



Catholic

Education

VOL 28 • NOVEMBER 2019

REFLECTION ON
LAUDATO SI



STUDY TIPS
FOR ALL
YEAR ROUND

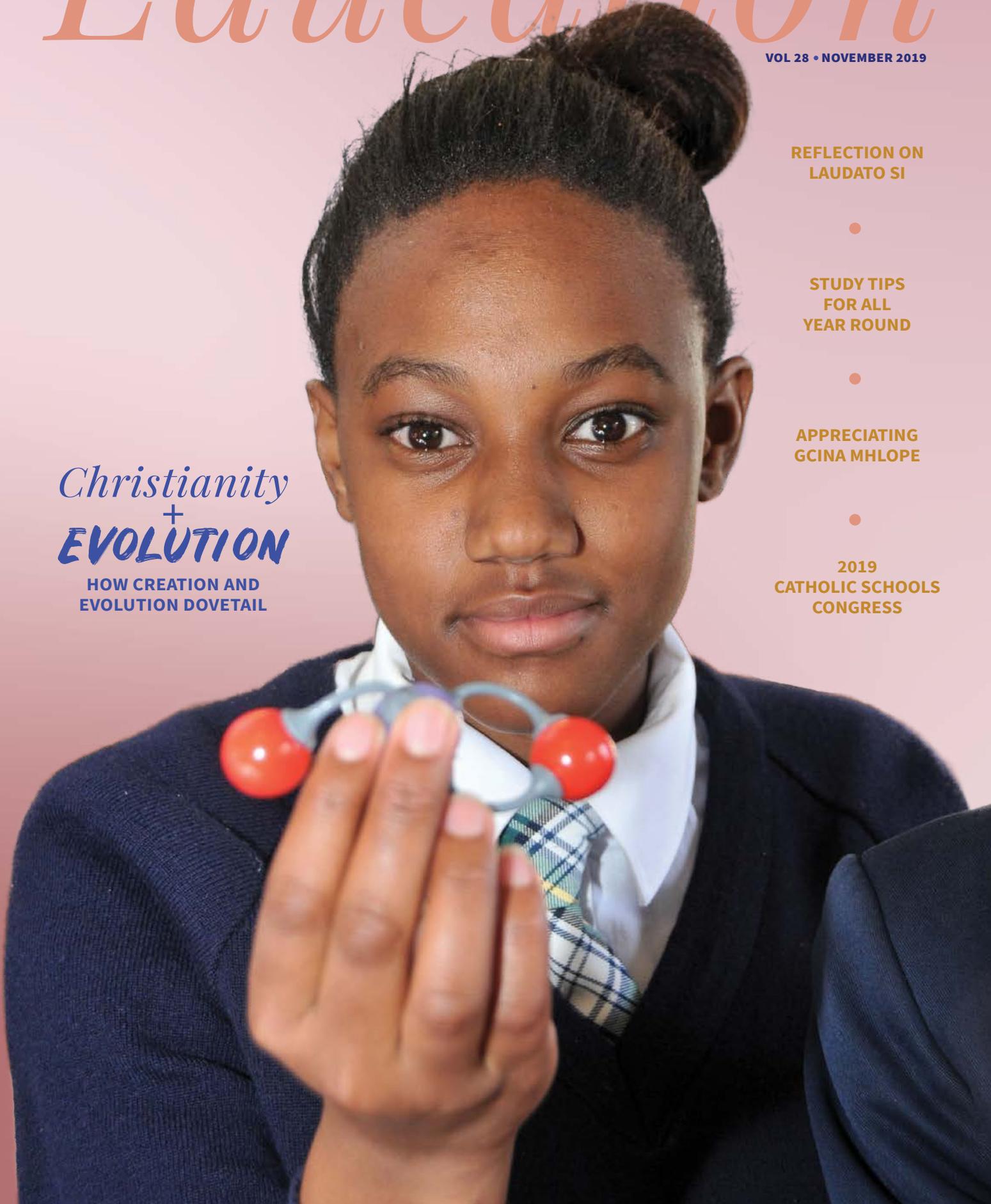


APPRECIATING
GCINA MHLOPE



2019
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
CONGRESS

Christianity
+
EVOLUTION
HOW CREATION AND
EVOLUTION DOVETAIL



Contents

This edition of Catholic Education brings you a wide variety of articles. A challenging topic is Christianity and Evolution which many people struggle with. Hopefully this article will bring insight and understanding. Some ways to engage learners with *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis's encyclical which calls us to care for our Common Home are offered, as well as how Business Studies assists learners to understand ethics in business.

With the poor reading skills of children today, one way to engage their interest is through stories something that Gcina Mhlope has enthralled people with for years.

The Catholic schools network has had a busy year with all the preparation for the 3rd National Schools Congress, *Towards Tomorrow Together in Faith* which took place in September.

We hope you enjoy reading this new look Catholic News.



04

Building Peaceful Schools



06

Christianity & Evolution



08

Kagan
Educate in the Now



14

Reflection
Ladauto Si



17

Silent Statement



18

Voice of a Storyteller
Appreciating Gcina Mhlope



22

Study Tips



24

Schools, business studies &
Christian ethics in South Africa



28

Serving the Vulnerable
St Joseph's special school



32

Are those ears an appendix?



