



# Roots & Wings

VOLUME 7 No. 2 JUNE 2021

*The Periodical of the Professional Society of Religious Educators*

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second issue of *Roots & Wings* for 2021. This publication, sent electronically free of charge to members of the Professional Society, appears quarterly. It contains regular features as indicated in the Contents table alongside.



## Visages

Jean-Georges Cornelius (1880-1963)

## CONTENTS

### REFLECTION

Losing the Song in the Singer .....2

### REFLECTION

The Holiness of Human Sexuality .....3

### TALKING ABOUT RE (CPTD)

The Purpose of Education .....4

### CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Everyone Matters in the Classroom.....6

### ARTISTS' CORNER

Jean-Georges Cornelius .....9

### WEBSITE

Encyclopedia of Religion and Society .10

### BOOK REVIEW

Citizen of the World & Impressions of Jesus .....11

### LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

.....12

QUESTION (CPTD) .....14

Members are encouraged to send material for future editions. What might you send? Here are some examples:

- Lesson ideas or plans
- Reviews of useful materials such as books or websites
- News from your school's RE Department
- Short articles of interest to religious educators
- Adverts for RE posts in your school

## REFLECTION

### *Losing the Song in the Singer*

(Ron Rolheiser)



Often when listening to someone singing live or on television, I close my eyes to try to hear the song so as not to let the singer's performance get in the way of the song. A song can be lost in its performance; indeed, the performance can take over so that the song is replaced by the singer.

When anyone is performing live, be it on a stage, in a classroom, at a podium, or in a pulpit, there will always be some combination of three things. The speaker will be trying to impress others with his talent; he will be trying to get a message across; and (consciously or unconsciously) he will be trying to channel something true, good, and beautiful for its own sake. Metaphorically, he will be making love to himself, making love to the audience, and making love to the song.

It is the third component, making love to the song, which makes for great art, great rhetoric, great teaching, and great preaching. Greatness sets itself apart here because what comes through is "the song" rather than the singer, the message rather than the messenger, and the performer's empathy rather than his ego. The audience then is drawn to the song rather than to the singer. Good singers draw people to the music rather than to themselves; good teachers draw students to truth and learning rather than to themselves; good artists draw people to beauty rather than to adulation, and good preachers draw their congregations to God rather than to praise of themselves.

Admittedly, this isn't easy to do. We are all human, so is our audience. No audience respects you unless you do show some talent, creativity, and intelligence. There's always an unspoken pressure on the singer, the speaker, the teacher, and the preacher,

both from within and from without. From within: I don't want to disappoint! I don't want to look bad! I need to stand out! I need to show them something special! From without, from the audience: What have you got! Show us something! Are you worth my attention? Are you bright? Are you boring? Only the most mature person can be free of these pressures. Thus, the song easily gets lost in the singer, the message in the messenger, the teaching in the teacher, and the message of God in the personality of the preacher.

As a teacher, preacher, and writer, I admit my own long struggle with this. When you first start teaching, you had better impress your students or you won't have their attention or respect for long. The same with preaching. The congregation is always sizing you up, and you had better measure up or no one will be listening to you. Moreover, unless you have an exceptionally strong self-image, you will be a perennial prisoner of your own insecurities. Nobody wants to look bad, stupid, uninformed, or come across as talentless. Everyone wants to look good.

Moreover, not least, there is still your ego (and its power can never be underestimated). It wants to draw the attention and the admiration to itself rather than to what is true, good, and beautiful. There is always the temptation for the messenger to be more concerned about impressing others than about having the message come through in purity and truth. The subtle, but powerful, temptation inside every singer, teacher, speaker, preacher, or writer is to draw people to themselves rather than to the truth and beauty they are trying to channel.

I struggle with this in every class I teach, every article or book I write, and every time I preside at liturgy. Nevertheless, I make no apologies for this. It is the innate struggle in all creative effort. Are we trying

to draw people to ourselves, or are we trying to draw them to truth, to beauty, to God?

