

## **Transforming Hearts and Minds: the contribution of Christian values to the curriculum**

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In a recent lecture on spiritual education, John Keast, a leading English religious educator, took the title *Clever Devils and How to Avoid Them*. He referred to a conference that took place on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1942 when a group of fifteen men gathered at Wannsee in Berlin. They were there to plan the “final solution”; we now know this as the Holocaust. Amongst them were several PhDs and a theology graduate. A number of these men were products of Christian schools; some were the sons of clergymen.

Allow me to read you a letter from a holocaust survivor.

Dear Teacher

I am a survivor of a concentration camp

My eyes saw what no men should witness:

gas chambers built by engineers;

children poisoned by educated physicians;

infants killed by trained nurses;

women and babies shot and burned by high school graduates.

So, I am suspicious of your education.

My request is: help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.

Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.

July 7<sup>th</sup> this year is now a memorable date for British citizens. It is our 9/11. Early that morning, four young men blew themselves up on the London transport system killing 52 innocent people. One of these suicide bombers was a well respected teaching assistant in a primary school. The question that a lot of British educators are now asking is how our education system managed to create such clever devils? I am sure that this is a question that is equally relevant in Australia.

### **Why Education?**

My own school was part of a Christian foundation set up by Archbishop Whitgift in 1596. Whitgift was the last Archbishop of Canterbury to serve Elizabeth I. We had a rich Anglican heritage and enjoyed an excellent all-round, education. Academic excellence was encouraged and I can remember the thrill that I used to get from gaining academic qualifications, both at school and university. I think I took public exams every year from when I was fifteen through to when I was twenty three. And I still have the evidence, despite my wife’s attempts to curtail my squirrel like habits. In a treasured folder at home

is a copy of every exam paper that I have ever taken and every certificate I have ever been awarded!

There is however a parable of Jesus that has always haunted me<sup>i</sup>. It is about the rich fool who accumulates wealth in his barns and in an orgy of self-congratulation declares himself to “have arrived”, to be “set up for life”. I have often thought that his approach to wealth was very similar to my pride in my academic achievements. Being clever is simply not enough. Even less so is having the certificates to prove that you are clever. It is what we do with our cleverness that matters. As Christian educators we all know that. But I went to an excellent Christian school. Why, I wonder, did it take me so long to learn that the real value of education is not in the accumulation of academic trophies but in a life lived to make a difference?

In this address I will be exploring how Christian education can make a “value-added” contribution to the curriculum. This is, of course, only one dimension of a Christian education, since there are many other aspects of school life where Christian values are emphasised. However the brief given to me did not include examining the worship life of the school, or that highly important, but somewhat nebulous, subject of the school’s ethos, or the crucial role of the teacher as a role-model of the spiritual life. These will, I am sure, be discussed elsewhere in this conference and are crucial elements of a rounded Christian education. Nor will I be analysing the nature of Christian spirituality and its relationship to Christian values, or attempting to draw up a list of Christian values that we should be promoting. Again, this is a topic that will be considered elsewhere in our programme. Rather my task is to consider the day-to-day work of the classroom teacher by asking this question; “how can our classroom teaching contribute to ensuring that we don’t just produce clever devils?”

### **The Place of the Classroom Teacher**

At the risk of appearing somewhat nostalgic, I want to return to my own experience of learning and teaching. I justify this on the grounds that I could make similar points by references to the research literature<sup>ii</sup>. But here I am concerned to show that it is, above all, our own classroom experience that counts. Allow me to tell you two stories.

I was fourteen at the time. It was a Thursday afternoon biology lesson. Our teacher gathered us round the front desk and produced a human brain in a large glass container. He proceeded to point out the various regions of the brain and describe their functions. His words went over my head. I just sat there wondering what this “person” used to think and what had happened to all those thoughts now his or her brain was pickled. Forty years on I can still see the brain. I can even visualise the slightly green colour it had turned. I cannot remember what else we did in biology that year.