34

Third Catholic Schools Congress

Catholic Education is produced by the Catholic Institute of Education: PO Box 2083, Southdale, 2135 | 011 433 1888/9 | info@cie.org.za | www.cie.org.za
Layout and design: Obliq | Printing: Law Print | Images: CIE Staff, Contributors of editorial content, Suzy Bernstein, Daniel Born, www.freepik.com.
Disclaimer: Photographs appearing in this edition do not necessarily feature individuals who are in any way related to the content of articles, unless specifically mentioned in captions. Catholic Education strives to provide a forum for discussion, debate and information for and about education in South Africa. Our readers are invited to respond to articles and to send in articles which may be of interest to the broader Catholic education network. The views expressed in Catholic Education do not necessarily represent the views of the editor or the board of the CIE.

BUILDING PEACEFUL schools



Five weeks into the first term I had a conversation with a Grade 1 boy, let's call him John, who attends a very sought-after primary school. Although John attends a State school, John's experience could just as easily take place in any Catholic school, independent or public.

"I am in Grade 1" I was proudly told by John. I asked how Grade 1 was going and was told that it's fine as long as you are not naughty. When I asked him to explain what naughty meant he said that it's when you talk, or when you don't finish your work or you say you have finished your work and you haven't. Of course the follow up question from me was "What happens when you have been naughty?"

"The teacher comes and stands over us and shouts at us or you get break detention" John said. I was appalled that this lively and enthusiastic little boy and his classmates were being subjected to this type of punitive control. An atmosphere of fear has been proven to block learning and while I am aware that a group of 35 Grade 1s is challenging, I have seen teachers with larger classes manage the learning through a positive classroom atmosphere and skilled teaching.

Often this type of punishment leads to an attitude of bravado to cover up for the embarrassment and the shame they feel, or withdrawal from interactions with peers and teachers.

Furthermore, this shames children, and toxic shame is detrimental to positive growth. I saw a similar shaming incident in a high school recently when prefects forced Grade 8 children to stand on the stage facing the whole school - all because they were talking. Often this type of punishment leads to an attitude of bravado to cover up for the embarrassment and the shame they feel, or withdrawal from interactions with peers and teachers.

At the beginning of the fourth term I was told that John cried himself to sleep because he did not want to return to school. While he was being comforted he said it was because he doesn't like the tests and that he couldn't always get his work done. This little person has now had almost an entire year of school mired in anxiety and fear.

What is important to know about John's story is that in spite of being a bright child he now feels unhappy and because his needs have not been met he dislikes school intensely which will inhibit his ability to learn. Every child and teacher deserves a secure and happy classroom environment.

In future editions of Catholic Education, there will be articles outlining aspects of Restorative Justice in the Building Peaceful Schools Programme developed by CIE. This is one way to build peaceful, just schools.

by Anne Baker



Christianity & Evolution

by Frances
Correia

Recently I have been struck by how many people (and in particular how many teenagers) still seem to believe that there may be a problem between our belief as Christians and modern scientific theories of Evolution and Cosmology. However, there is clear church teaching, particularly from Pope Benedict on the appropriate relationship between faith and science. In the words of the Pope Benedict, 'We cannot say: "creation OR evolution," as if these two things respond to two different realities.' He goes on to say that, 'the debate raging between creationism and evolution is an "absurdity."¹

Let's explore the basis of Pope Benedict's statement that the debate between Creationism and evolution is an absurdity.

Firstly, Creationism is the set of beliefs that take a literal interpretation of scripture, in particular the two accounts in Genesis of creation, as a literal description of how the universe came to be. This interpretation would, for instance, hold as 'scientifically' true that the creation happened in seven days exactly as described in Genesis 1. Drawing on the Jewish calendar, the world is therefore about 5779 years old currently.

There are various scriptural and theological problems with this view of Creationism, not to mention scientific ones! Primary amongst these is that the church promotes a variety of ways of reading and understanding scripture. A literalist interpretation, far from being the most authentic or valuable, according to the church teaching, can be highly problematic. In the Vatican document, 'On the interpretation of the Bible in the church'² we are reminded that:

When it is a question of a story, the literal sense does not necessarily imply belief that the facts recounted actually took place, for a story need not belong to the genre of history but be instead a work of imaginative fiction.

The document goes on to argue that the literal sense of a metaphorical or allegorical story lies beyond a surface 'literalist' reading of the text. The two Genesis stories are good examples of these kinds of narratives in the scriptural tradition. Genesis I is a highly signif-

¹J. Ratzinger, *In the Beginning: A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*. 1990

²In 1993 the Pontifical Biblical Commission wrote *On the Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. The document is a simple outline of church teaching on how to read and use Holy Scripture. (p31)

icant text in the canon. It is theologically incredibly important. But its importance lies not in its correct detailing of the 'how' of creation, but rather in the 'why'. The church understands the 'why' questions being proposed and answered in Genesis I as the 'literal truth' which the allegorical text point us towards.

So what is this truth that Genesis I points us towards? Firstly, the emphasis is clearly on showing us the right relationship between the human person and God. God is the Creator, and we are the creatures. Secondly, Genesis I explores the right relationship between human beings, that we are all, 'male and female' created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore that we all have equal dignity. Thirdly, it lays out the right relationship between us and the rest of creation, namely a role of stewardship and responsibility.

The emphasis is not on a coherent account of how creation came about. It is a theological text dealing with the questions of meaning and purpose. The explorations of the scientific community and their search for falsifiable proof of the origins of creation and of our human evolution are a completely different undertaking.