When I teach a class, how much of my preparation and energy is motivated by a genuine concern for the students and how much is motivated by my need to look good, to impress, to have a reputation as a good teacher? When I write an article or a book, am I really trying to bring insight and understanding to others or am I thinking of my status as a writer? When I preside at mass and preach is my real motivation to channel a sacred ritual in a manner that my own personality doesn't get in the way?

Is it to lead people into community with each other and to decrease myself so Christ can increase?

There is no simple answer to those questions because there can't be. Our motivation is always less than fully pure. Moreover, we are not meant to be univocal robots without personalities. Our unique personalities and talents were given by God precisely as gifts to be used for others. Still, there's a clear warning sign. When the focus of the audience is more on our personalities than on the song, we are probably making love more to ourselves and our admirers than to the song.



## REFLECTION

### *The Holiness of Human Sexuality: The Goal Is Union*

(Richard Rohr - Friday, June 11, 2021)



Marlina Vera 2017

The goal of our sexual longing is universal love, which is to say union with God, ourselves, and What Is. We came from union and all of our longing is a movement back toward union. The experiences of sexuality can help us glimpse and taste this unity and bring us to what I call the "Gate of the Temple," but they do not by themselves carry us through the doors. The late gay contemplative writer Michael Bernard Kelly (1954–2020) understood that our incarnate, finite loves find their source in Infinite Love:

In every era and in every part of life there is a tendency for us to focus on 'experiences,' ecstatic 'thrills'. . . . This tendency is especially marked in sexuality and spirituality, where the tastes are so intoxicating, fleeting and profound. These tastes are essential; they are seeds, glimpses of that fullness to which we are called. However, they are not the Journey itself, not transformation, not mystical union, not enlightenment. They set us on the road—perhaps they are even glimpses of the destination—but we have not yet arrived. Indeed we have hardly set out! If we become addicted to simply seeking more and more 'experiences,' whether sexual or spiritual, we

never will arrive. We all know this tendency in sexuality, but the seduction in spirituality can be more subtle, more compelling and more soul destroying.



So what is happening? Firstly, some element of this ‘addiction’ is probably inevitable in our yearning and longing, for the taste of ecstasy, however it comes, is so delicious, so overwhelming. Of course we seek it again and again!

‘You shed your fragrance about me; I drew breath and now I gasp for your sweet perfume. I tasted you and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me and I am inflamed with love of your peace,’ says Saint Augustine [1], and in our different ways we know what he means. However, we must allow the withdrawing to take place. It is the withdrawing that will draw us towards the transformation, to the abiding fulfilment of that which we taste so briefly in our ecstasies. How does this happen?

When we taste the Mystery we long to drink deeply of it, to take it into ourselves, to be possessed by it, to surrender to it, to become it in an abiding way, ‘forever and ever.’ To become that which we taste. . . . This is mirrored very powerfully in the images of spiritual communion, where we eat and drink ‘the body and blood of the Lord,’ our very bodies merging and becoming transformed into the One who is the Beloved of our souls.

This is the heart of our yearning: to become that which we taste and hunger for, not briefly, but fully, totally, permanently, being utterly transformed into that which we desire so deeply. Union. Ecstasy. The ‘Lover with his beloved, transforming the beloved in her Lover,’ [2] the seeker transformed into that which she seeks.



## TALKING ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CPTD) <sup>1</sup>

### *The purpose of education*

(Trevor Cooling)<sup>2</sup>

How is religious belief to be handled when there is such diversity of views in society? Since education is largely funded by the state, should religious beliefs have any place in the educational institutions of a religiously diverse democracy? Should teachers and lecturers be free to express their views on matters of faith or should professional integrity mean that they keep quiet?

The questions that lie at the heart of this debate are “what is the purpose of education?” and “how does religious belief relate to that?” The answer developed in this report can be illustrated through considering two well-known scientists.

Richard Dawkins and Francis Collins are both leading biologists with prestigious reputations. They are also both vocal in expressing their views on matters of religious belief. Dawkins is an atheist who believes passionately that evolution gives a total explanation for the nature of life on earth. For Dawkins, God is a delusion. Francis Collins, who was the Director of the Human Genome Project, in contrast is a Christian convert. For him the natural world does not make sense unless one sees it as the result of God’s design. For Dawkins design in the natural world is an illusion. For Collins it is inherent.