Twenty years after this incident, I was myself teaching the new Nuffield course in biology. Part of the course involved the study of chick development in the egg. We incubated the eggs and the pupils examined them at various stages of development. They looked at the developing organs and made notes and drawings. They also watched the

beating hearts stop beating as the chicks died under the binocular microscopes. Every year I had a few deeply upset pupils. After three years I refused to teach this part of the course practically.

I hasten to add that neither of these incidents would happen in British schools today. Sensitivities to matters of life and death are more developed now. However they are both examples of what I am going to call “values moments”; those times when questions of value and meaning force themselves through the academic content of the lesson to become the focal point of the pupils’ attention. I have no doubt that everyone here can describe such moments from their own experience.

These values moments highlight an important point about the academic curriculum. In teaching the knowledge and understanding that pupils need to acquire, it is quite possible to completely miss the point of what is actually being learnt. For my pupils studying chick embryology, the question that was uppermost in some of their minds was this; “why do these chicks have to die – surely their life is more valuable than this?” As a pupil myself, although a keenly interested biologist, my most significant question on observing a brain was to do with what constituted being human. How did the brain as a physical object relate to the mind and spirit of the person who once “occupied” that brain? But none of these questions were addressed in these lessons. The focus was on “the facts” of the subject. The “soft” questions of values that related to meaning and significance were considered to be inappropriate in the context of an academic discipline. So the sensitive amongst us were left feeling our questions were irrelevant to academic work. The less sensitive were reinforced in their materialist view of life. Surely this sort of approach poses the danger of creating clever devils? After all what is a clever devil other than someone who has failed to appreciate that their prime function as a learner is to pursue the good in their use of the knowledge that they learn?

The question, therefore, for a Christian school is how reflection on Christian values can be systematically promoted through classroom teaching? How can we capitalise on the potential offered by values moments?

In order to illustrate how to develop an effective Christian value-added curriculum, I am going to introduce you to the *Charis Project*. The Project was set up in the 1990s in the wake of legislation in England that required schools to promote the spiritual and moral development of their pupils through the curriculum. Although it sounded a worthy aim, there was very little understanding of what this meant in practice. The Charis Project was charged with developing materials that demonstrated how this could be done in two unlikely subjects; modern foreign languages (MFL) and mathematics. If the importance of a values-based approach could be demonstrated in these seemingly “value neutral” subjects, then its importance would be established for all subjects. The brief for the Project was to generate materials that exemplified the process of promoting spiritual development in a way that was both distinctively Christian but appropriate for all pupils irrespective of their background and personal beliefs. Quite a tall order! David Smith, who was one of the Charis project writers and an MFL teacher, exemplifies the challenge

when he notes that the only relevant biblical reference that he could find for a languages teacher was in Judges 12. As David puts it:

You may remember that Ephraim fought with the men of Gilead. When the Gileadites got the upper hand and captured the fords of Jordan, they asked every survivor who passed that way to say “Shibboleth”. Those with faulty pronunciation revealed themselves as being from Ephraim and were promptly slain. Not exactly a promising basis for a “biblical” approach to foreign languages education.<sup>iii</sup>

However, before we can examine the work of the Charis Project we need to take a little excursion into the world of theology to find a solution to the challenge posed by of integrating Christian values into the subject matter of the academic disciplines.

### **Shaped by the Biblical Story**

If it means nothing else, to be shaped as a Christian in today’s world surely means to be shaped by the Bible. But what does this mean in practice? Is there, as once was suggested to me, a curriculum in the mind of God which we can discern in the pages of the Bible and then simply follow to the letter? It seems unlikely.

