically on Scripture in Years 7 to 10?**

    Yes
    No (if no go to queston 5)

(b)   **At what Year levels do you teach these units on Scripture? (you may circle more than one)**

<div align="center">

Year   7   Year   8

Year   9   Year 10

</div>

(c)   **What topics are taught in these units on Scripture?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.   **(a)**   **Do you teach any of the Text and Tradition Units?**

        No

        Yes, please explain (eg. Unit 1 Texts and Justice to Year 11)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(b)   **Do you have any VCE students who will not undertake a Text and Traditions unit at all throughout their VCE?**

        Yes

        No (if no go to question 6)

(c)   **If yes, what proportion of your VCE students would this be? (eg. 60%)**

_____

(d)   **What type of religious education do these non Text and Tradition students do in their VCE?**

        Other VCE Units

        School based units

        Other

        Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(e) **Do these non Text and Traditions students do any units of work or topics on scripture in Years 11 or 12?**

No

Yes, please explain:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(f) **Has the teaching of Texts and Traditions in Years 11 & 12 influenced the teaching of scripture in Years 7 to 10?**

No

Yes, please explain

_____

_____

6 **(a)** **How often do you use Scripture in the religious education of students you teach?**

Every day   At least twice a week

At least once a week   At least once a fortnight

At least once a month   Seldom

Please explain your answer?

_____

_____

_____

(b) **From the following sections of the Bible please rate your frequency of use with your students i.e.1-never, 2-seldom, 3-once a term, 4-monthly, 5-weekly.**

The Pentateuch (genesis to Deuteronomy) ☐

Historical Books (i.e. Joshua, Samuel, Kings etc)

The Prophets ☐

The Psalms ☐

Wisdom Books (i.e. Proverbs etc) ☐

Gospels ☐

Acts of the Apostles ☐

Letters of Saint Paul ☐

The Pastoral Letters (i.e. James, Peter, John, Jude) ☐

Revelation ☐

(c)   **In relation to factors influencing the category(s) you selected as most frequently used with your students in 3 (b) above, please circle, for each statement, the appropriate response:**

	No Influence				Strong Influence
Suggested by the Guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate to the theme	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate to the Liturgical Year or feast	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher confidence/familiarity	1	2	3	4	5
Personal appeal	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of teaching materials	1	2	3	4	5

Other, please specify.

_____

_____

(d)   **When using scripture with students do you use:**

The Bible itself   Excerpts from the Bible
Paraphrases   Other (Please explain)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(e)   **Do you require your students to bring a Bible to class each lesson?**
Yes (if yes go to question 7)
No

(f)   **If no, how often do you require students to bring their Bible to class?**
weekly   fortnightly   monthly   seldom
Please explain your answer?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.   **Why do you use Scripture with students?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. **Please list up to five passages of scripture you have used with students this year.**

(Please cite eg. Mark 10:46-52: the healing of blind Bartimaeus)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

9 **(a)** **Nominate one passage of Scripture you have used with students in the past month.** (Please cite eg. Mark 10:46-52: The healing of blind Bartimaeus. It is appropriate to use one of the passages nominated in question 5)

_____

(b) **Why was this passage chosen for use with your class?**

_____
_____
_____

(c) **What is your understanding of the text?**

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(d) **What were your aims in using this passage with your students?**

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_____
_____
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_____

(e) **How did you communicate this passage of Scripture?**

_____
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_____
_____
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_____

(f) **What learning activities did you employ?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

(g) **What books/resources did you find useful in your own preparation of this text?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

(h) **What books/curriculum materials did you find useful in presenting this passage to your students?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

(i) **How did you relate your students' experience to this passage of Scripture?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

10. **Do you have any other comments to make about the use of Scripture in Catholic secondary education?**

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Please return this questionnaire and the consent form in the envelope provided.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

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