Dawkins and Collins are scientific colleagues. They share the same knowledge base and can work with integrity within the same discipline. Their different religious beliefs make no difference to their professional capacity to work as biologists. There is a shared scientific activity which is based on rational principles. However, they differ fundamentally when it comes to the *meaning and significance* they attribute to their shared enterprise. For Collins it only makes sense in a world where there is a Creator, but for Dawkins it leads him to

---

<sup>1</sup> Read this article for CPTD points. See Page 22.

<sup>2</sup> From *Doing God in Education* – Theos 2010

believe that God does not exist. Dawkins and Collins have both written books intended to persuade others of the truth of their beliefs. For both of them the shared activity of science is important, but the interpretation of the meaning and significance of science is even more so; indeed, the two activities are inextricably related. What then are the implications of this observation for education?

Faith schools are a significant factor in the current educational scene. Their existence raises the question of how their ethos relates to their educational role. For example, Church of England schools are encouraged to explore how the curriculum might be “distinctively Christian”. Science teachers sometimes object to this on the grounds that the purpose of science lessons is to teach young people the discipline of science, not to engage with debates about religious belief. Those, they argue, should happen elsewhere in the curriculum, if indeed they have any place in education.

But what is being said here? The argument seems to be that science lessons are *purely* about passing on the facts of science and inducting students into scientific method. That means that the debate between Collins and Dawkins about meaning and significance is being treated as of no consequence for science teachers. And yet Dawkins and Collins as professional scientists are committed enough to that debate to give it considerable time and energy. They know it matters. Why should not science lessons contribute to the wider educational task of helping pupils develop their understanding of meaning and significance in life? Why should such debates be confined (or perhaps relegated) to Religious Education (RE) lessons and assemblies?

Interestingly, discussions about the nature of RE in schools throw significant light on this question. Good RE teachers don't just teach the facts about religion, but put great emphasis on helping students to make their own judgments about the meaning and significance of religious belief. This is the *learning from* dimension of the subject. That's why it is called religious *education* and not just religion. Why then is the curriculum subject science not called science *education*? Maybe a change of name is needed because the value of teaching science in schools should lie not just in learning scientific information, but in developing the ability to make judgments about the meaning and significance of science. In other words, science in schools should be contributing to *pupils' development as persons* and not just to their knowledge of science. The debate between Dawkins and Collins is too important to be ignored by science teachers. *This report argues that learning to make judgments about the meaning and significance of what we learn is, actually, what education is all about.* This is expressed evocatively in the following letter from a holocaust survivor written to the United Nations about the importance of studying history:

Dear Teacher

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: Gas chambers built by learned engineers; children poisoned by educated physicians; infants killed by trained nurses; women and babies shot by high school graduates; so I am suspicious of education.

My request is: help your students to become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns. Reading, writing and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.



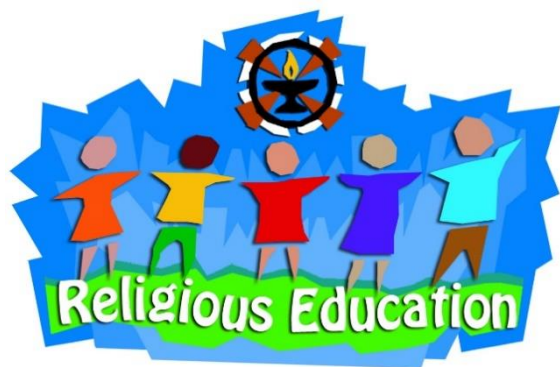
# CLASSROOM PRACTICE

## Every One Matters in the Classroom

### A Practice Code for Teachers of RE

*Demonstrating respect for diversity and promoting equality: religious and non-religious belief in schools*

#### Introduction



Teachers are influential people and it is important that this influence is exercised in a professional and responsible manner, particularly in relation to religious and non-religious beliefs.

All teachers operate within the framework of human rights legislation. The following principles are offered for teachers to support them particularly when working with religious and non-religious beliefs. Professional judgements will need to be made concerning the interpretation of these principles with pupils at different ages and stages.