As Pope Benedict argues, we need both kinds of knowledge. We cannot say either or, but rather both and.

What does science and the scientific method offer to us as people of faith? Primarily, it offers an intellectually rigorous pursuit of truth. The nature of the scientific method is that it must be open to scrutiny and it must be falsifiable. This means that any scientific theory must be presented in such a way that it can be found to be false in some or all of its parts. In this

way science adds to our understanding of the world around us, and has the capacity to add to our marveling at the consistency of the work of the Creator.

Conversely, faith deals with meaning and purpose. The statements of how to live presented in Genesis are normative, and therefore are not proven with facts or data, as in science. Rather, as we hear in the teachings of Vatican II, 'we must each assent to them in our own heart.'³

So what does this mean for a religion teacher or a science teacher in a Catholic school. Firstly, the Catholic Church has never condemned teachings about evolution as false. Secondly, there have been committed Catholics working on theories of evolution, genetics and cosmology. Most notable amongst these would be Mendel, the 'father' of modern genetics who was also an Augustinian friar (and later abbot) and Georges Lemaître, a Catholic priest and physicist who developed the idea of the 'Big Bang'. Thirdly, the Church sees itself as having an important role to play in offering a moral perspective on the work of science. Areas such as bio ethics, or environmental ethics have been positively formed by the engagement of Judeo-Christian moral thinking.

However science also has an impact on our moral thought. For instance in *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis contrasts the slow development of nature through evolution on the one hand, with the process of rapid human-caused change brought about by our technological development. Arguing from natural law (a classic form of moral argument) Pope Francis suggests that our new rapid change is immoral, because it is opposite to the way God has been at work in nature over millennia.⁴

When thinking about evolution and creation the two important questions any teacher should bear in mind are 'How' and 'Why'.

'How' questions are the domain of science.
'Why' questions are the domain of faith and morality.

In order to become fully human, we need to learn to ask both kinds of questions.

³ Declaration On Religious *Freedom Dignitatis Humanae* (3)

⁴ Encyclical Letter Pope Francis *Laudato Si*' 2015 (18)

Images:

1. Adapted from: Phillip Medhurst *Temptation of Adam and Eve. Genesis cap 3 v 6. Moine*
2. Adapted from: BBC *Human Evolution*

Kagan educate in the Now

When students are engaged, they learn more. Kagan Cooperative Learning is an ingenious, structured approach to encourage this engagement in students: for both content as well as with each other.

Out goes the traditional mode of sitting in rows and responding to the teacher with hands in the air. Out goes traditional group work where you have the “hogs” taking over and the “logs” hiding! The structures have been refined over decades of implementation and research. Every structure, while they serve different purposes, all have the following key ingredients:

- Positive Interdependence between students. They feel on the “same side” in their learning.
- Individual Accountability. Students cannot hide behind others.
- Equal Participation. No more “hogs” (individuals who take over the task and exclude others from contributing) and “logs” (individuals who are happy to sit back and let others do the work).
- Simultaneous Interaction. Every student is engaged in either talking or actively listening.

The benefits:

- Significantly increased engagement with the content, boosting academic achievement.
- Social skills are honed as students continually practise attentive listening, praise and feedback, coaching each other, and asking questions.
- Students are happier as they improve relationships with the entire class not just their favourite peers.

Pioneered some 33 years ago by Dr Spencer Kagan, a psychologist and renowned researcher, the focus has now shifted to the fascinating discoveries about the

brain and how it works. This builds on the foundation that cooperative learning is the most researched teaching methodology. In a multitude of studies comparing it to other classroom practices it consistently comes out on top for boosting academic gains.

In March of 2018 our Primary School Specialist Trainer – Jennalee King - joined two of the ladies from the Catholic Institute of Education on a trip into Limpopo to work with some of the schools there. It was not possible to present training as we normally do and so a version of our coaching method was employed. Jennalee went into various classrooms and watched the teachers teaching for a few minutes. She would then stop them and teach the class with a Cooperative Learning Structure that was best suited to the question the teacher had asked or the task that was given. This was challenging as the teachers had no background in understanding Cooperative Learning, and yet, they were enthusiastic to try as they immediately saw a way to involve every student in their over-crowded and under-resourced classrooms. In one school there were a mix of grades in a classroom and Jennalee showed the teachers how they could give one group a structure to engage the students with the content while she/he focussed their attention on the other grades. None of what these teachers experience is ideal but the few things they learned showed a difference in their classroom management and engagement.

Marc Paul, Director of Teaching and Learning at St Andrew’s Preparatory School in Grahamstown,

attended the Kagan Summer Academy in the USA in 2018 where he took part in the Instructional Leadership, Coaching and Cooperative Meetings courses. Marc has also been trained through Days 1 – 5 of Kagan implementation. Upon returning to his school in South Africa he has enthusiastically taken to turning it into a Kagan Model School – the first in South Africa. Post all the staff undergoing the Day 1 – 5 training, he has implemented a SAM (Structure A Month) Club, as well as engage in regular class visits to refine implementation via coaching. This ensures all the teachers across the school diligently employ the same structure for an entire month. Depth is achieved by using one structure in as many ways as possible. The teachers readily receive coaching and positive feedback, as and support each other in their ideas of how to use the structure across the curriculum spectrum. The students learn the structure being used, leading to efficient and effective usage. A new structure is added each month across the school, while still using the previously learned structures. Marc has excitedly reported the success of the SAM Club and how positively his teachers have responded. We look forward to being able to track the academic achievement here and will soon have our own South African based research and data.