Much of the Bible is actually a narrative of God’s dealings with the human race. A relatively small amount of the text is made up of instructions that can be straightforwardly applied in the day to day life of twenty first century people. And even those that do seem to be like that, such as the injunction that it is a disgrace for a man to have longhair<sup>iv</sup> (on the basis of which as a teenager in the 1970s I was required to undergo a haircut of biblical proportions) often turn out to be more culturally specific than may first have been appreciated. So how does one apply the narratives of the Bible in today’s world, and particularly in today’s school curriculum?

Tom Wright, now Bishop of Durham, has developed a most helpful analogy that has been highly influential in recent years. He asks us to imagine that a previously unknown Shakespeare play has been discovered, but where the fifth act has been largely lost. How best, Wright asks, to complete this play so that it can be enjoyed by theatre audiences? His suggestion<sup>v</sup> is that we commission a number of highly experienced Shakespearean actors to complete the unfinished play. Their task will be to immerse themselves in the first four acts and then to use their extensive knowledge of Shakespeare’s work to write an ending that respects the integrity of the parts of the play that we do have, but, and this is most important, utilises their own creativity to craft an ending which reflects their own experience of life. The result suggests Wright, will be a number of different endings, all of them written under the undoubted authority of the original four acts, but each of them reflecting a contemporary application and interpretation. The authenticity of each ending would of course be open to scrutiny and would, no doubt, generate considerable debate. The important point, however, is expressed by Wright as follows:

The authority of the first four acts would not consist – could not consist! – in an implicit command that the actors should repeat the earlier parts of the play over and over again. It would consist in the fact of an as yet unfinished drama, containing its own impetus and forward movement, which demand to be concluded in an appropriate manner. It would require of the actors a free and responsible entering in to the story as it stood, in order to understand first how the threads could appropriately be drawn together and then to put that understanding into effect by speaking and acting with both consistency and innovation.<sup>vi</sup>

Wright goes on to suggest that this analogy helps us to understand what it is to seek to live biblically in the world of our own time. He maintains that the biblical story itself is like an unfinished play with four acts and that the task of Christians is akin to that of the Shakespearean actors, namely to immerse ourselves in these with a view to acting out our own fifth act that is faithful to the text but innovative in its application. To quote Wright again:

We are not searching, against the grain, for timeless truths. We are looking, as the material is looking, for and at a vocation to be the people of God in the fifth act of the drama of creation.<sup>vii</sup>

The first time I came across this analogy was a liberating experience. It helped me to understand my experience as a Christian teacher. Allow me to give an example. At the very start of my career as a secondary teacher I was asked to teach about animals with backbones as part of a unit on the variety of life in the first year biology programme. We were issued with a number of booklets, covering fish, amphibian, birds, reptiles and mammals. The message embedded in these was clear. “Look how good fish are at turning into amphibian. Look how good reptiles are at turning into birds.” The implicit story was that all of this came about by chance. The same message was being reinforced in the integrated studies lessons where pupils were being exposed to textbooks with pictures of apes “turning into” men. I also taught a bit of religious education. It was hard work as the idea of a creator God was being squeezed out of their consciousness by the implicit story told elsewhere in the curriculum that everything happened by chance. This particular fifth act was hardly in line with the biblical first four acts.

So a friend and I offered to rewrite the booklets with a view to making them more consistent with the Bible’s first four acts. We didn’t want to write an anti-evolution curriculum, but we did want to embed the concept of a creator in the biological story that we told. So we developed the booklets based on the biological principle of adaptation. Again the message was clear. “Look how good fish are at being fish. Look how good reptiles are at being reptiles.” In contrast to the previous lessons, this writing of the fifth act was “Bible-friendly” since it reinforced the message of created design rather than chance evolution.

## **The Charis Project**

How can this concept of writing the fifth act be applied to teaching languages? In order to answer this question, the Charis team decided to review the underlying story that was being told by the way in which languages were taught in British schools. Their conclusion was not particularly positive in that most textbooks reinforced the notion of what I shall call tourist French. By this I mean an approach that suggests to pupils that the value of learning a language lies in the benefits it provides for learners in being able to obtain what they require from native speakers whilst on holiday in their country. So there are endless exercises to do with shopping, using public transport, buying tickets and so forth. The truth is that the rationale usually given to young people for learning a language is love of self; you will have better holidays, be more employable, earn more money and so on.