#### PRINCIPLES

##### 1. Respect persons.

One hallmark of a professional teacher is sensitivity to pupils. Irrespective of their religious or non-religious beliefs, every pupil should be treated equally out of respect for their dignity as a human being.

##### 1. Respect persons.

##### 2. Value reason-giving.

##### 3. Practise reciprocity.

##### 4. Accept contestability and value self-awareness.

##### 5. Be open.

##### 6. Promote fair and accurate representation.

##### 7. Model life-long learning.

##### 8. Promote balance.

#### EXEMPLIFICATIONS

*Learning is planned in a way that allows pupils to express and evaluate opinions and feelings in confidence e.g. collecting anonymous comments on post it notes which are then shared and discussed by the class.*

*Before involving any pupil from a particular religious or non-religious background as a 'living resource', teachers consult with them, and ideally their family, to make sure they are comfortable to take on this role, to agree how their contribution will help learning and to check that they are knowledgeable enough to do this successfully. It is important that they are not presented as authoritatively representative of their tradition or community.*

*Teachers always allow pupils to withdraw from answering a question and/or participating in an activity if they feel compromised, being careful also not thereby to draw attention to such pupils.*

## 2. Value reason-giving.

Schools are places of critical engagement and respectful, vigorous debate where deep thinking is valued. Pupils should be encouraged to think skilfully about, reflect on and take responsibility for the beliefs that shape their behaviour and attitudes so that they continue in or develop their beliefs through lifelong critical reflection.

*The teacher's careful use of a variety of appropriate assessment methods in planning lessons allows pupils to employ skills of evaluation and encourages them to be reflective learners. Teachers' planning creates opportunities which allow pupils to challenge and reflect through the use of thinking skills activities such as 'Mysteries' and 'Community of enquiry' and through debate.*

## 3. Practise reciprocity.

The Golden Rule, "treat others as you would like to be treated", is a principle which is widely shared across human communities. When handling beliefs in school, teachers should treat religious and non-religious beliefs as they would like their own beliefs to be treated in the same circumstances.

*Teachers include the Golden Rule as one of the ground rules for RE lessons negotiated at the start of each year with every class.*

*Teachers recognise that it is not their role to pass judgement on whether pupils' beliefs are valid or not but to help them explore those beliefs and their impact on individuals and groups who hold them.*

## 4. Accept contestability and value self-awareness.

Beliefs are always contestable; the teacher should recognise that they may be controversial and should frame their language accordingly. This entails a willingness to be self-aware, particularly in relation to the way in which the teacher's own beliefs impact on his or her approach to teaching and learning.

*The word 'we' is used with caution by teachers e.g. 'Because we believe in God....' is never appropriate as teachers cannot assume belief, even in a faith school context. Teachers acknowledge the variability of beliefs in response to moral issues even within a single tradition.*

## 5. Be open.

Appropriate openness about what a teacher believes can be a professional asset. This means being prepared to answer questions about and talk about his or her own beliefs when that is appropriate (an important professional judgment) in a way that enables pupils to develop in their own learning. The older the pupils, the more likely it is that a teacher could be open in an appropriate way. Teachers will make their own professional judgment on the extent to which to be open about their own beliefs.

*Before sharing their response or belief with students teachers routinely ask themselves, 'Will this help the learning?' They also consider prefacing their thoughts with 'My comments/beliefs are no more important than those of anyone else in this room/group', and are receptive to pupils' critical evaluations of their responses.*



## 6. Promote fair and accurate representation.

Where people of diverse beliefs meet, there is opportunity for both conflict and co-operation. Teachers should strive for fair and accurate representation of religious and non-religious beliefs by drawing on sound scholarship and a range of voices. To promote cooperation, teachers should treat diversity as an opportunity to work with others in the shared task of achieving excellence in teaching and learning.