Our first South African trainer, Wilfred Reynolds, is based in the Western Cape. His focus has been a philanthropic one, and that of reaching “no-fees schools” which are often under-resourced and have teachers in need of support. He has been able to offer both training and coaching to these schools, as well as help with successful lesson planning. Kagan coaching typically consists of him entering a classroom and

watching the implementation of a structure for a few minutes. Feedback is given by way of positive pointers on what is going well and what could be improved. As Wilfred says, “if Kagan can be adopted here, then it can work anywhere!” Slowly, but surely, the benefits are being seen: improved learning and engagement, more enjoyable lessons, with teachers enjoying their teaching more! Really! Many testify that it is the best training they have ever had!

We also have two excellent trainers with high school experience, Gail Murray and Lilian Southey. Our goal going forward is to train and coach as many teachers in as many schools as possible. South African education faces many challenges: from overcrowded, under-resourced classrooms, to the inability to teach all children in their home language. We are convinced that Kagan Cooperative Learning can make a massive, positive contribution to these challenges: by building support structures within a classroom; by maximising interaction with the content; by giving children the opportunity to be immersed in the language of instruction; and helping them to learn more effectively.

contact Us

to find out how to obtain training at your school or in your area.

www.kagansouthafrica.co.za
peter@kagansouthafrica.co.za
031 764 2365 | 073 228 6378



Reflection

Laudato Si

Read the following extracts from Pope Francis' Encyclical 'Laudato Si'. Then answer the questions that follow.*

*(Encyclical is a Latin word for a letter, usually from a Pope, traditionally addressed to the church.)

Pope Francis has addressed this letter to everyone. The title of the Encyclical is also the title of a famous prayer or canticle by the medieval saint, St Francis of Assisi)

What is happening to our common home

1. *"LAUDATO SI, mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".* In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs".[1]

2. This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. Nothing in this world is indifferent to us

18. The continued acceleration of changes affecting humanity and the planet is coupled today with a more intensified pace of life and work which might be called "rapidification". Although change is part of the working of complex systems, the speed with which human activity has developed contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution. Moreover, the goals of this rapid and constant change are not necessarily geared to the common good or to integral and sustainable human development. Change is something desirable, yet it becomes a source of anxiety when it causes harm to the world and to the quality of life of much of humanity.

19. Following a period of irrational confidence in progress and human abilities, some sectors of society are now adopting a more critical approach. We see increasing sensitivity to the environment and the need to protect nature, along with a growing concern, both genuine and distressing, for what is happening to our planet. Let us review, however cursorily, those questions which are troubling us today and which we can no longer sweep under the carpet. Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.

Questions

Before you begin to answer the first question, first read all the questions.

Look for a particular idea or image from these two extracts that strikes you, and quote it. What struck you about this idea? You may wish to write about how you felt, or about what you thought. You may find that you agree or disagree with his point of view. Please say why you agree or disagree. (15)

What are 5 things you can think of doing that would help to care for the planet? (5) (You need only name 5 ideas for this question.)

Clearly, from just this extract, you can see that Pope Francis has integrated into his understanding of Christianity the reality of evolution. From your own faith background, do you see a conflict between theories developed from science, like evolution or cosmology, or do you think that there is a way of integrating scientific theories into your faith perspective. Explain in a paragraph how you would understand your religious beliefs interacting with scientific theories. If you are an atheist, has anything in this extract offered any helpful ways with which you might engage a person of faith in a discussion about the environment? What were these? (20)

SILENT STATEMENT

LESEDI MAJOLA

Grade 10 | Dominican Convent School

Inspired by Greta Thunberg, a sixteen-year-old environmental activist; and our blue plastic campaign, Dominican Convent School Grade Ten Geography learners have been educated about global warming and its abysmal effects. So much has taken place in mid-September and early October. Learners attained the goal by being recognised by their school pupils after partaking in a re-use, reduce and recycle process. Children in the Primary School failed to understand what the Grade Tens were doing and saw it as a joke while they were picking up litter and digging in bins for things that are recyclable. To help educate the Primary School scholars, the Grade 10s decided to share their experiences and reasons for wanting to recycle.

Showing their interest and support for environmental amendments, learners created social media accounts to promote the DCS Go Green campaign.

It has been a significant experience, even though there were trials and tribulations in terms of getting everyone involved and recognised. Learners were encouraged to persevere and keep on promoting the campaign. We believe and hope this experience will make a difference by awakening learners, teachers and the rest of the communities' senses to wanting to minimise their carbon footprint.

Image: Ntando Mazibuko, Grade 11



The Voice of a Storyteller

Appreciating Gcina Mhlophe

{ *By Elinor Sisulu* }

Many years ago I visited the children's tent at the Cape Town Book Fair to attend a Gcina Mhlophe storytelling session. Gcina was in full flow, recounting her story in inimitable dramatic fashion when she was interrupted by a little boy in the front row. "I love you," he declared, with the complete lack of self-consciousness of a three-year old. He proceeded to interrupt Gcina's story at intervals with his declaration of devotion, much to the embarrassment of his mother and the amusement of the audience and Gcina herself. He was completely oblivious to the reactions of those around him. At that moment no-one else existed except him and the storyteller.