*Teachers' planning allows their students to work with members of different groups within the same religion or non-religious belief, e.g. ask the same questions to Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. Teachers consider how they present religious or non-religious beliefs, ensuring they avoid the phrase 'Hindus believe...' or 'Jewish people worship by...' preferring 'Some ...' or 'Many ...' Teachers also include examples which help pupils to understand that in some cases religious and non-religious identification is expressed in terms of belonging not believing.*

## 7. Model life-long learning.

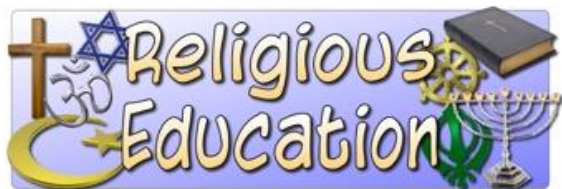
In a culture where open debate and hard questions are encouraged, teachers will often find there is much that they do not know. Professionalism in these circumstances means being open to the discussion moving into challenging territory and being willing to learn.

*It may be appropriate for teachers to adopt the role of 'learner' alongside pupils thus modelling that to be adult means to accept that you don't always have all the answers. The words 'I don't know' can be powerful in the RE classroom especially if they are followed by the questions 'Is there an answer?' and if so, 'How could we find out?' In many cases teachers should be, in the words of Philosophy for Children, 'the guide on the side' rather than 'the sage on the stage'.*

## 8. Promote balance.

The search for meaning and truth is central to education. When dealing with a controversial issue, teachers should encourage consideration of a balanced range of views, even if they find this uncomfortable on occasion.

*Teachers provide pupils with cards with a wide range of comments and views and ask them to rank order them, justifying their own ideas to others in the group. The point is not comprehensiveness of coverage but is about helping pupils to understand that there is difference of opinion, which often rests on a key issue. So on abortion they need to understand the key difference on the status of a foetus if they are to get a balanced understanding of that debate.*



Copyright Religious Education Council for England and Wales 2009. Reproduction in complete form is allowed for educational use.





## ARTISTS' CORNER

*From 'Jéhovah devient notre père' by Jean-Georges Cornélius.*



Before I left Paray-le-Monial I was given an unexpected gift. In Musée de Hieron, not far from the old Jesuit residence, are some works by the 20th century artist Jean-Georges Cornélius. One painting powerfully impressed itself upon me: *Jéhovah devient notre père* (above). It seemed to sum up so much of what contemporary theology had been trying to express about the reality of the cross at the heart of God's Trinitarian life. This painting did not use words or sophisticated philosophical theology. It simply showed the crucified Christ held in the arms of the Father; a traditional artistic theme. In a profoundly personal moment between the Father and the Son, the painting caught a delicate heart-consoling, heart-breaking ambivalence in their closeness: the love was evident and palpable but, as for any parent holding a suffering and dying child, the pain of the Father as well as that of the Son was visible. And there was also a gentle, trusting peace. Supported in the Father's arms the Son was held, lovingly secure. Theirs was not a closed relationship. Even in such profound intimacy and suffering, their love draws us in. We cannot be onlookers or spectators; we are moved not just by empathy but by grace. In their suffering their heart was one. So are we all held close to the Father's heart (James Hanvey SJ)

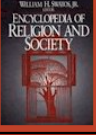
<https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/alive-love-sacred-heart-jesus>



# WEBSITE

## Encyclopedia of Religion and Society


<http://hrr.hartsem.edu/ency/index.html>



### Encyclopedia of Religion and Society

William H. Swatos, Jr. Editor

Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Hartford Seminary



[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[D](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[Q](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[W](#)
[X](#)
[Y](#)

[Table of Contents](#) | [Cover Page](#) | [Editors](#) | [Contributors](#) | [Introduction](#) | [Web Version](#) | [Topic Suggestion?](#)

#### A

Abortion

Acquaviva, Sabino

Adams, James Luther

Adaptation

Adolescence/Youth Culture

Adventism

Affective Commitment

African American Religion

Age

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alienation

Allport, Gordon

Alternation

American Academy of Religion

American Catholic Sociological Society

American Psychological Association, Section on the Psychology of Religion

American Religion

American Sociological Association, Section on the Sociology of Religion

Amish

Ammerman, Nancy T.

Anabaptists

Ancestor Worship

Animism

Anomie

Anthropology of Religion

Anticult Movement

Apocalyptic

Apocryphal and Deception

Apocalypse

Apparition

Archives de Science Sociales des Religions

Asceticism

Asian Religion

Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry

Association for the Sociology of Religion

Astrology

Atheism

Attitudes

Attribution Theory

Authoritarianism

#### B

Baha'i

Bailey, Edward J.

Baptists

Barker, Eileen

Barratt, Donald H.

Batson, C. Daniel

Becker, Ernst

Beckford, James A.

Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin

Beliefs

Bellah, Robert N.

Belonging

Bendix, Richard

Berger, Peter L.

Berenson, Henri

Bibby, Reginald

Biblical Studies

Blasi, Anthony J.

Blizzard, Samuel

Boagardus, Emory

Book of Mormon

Bouma, Gary D.

Bourdieu, Pierre

Bourg, Carroll J.

Brainwashing

Brewer, Earl D.C.

Bricolage

Bromley, David G.

Brough, Mary Lippert


Brunner, Edmund S. de

Buber, Martin

Buddhism

Burke, Ralph


This a very handy reference for the religious educator with short, informative articles on every conceivable topic from A-Z from the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. Below is a sample – the entry for Ancestor Worship.



### Encyclopedia of Religion and Society

William H. Swatos, Jr. Editor

Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Hartford Seminary



[Table of Contents](#) | [Cover Page](#) | [Editors](#) | [Contributors](#) | [Introduction](#) | [Web Version](#)

#### ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Beliefs and rites concerned with the spirits of one's ancestors. Rituals may be intended to honor the ancestors, to help the ancestors in the other world, or to seek help (guidance, power) from the ancestors. The spiritual world of the ancestors is usually thought to be similar to the life they experienced prior to death. Morality is concerned with pleasing the ancestors.

Ancestor worship is not itself a religion but exists as a part of many groups' religious systems. It fits societies in which the authority of elders is an important component. While ancestor worship is most important within traditional groups or folk religions, practices associated with ancestors linger on in the world religions (e.g., having Catholic Masses said for the dead).

Ancestor worship has been affected by the scientific challenge to magic, by the diffusion of universal religions, and by changes in family life. In East Asia, worship of ancestors is being replaced by simple acts of remembrance (Morioka 1986). A similar process may be occurring in all modernizing societies. In Western societies, the tendency to preserve deceased loved ones in memory conflicts with changes such as multiple marriages; new religious and secular grieving practices emphasize letting go of old relationships in preparation for forming new ones.

—Joseph B. Tamney

#### References

M. Freedman, *Chinese Family and Marriage in Singapore* (London: HMSO, 1957)

K. Morioka, "Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan," in *Religion and the Family in East Asia*, ed. G. A. DeVos and T. Sofue (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986): 201-213

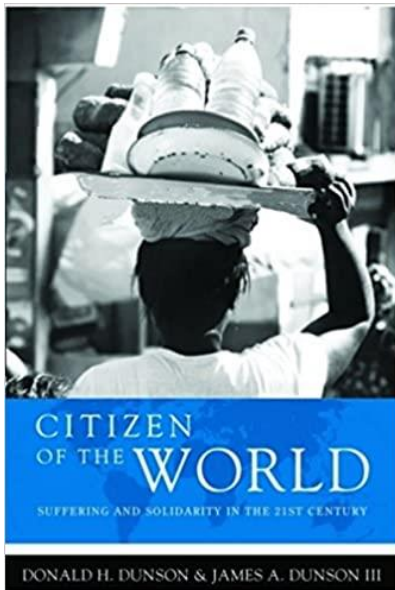
[return to Encyclopedia Table of Contents](#)

Hartford Institute for Religion Research [hrr@hartsem.edu](mailto:hrr@hartsem.edu)  
Hartford Seminary, 77 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105 860-509-9500