Images: Daniel Born

Having fallen under Gcina's spell the first time I saw her perform at a writer's conference in 1991, I could relate very well to that little boy. I have watched many storytellers since, indeed on platforms created by Gcina herself, such as her Nozincwadi festival, but I have never come across anyone who can generate that particular brand of magic.

One of the main lessons that I have taken from Gcina is how to be proud of one's own culture, language and heritage without being chauvinistic.

Nokugcina Elsie Mhlophe, to use her full name, is deservedly one of the world's most acclaimed storytellers. She does not just tell stories, she performs them, deploying her formidable artistic gifts – a rich contralto voice, a gracefully sinuous dance ability and a vibrant and commanding presence. Watching her tell a story is a total theatrical experience.

Her storytelling is not limited to performance. She is a prolific writer of children's stories, plays and poetry. Her works are used in schools and universities around the world and have been translated into German, French, Italian, Swahili and Japanese and she has been the recipient of numer-

ous awards, including honorary doctorates from universities at home and abroad.

Gcina Mhlophe celebrated her 60th birthday in 2018. In recognition of this milestone, the Puku Children's Literature Foundation honoured her at the Puku Story Festival in Grahamstown (now Makhanda). We compiled a mini-catalogue of all her works and had her award-winning play "Have You Seen Zandile" translated by Dr Hleze Kunju and performed for the first time in isiXhosa by local students. Gcina came to watch the performance and gave critical feedback to the actors. It was personally gratifying for me, as organiser of the festival that gave these young women the opportunity to perform Gcina Mhlophe's work, to watch them being affirmed and inspired by her, just as she has affirmed and inspired me during our twenty years of friendship.

One of the main lessons that I have taken from Gcina is how to be proud of one's own culture, language and heritage without being chauvinistic. When I reflect on how Gcina has approached her life and her art, the words of Mahatma Gandhi come to mind: "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

I also think of Nelson Mandela's words: "It is my wish that the voice of the storyteller will never die in Africa, that all the children in the world may experience the wonder of books, and that they will never lose the capacity to enlarge their earthly dwelling place with the magic of stories."

It is my hope that all children in this land and beyond continue to enjoy the voice of Gcina Mhlophe for many years to come.



Study Tips



Schools, *Business Studies* & Christian Ethics *in South Africa*



As a high school subject, *Business Studies* is interesting, thought-provoking and relevant to South African learners. In Catholic schools teachers can make it especially meaningful.

Business Studies is an interesting and relevant subject in the high school curriculum. It imparts skills and understanding that are applicable to those wishing to embark on future careers as entrepreneurs, business managers or marketers. Learners are exposed to the basic conditions of the economy, the role of business and the need for entrepreneurship in growing economies. They learn about productivity in management, quality performance and the profit motive which drives business.

In addition to this, the subject teaches learners about the influences of politics, good governance, technological advances and socio-economic conditions in companies and the wider economy. By the time learners reach matric, study themes include business ethics and ethical marketing. Case studies show how ethical discussions include concepts such as conflicts of interest, nepotism, cronyism and everything from sexism and sexual harassment to corruption and state capture. Clearly, Business Studies is a dynamic and relevant subject in the hands of a thoughtful educator.

When applied to our country's context, it allows for deeper analysis and application. For example, a PESTLE analysis of the macro environment reveals that in South Africa we are faced with wholesale government corruption epitomised by the ongoing Eskom debacle and the unfortunate findings of the so-called state capture reports. Billions of rands have been systematically pilfered from the nation's resources going back as far as the notorious arms deal scandal of the late 1990s, to the more recent VBS Bank frauds involving municipalities and government.

But it is not only government who act unethically. Several large businesses in South Africa have been

caught out in their financial crimes. The supposedly respectable auditing firm KPMG was complicit in accounting fraud that enabled large scale corruption amounting to large amounts of money. Another example is that of JSE-listed company Steinhoff, which collapsed after the fraudulent activities of its CEO directly caused the loss of billions of rands worth of investments. More recently, South Africans have learnt how politically-connected company Bosasa routinely paid politicians millions in bribes to facilitate its corrupt business dealings. These practices hurt the country's economy, moral standing and international reputation.

Unfortunately, the nature of unethical dealings extends even further, often including morally dubious practices like manipulative marketing campaigns such as those aimed at children. Next, consider the exaggerated claims a salesperson makes of their product in order to make a quick sale, or the entrepreneur who specifically develops products and services focusing not on consumers' needs but their own, basest desires.

Consumers are sold products they don't really need (to impress people they might not even like) for example keeping up with the latest app or technological gadgets. Others are convinced they need expensive cosmetic surgery, or some other appearance enhancing procedures.

These things are not necessarily illegal, yet they are ethically problematic in a society characterised by hyper-materialism and hyper-consumerism. In the meanwhile, many low-wage workers are ruthlessly exploited and employed in mind-numbingly mundane jobs. They are often without basic needs and govern-

ment services and could be victims of extortionate micro-financing practices.

In this context, Business Studies teachers at Catholic schools can draw on Catholic Social Teaching to present their students with an ethical framework pointing to a better way for business in society. This is based on the principles we find in the Gospel and can be applied by business leaders too because respect for human dignity should apply to all.

In the publication, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection* the author says:

“When business activity is carried out justly and effectively, customers receive goods and services at fair prices, employees engage in good work and earn a livelihood for themselves and their families; and investors earn a reasonable return. Communities see their common resources put to good use and the overall common good is increased” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2014).