## BOOK REVIEW

### *Citizen of the World*



*Donald H. Dunson & James A. Dunson III (Authors)*

*Orbis Books 2013 162pp. ISBN-13 978-1626980457*

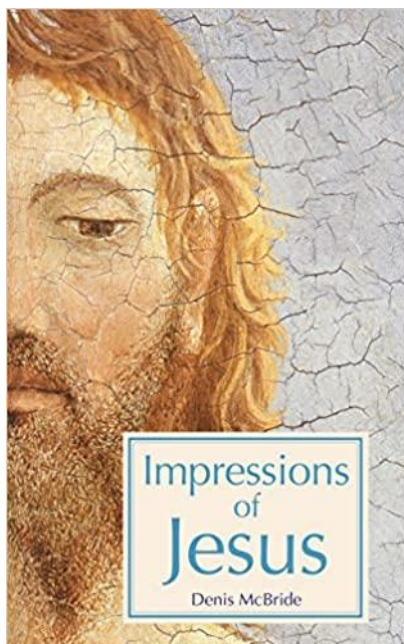
This study of the nature of our moral obligations to alleviate suffering on a global level addresses many of the vexing questions that face practitioners of Christian compassion: how do we avoid a kind of "poverty tourism" or "slacktivism" in our response to suffering, particularly far from home? How do we respond authentically and effectively in our strategies for solidarity with the poor and the underprivileged?

Using personal anecdotes as well as philosophical and theological reflection, Donald and James Dunson emphasize the power of moral argument as well as personal experience in addressing what can seem an insurmountable catalog of evils and suffering in the world. Approaching these issues from a number of backgrounds—academic philosophy, pastoral counseling, theology, social science, and narrative approaches—

Dunson and Dunson have created a text perfect for use with high school and college classrooms, immersion groups, parish study groups, and service-learning programs.

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/becoming-a-citizen-of-the-world-donald-h-dunson/1114732330>

### *Impressions of Jesus*



*Denis McBride (author)*

*Redemptorist Publications 1992 233pp. ISBN-13*

*978-0852311370*

What would the different people - the woman of Samaria, children, the woman of Magdala, Simon, Martha, Nicodemus, Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, Judas, the good thief - who encountered Jesus have said about him? Father Denis McBride has produced a beautifully written book of their "impressions" leading one through the ministry journey of Jesus. 'Impressions of Jesus' has been highly rated by Father Raymond E Brown one of the foremost English speaking Catholic Biblical scholars - "a fascinating little book, scholarly and simple at the same time, and it will enlighten all who read it". It is recommended by Joseph Girzone (author of the Joshua books) "What a refreshing and enjoyable portrait of Jesus!"

David Antony - <https://www.amazon.com/Impressions-Jesus-Denis-McBride/dp/0852311370>







## LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Scientists and religious leaders to join Vatican climate summit

(Loup Besmond de Senneville | Vatican City)

*World figures invited to October 4th gathering in Rome in run-up to the COP 26 global climate summit in Glasgow.*

*With this meeting, the Vatican wants to emphasize the importance of the approach of believers in the ecological debate.*



(Photo by VINCENZO PINTO/AFP)

The Vatican has announced that scientists and religious leaders from around the world will come to Rome in early October for a Church-sponsored meeting on climate issues. The gathering is scheduled for October 4, which Christians celebrate as the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron of ecology. It will take place less than a month before world leaders meet from November 1-12 in Glasgow, Scotland for COP26, the next United Nations Climate Change Conference. Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Holy See's equivalent of "foreign minister", told journalists at a June 17 press briefing that Pope Francis is pressing for an "ecological conversion". "We are invited to rethink the world in which we live," he said. The English prelate was

joined by Italy's and Great Britain's ambassadors to the Holy See, the co-initiators of the Rome gathering. Archbishop Gallagher said the religious figures attending the event will be able to offer an "integral" vision of life. "Faith has had a very significant role in these debates." The Vatican hopes the gathering will underscore the importance of the approach believers bring to the ecological debate. Sally Axworthy, the British ambassador, agreed. "Faith has had a very significant role in these debates," she said, especially "in building the Paris agreements". Her Italian counterpart, Pietro Sebastiani, shared that view. He claimed that religious leaders had even played "a key role in creating the conditions for the success of COP 21", which led to the Paris agreements in December 2015. "Climate change is also a moral issue," he insisted. "There is an urgent need to step up our actions to address the threat of climate change, especially for the younger generations and for the poorest countries and communities," Ambassador Sebastiani argued. Pope's presence "very likely." Pope Francis made sure his ecological and social encyclical, *Laudato si'*, was published in June 2015 so that it appeared well before the Paris summit. As he told a group of French environmentalists a few months ago, the idea was to put pressure on the leaders who gathered for that climate change meeting. Archbishop Gallagher said it was "very likely" the pope