Behaving ethically should be more than merely ‘not committing fraud’, or ‘not paying bribes’. And businesses should be about more than growing market share or making a quick profit. For the Christian, being an entrepreneur or business leader is a vocation that calls them to a higher ethical standard than our materialist culture’s ‘business-as-usual’. Their vocation must contribute to the good of society as a whole.

Business leaders can do this in a number of practical ways such as:

- Developing and marketing products or services that address real human needs not merely wants or desires
- Bringing worthwhile products to those who really need it like the poor and marginalized who have access to very little
- Acting responsibly towards the environment as stewards of God’s creation
- Organising meaningful work that uplifts the dignity of workers
- Looking for sustainable opportunities for development and wealth creation

Business people who act in these ways are manifesting true servant leadership. Our model in this is Christ, who humbled himself by serving his disciples in the lowly act of washing their feet (see the Gospel of John 13:1-17) and commanding them to do likewise. Entrepreneurial servant leadership is not self-centred but rather centred on meeting the genuine needs of others with products or services that are beneficial.

In Business Studies, the theme of corporate governance refers to the ‘triple bottom line’. This means that ethical and sustainable companies do not only focus on the financial ‘bottom line’ but also look at the way their businesses impact people in society, as well

as the environment. This is reminiscent of Catholic Social Teaching’s emphasis on solidarity, human dignity and stewardship. Similarly, teachers inculcate Gospel values in those learners willing to integrate their faith with their everyday lives.

South Africa’s political and business decision-makers have regularly acted corruptly and dishonestly by enriching themselves. They serve their own selfish and greedy purposes. This harms society, the econo-

my, the general political environment and millions of people still caught in poverty in our country. But Business Studies teachers in Catholic schools can point a new generation of South African learners to a better way. We do this by remembering our vocation as teachers while reminding future business leaders that they too have a vocation.

Kyle Lauf is a Life Orientation and Business Studies teacher at Assumption Convent School, Gauteng.



Serving *the* Vulnerable

St Joseph's Special School

“You have to convince her that the murderer is the victim”, is the advice given to the lawyer representing Ellen Pakkies. The movie *Ellen: Die Ellen Pakkies Storie*, offers an understanding into the tragic story that unfolds repeatedly in the Cape Flats suburb, Lavender hill. Through her true story, we witness how the infamous drug “tik” (methamphetamine) collapses the scaffolding of this mother and son relationship to a point of no return, ending up in her ultimately murdering her own son (Abie Pakkies).

*When a flower doesn't bloom,
you fix the environment in
which it grows, not the flower*

- Alexander Den Heijer

On a visit to St Joseph's Special School in Montana, Western Cape, I am confronted with the children - some of whom may well be born out of these circumstances - and witness yet another layer that is brought about by “tik” as it ravages a path of destruction in an already impoverished community. Aside from the growing rise of “tik-babies”, South Africa has the highest incidence of foetal alcohol syndrome. Some of the symptoms that tik- and foetal alcohol syndrome-babies are born with include being underweight, having a small head circumference and limited cognitive function with short attention spans.

There are also several children attending the school who suffer from various syndromes. The resident occupational therapist explains that it is often difficult to diagnose the children, as there are over 200 syndromes, which include Down's syndrome and

the Candle syndrome. However, their physical, emotional and intellectual impairments are evident and they need varying levels of care in order to try and strengthen their impairments.

The overall classification for the children attending the school is SID – Severely Intellectually Disabled. They will not have curriculum input and will merely learn skills that will potentially help them in their lives when they need to do things for themselves.

The care, patience and attention that each individual child receives in this school is heartwarming. On the day that we visit the school, we watch as a group of the children painstakingly practise life skills whilst making a fruit salad. A simple thing like segmenting a naartjie, or slicing through a banana, can be a slow and laborious skill for a LSEN (Learners with Special Educational Needs) child to master.

There are currently about 230 children attending the school. Amongst the children, there are also several children who are termed P.A.C. – Pedestrian Accident children, who suffer from TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury). The Principal, Clara Paulse, explains that these children were in road accidents resulting in severe, permanent injuries. Many children are injured both because they have no road sense and because of the severe conditions in their communities, where they are often left to fend for themselves.

Currently, the number of child road deaths in South Africa is double the world average. Children spend a lot of time on the roads as pedestrians and frequently use the roads alone, thereby increasing their risk. Often, there is also poor infrastructure in these areas, meaning the roads themselves are not safe. In several areas, children are targeted by drug dealers when they walk to school.

Transporting the children to St Joseph's Special School, who hail from several of the surrounding areas, is often one of several economic hurdles facing the parents. As a rule, the parents of these children can ill afford the costs of getting the children to the school, let alone the payment of school fees.

In an endeavor to address the road accidents and the security risks facing children in the Cape Flats, an initiative called the "Walking Bus" was launched by the Department of Community Safety. Some of the parents volunteer their time walking the children to and from school. This ensures that the children walk on safe and supervised routes, thereby reducing the incidents of children who are injured in car accidents as well as alleged security threats facing the children in the crime riddled communities. The school also meets the children at several pick up points, transporting them safely to school.

The care, patience and attention that each individual child receives in this school is heartwarming.

St Joseph's Special School offers these SID children an environment that will nurture, guide and educate them until they are 18 years old. There are two exit points - one at 14, and the second at 18. The 14 year old children go to schools of skill, and the 18 year old learners go to workplaces. This is, however, dependent on there being sufficient openings in both of these places. Sadly, this is not always the case.