would be attending the October meeting in Rome. But he and the other organizers refused to say who else would be present. "We tried to invite people from all parts of the world, from all religions," said Ambassador Axworthy. As for Francis going to Glasgow in November for the international climate talks, Archbishop Gallagher would

not say. But John Kerry, the US president's special envoy for climate change, said he's sure the pope would attend COP26 on November 1st. "The first day. He will be there with the heads of state," Kerry said last month after a private meeting with the pope at the Vatican.

<https://international.la-croix.com/news/environment/scientists-and-religious-leaders-to-join-vatican-climate-summit/14494>



## *Having no home*

(Abigail Dawson)

Imagine having lived in a country for the majority of your life or having been born here and still not being recognised as a citizen of this country. This place is the only city, people, streets and languages you know. Yet, you are still considered other.



JESUIT INSTITUTE SOUTH AFRICA

In the lead up to World Refugee Day, my colleagues and I have been working with young people who are stateless or at risk of becoming stateless. Being stateless essentially means that you are not recognised as a citizen under the operation of the laws of a country - you are a citizen nowhere. Conflicts in citizenship law and practice perpetuate statelessness - it is preventable.

One of the young people we have been working with was born in South Africa to a parent who holds refugee status. She was removed from her parents' status at age eighteen, a process known as de-linking. She has since had to make her own asylum application which is currently under review. She explains the barriers she faces without having an identity document: "Without an identity document, simple tasks like banking, schooling, obtaining a driver's license and finding employment become impossible. I plead that the only place I have known as home accepts me."

A process in South African citizenship law provides a legal pathway for this young person called citizenship by naturalisation. The young person we are assisting applied for this in 2019. No outcome has been received to date. This has been compounded by the closure, since March 2020, of the citizenship section in the Department of Home Affairs. As organisations and activists, we are advocating against various legal barriers and the processing of these applications. There is more that needs to be done.

Having worked with these young people, I have thought deeply about the importance of hospitality and dignity. Beyond legal provisions and human rights provisions which promote inclusion and equality for marginalised groups, how can our value of hospitality be used as resistance? Hospitality beyond pleasantries. Christine Pohl's in her book, "Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition", points to this in saying: "Especially when the larger society disregards or dishonors certain persons, small acts of respect and welcome are potent far beyond themselves. They point to a different system of valuing and an alternate model of relationships."

As we commemorate World Refugee Day on Sunday, 20 June, we can reflect on our practice of hospitality. I encourage us all to think about whether our practice of hospitality involves respecting the dignity and equal worth of all people? Do we recognise their contributions or potential contributions, not only of those embedded in our communities but also those on the margins?

\*In commemorating Youth Month and World Refugee Day, The Jesuit Institute, in collaboration with Jesuit Refugee Service and Lawyers for Human Rights, will be hosting a five-week campaign called This Is Home – documenting the lives of young people who are stateless or at risk of becoming stateless. Follow # ThisIsHome for more information.



## CPTD

### *The purpose of education*

Read the article for CPTD points and record your response to the following questions:

- What is the writer's main argument?
- What significance does the argument have in my context?
- What practical action does the argument's conclusion suggest?

### *Professional Development Points Schedule*

<https://www.sace.gov.za/Documentation/PROFESSIONAL%20DEVELOPMENT%20POINTS%20SCHEDULE.pdf>

Catholic  
Institute of  
Education  
CREATING FUTURES



66 Nelson Road, Booysens, Johannesburg 2091  
P O Box 2083 Southdale 2135;  
Tel: 011 433 1888 Web: [www.cie.org.za](http://www.cie.org.za)