Discussing the film on Ellen Pakkies with Clara Paulse, she points out that when Abie – Ellen's son – finds out that he is not in fact his father's son, that is the point at which he ends up on a downward spiral. Following that, his peers ostracize him, and then the school expels him, thereby failing him. Clara Paulse states, "It was wrong to expel him. It was not the correct way to deal with the situation." Perhaps if he hadn't been expelled, the system that failed him, could have rather have been a support, and he might not have been one of so many who fell through the cracks.

Ellen Pakkies, who could no longer stand the havoc that her tik addicted son (Abie) was inflicting on their home, strangled him to death in 2007. In a consistent state of desperation and trying to gain a semblance of control in her own life, she was finally seen to be the victim and received a three-year suspended sentence, with 260 days of community service. Although it was clear that she had to do something, in this warped set of circumstances, whatever she did was going to have dire consequences. She tried everything at her disposal, time and time again. By way of example, when she was forced to lock him out of the house so as to protect herself, she provided an outside room for him in her backyard. But his manipulation continued as he constantly took advantage of her need to believe that he would and was capable of changing, whereas in truth the boy she raised was no longer resident. The society

itself also fails her. There were no effective support structures, and it appears that all roads led to nowhere, as she was unable to manage the relentless destruction that her son, the tik addict, brought into the home. Clint Brink who plays Ellen's lawyer, Adrian Samuels says, "Drugs have infiltrated our community and I hope this film opens the eyes of drug merchants and addicts to see what they are doing to us."

However, a film like *Ellen: Die Ellen Pakkies Storie*, based on a true story, raises more questions than it provides answers. What will become of the children who have ended up at schools like St Joseph's Special School, knowing that when they reach adulthood they will return to the communities that they came out of? What solutions are there available to the pregnant mothers who are addicted to tik and are unable to stop themselves long enough to look at the effects this drug will wreak on their unborn child?

All these years later, one can only hope that society will find answers by unraveling the metaphorical rope that Ellen Pakkies used all those years ago and collectively harness it in a manner that will empower the members of that society to find solutions to restore their environment to a healthy one, ridding the community of those who continue to wage war with the incessant substance abuse, and that they will somehow forge a way forward.

Are those Ears an appendix?



I think we all grew up with some or other adult asking if our ears were just ornaments or if we were going to use them. Being a speech and language therapist, I deal with the area of auditory perception and auditory memory which involves processing language and the ability to follow instructions. I have so many educators coming to me often to ask for advice on how to get children to listen, that I have dubbed it 'The Listening Pandemic'.

Adelle Schwark
Speech and Language therapist

In the past we worked on listening skills in the junior grades and children were able, for the most part, to sustain attention and learn to listen. We are now seeing difficulties in listening all the way up into the intermediate phase. There are, in my opinion, three reasons for this:

Firstly, the world has become **increasingly visual**. The making of a mental image while hearing information is no longer necessary as there is a screen to show you what is presented. Screens have often been spoken about in terms of hindering development and it is almost as though we are tired of hearing about it. The truth is that the constant visual images our children are exposed to lead to them not properly developing the ability to process what they are hearing and make sense of it. There is a picture to show you before you have had to.

Secondly, we as parents find it difficult to **model good listening behaviour**. We too have become distracted with our screens and if we are not working we are often quickly checking Instagram or Facebook. If you

do get a work email or WhatsApp, it is expected by the working world that you respond. They have a read receipt and two blue ticks to prove that you have received the message. This might, however, just be at the same time your child is telling you about the terrible day they had at school and you are not actively listening but rather 'multi-tasking' – as necessary as this skill is.

The third reason is that **information is presented in a fast-paced way** on the internet. We get short bursts of information on our phones, a summary of a news article, a 2 minute video on a pressing issue via Instagram or Facebook. This makes sustained attention difficult. We don't train our ears to listen to beautiful pieces of prose – we simply don't have the time.

Below is a table, of behaviours which developed listening skills in the past and the current way we do things. I had a bit of fun with it, so perhaps some are a bit tongue-in-cheek, but maybe we could learn from the past and reinstitute some of these things.

THE WAY THINGS WERE:	THE WAY THEY ARE:
We listened to books via tape or CD or our mothers read them.	We watch a book being read on the iPad
We played Monopoly or snakes and ladders together and had to listen and count the spaces and take turns.	We play Candy Crush by ourselves.
We played memory games like "My grandmother went to market..."	We rush to the shops before we pick up our kids because its faster that way.
We remembered phone numbers.	We save phone numbers in a device.
There was no TV for kids in the afternoon so we played outside and listened for each other.	We can stream, download and access a show at any time.
If we didn't understand a new word e.g. bagpipes the adult would explain in detail what they are and we would have to listen to the explanation involving a pig's bladder, tartan, Scottish, kilt, tubes and blowing.	We Google a picture of bagpipes.
When we got bored we invented new games that we had to explain to our friends... who had to listen.	When we get bored, we swipe left.
We played broken telephone.	We NEVER have a broken telephone.

I did feel rather old writing some of these down, but you get the idea. We need to use our ears and develop our children's listening skills before ears become like an appendixobsolete!

THIRD CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CONGRESS



TOWARDS
TOMORROW
TOGETHER
IN FAITH

From 25-27 September 2019 some 350 delegates gathered for the Third National Catholic Schools Congress, Towards Tomorrow Together in Faith. The congress had been more than a year in preparation with regional conferences held across South Africa. These conferences were attended by school leaders, Religious Educators, teachers, parents, governors and owners of Catholic schools, Bishops and Religious Congregational leaders.

Prior to this the network was canvassed and from the replies five themes chosen:

- Catholic Education Today and Tomorrow: Exploring Identity and Mission;
- Religious Education: Educating the heart, mind and soul: Exploring the potential of Religious Education to shape a better world;

- Liberating Education for 21st Century: Exploring the Catholic school response to the needs of the 21st Century;
- Governing and Leading Catholic Schools towards tomorrow: Exploring ethics, stewardship, empowerment and collaborative practice;
- Sustaining and Growing Catholic Schools today and tomorrow: Exploring ownership, advocacy and viable partnerships.

Reading materials for these conferences included the South African educational landscape and readings on each of the themes. Groups at the conferences answered questions and submitted their answers for analysis in preparation for the Congress. The delegates to attend the congress were elected at these regional conferences. Senior learners also attended some of the regional conferences and their input was recorded.

Mr Sizwe Nxasana, a past pupil of St Francis College, Marianhill was one of the keynote speakers. Sizwe is the co-founder and chairperson of the National Education Collaboration Trust and the founder of the Sifiso Learning Group. Sizwe spoke of the urgency and importance of Africa to renew and change its education system which is failing its children and young people. Dr Wayne Tinsey, the Executive Director of Edmund Rice Education Australia, presented a clear exposition of what a Catholic school should be, especially in its response to the social challenges of our time. He grounded the delegates in the call for Catholic schools to be prophetic and a sign of hope in the world.

Philippe Richard, the Secretary General of the International Catholic Education Office, shared the results of the International Congress, Education Si, which took place in New York City in June 2019.

Nontobeko Matlala, Anne Baker and John McCormick outlined the three important aspects of Child Safeguarding, the Building Peaceful School Programme and Christian Meditation in schools. These three linked programmes all aim to keep children safe and build a culture of peace in schools. John McCormack gave the delegates an opportunity to mediate and experience the peace it can bring.

Guest speakers for each theme leaders were Evona Rebelo, Barbara Dale-Jones, Mduzuzi Qwabe and Sr Kathy Gaylor OP. They outlined each theme after which delegates engaged in rounds of discussion on

the themes and offered their insights into the topic. The results of the discussions were synthesised by a hardworking team in time for the next deeper round of discussions.

The synthesis team offered a summary statement of each theme with a commitment and how it would be done to a working group who refined it for presentation to the plenary. An open and helpful session with all delegates took place where they were able to comment on the vision and direction statements. These comments are being taken into account after which the statements will be circulated via email for final comments.

Early morning Mass took place each day as well as morning and closing prayers. These were led by various provinces and proved a unifying factor. The Congress ended with a beautiful celebration of the Eucharist led by Cardinal Napier with Bishop Jwara, the President of the CBE, offering a meaningful and thought provoking homily. Each region received a 'tree in a bag' to take home and plant, symbolising the continued growth of the Catholic education tree in South Africa.

Once the final Vision and Direction Statements have been approved by delegates, the Catholic Board of Education will in consultation with regions develop a new plan for South Africa in order to give life to the vision and direction statements. The enthusiasm of the delegates to the conference will certainly help the network to move towards tomorrow together in faith.



LET'S SAVE MONEY TOGETHER

COLLABORATION AND SHARED SERVICES COULD SAVE US MONEY

The Catholic Board of Education (CBE) has already put the following in place:

- Central fund raising to support Catholic schools Network
 - ✦ "Leave your print" – R365, 000 raised in 2018 and renovated six toilet blocks
 - ✦ The Educational Access Programme (EAP) – for over 17 years this programme has supported 42 low-fee independent schools with grants which enable vulnerable learners to access the schools. The total money spent is R42 million.
- Centralised accounting services to schools. These can replace the need for each school to employ a bookkeeper and is currently offered at a sliding scale per school (rate determined on size of school's budget). These services include:
 - ✦ budgeting assistance
 - ✦ bookkeeping on an accounting package up to trial balance
 - ✦ quarterly management accounts
 - ✦ subsidy application assistance and school legal compliance
 - ✦ payroll administration to be introduced in 2020
 - ✦ Collective engagement where possible with school auditors to ensure common standards and compliance with regard to school annual financial statements
- Partnership with Ed-admin to reduce costs of admin programme in schools.



**For more details on these accounting services contact
info@cie.org.za**

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

These could be negotiated amongst groups of schools, or a general administration office could be set up to broker these benefits.

- Collective (bulk) purchasing to reduce costs
 - ✦ Staff benefits including common pension/provident fund, group insurance
 - ✦ Consumables
 - ✦ Equipment rentals
- Shared Resources
 - ✦ Centralized maintenance such as plumbing, electrical, planning permission, architectural services, building, dealing with municipalities
 - ✦ Vehicle management, purchasing, servicing, accident repairs, loan vehicles, disposal etc.
 - ✦ General legal assistance including HR management, dispute resolution etc.
 - ✦ Specialist teachers shared between schools

Schools would pay for services as and when needed. Where schools possess a service which may not be fully utilized, the excess capacity can be 'sold' to the general administration office for use by another school in the network.

Catholic
Board of
Education