The Charis team therefore asked themselves whether there are fundamental biblical themes that would provide an alternative to this consumerist-oriented approach and that could shape the teaching of languages in the fifth act. Their answer was to utilise the biblical idea of hospitality to the stranger which “provides an ethical imperative for rethinking the basic objectives and emphases of foreign language education”<sup>viii</sup>. They found numerous places in the Old Testament where the Israelites are reminded that their community grew out of the foundational experience of being aliens in a foreign land among speakers of an unfamiliar tongue. It was this experience, they argued, that led to the injunction in Leviticus 19 verse 34 that the people of God should love the alien as themselves; a verse that was later echoed by Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan. So they adopted Barbara Carvill’s suggestion that “foreign languages education in the Christian context should be seen as a preparation for exercising hospitality to the stranger and for being a good stranger when visiting overseas”<sup>ix</sup>. So learning a new language is not simply a matter of mastering words and grammar, but is rather to make a space within oneself for that which comes from another culture.

None of this means that the basics of vocabulary and grammar will be different, but it does mean that the story told by the way we teach the subject will be radically different. For example, Smith emphasises the importance of using biography in the classroom to bring to life the humanity of the native speaker and to promote engagement with their culture. He describes one unit on the White Rose Movement, a student resistance movement in Hitler’s Germany that emerged at Munich University in 1942. After a short period of publishing anti-Nazi tracts, the group were caught by the Gestapo and its core members executed. A study of the motives that led to their resistance reveals that one was challenged by James’ admonition in chapter 1 verse 22 to be doers of the word, not just hearers. This biographical study encourages students to engage with the impact of Scripture, the influence of the Nazi period in German history and its legacy and the experience of being German whilst dealing with the basics of grammar and vocabulary.<sup>x</sup>

In the case of mathematics, the team sought to highlight spiritual and moral themes that are interwoven into the subject matter rather than extraneous to it. For example, they developed a theme on the use and abuse of averages, exploring ideas like peer pressure to conform and what it means to be normal. In another topic the idea of infinity was explored in a way that prompted a sense of awe at the idea of an infinite God. In another

unit, the mathematics of money was re-focussed from its normal emphasis. What one usually finds is pupils being encouraged to calculate the spending power of their money and the opportunity that discounts offer for obtaining more value for their money. This is not wrong in itself, but the impact of this single message approach to money is to reinforce the implicit indoctrination into consumerism that is part of life in western societies. So the team developed units on the mathematics of giving. What is the value of a tithe? How will tax rebates for charitable giving make a difference to those less fortunate than us? What is the increase in buying power when a gift is made to a charity working in a developing nation? Mathematical work on these questions will tell another story for pupils about the value and use of money. It writes the fifth act for them according to a different script; one that is much more in keeping with the first four acts of the Bible in contrast to that which pervades the thinking of the society around them. These examples illustrate the importance of considering the concrete human context in which mathematics is used. When this is done, the spiritual and moral dimensions emerge.<sup>xi</sup>

### **The Importance of Teaching Method**

So far I have focussed on the content of our teaching and have suggested that a fruitful way of integrating spiritual and moral values is to ask what story our teaching is telling. This means searching the Christian tradition, and in particular the Scriptures, for ideas and themes that can transform the message that is conveyed by the way the subject is developed. However there is another dimension to values integration which relates to our teaching method. Every teaching method makes assumptions about what it means to be human. For example crude behaviourism will work by reinforcing correct responses with rewards and by punishing incorrect responses. In this way it is assumed that students will learn the “correct” responses. It certainly works well for repetitive learning like vocabulary, tables and so forth. But the research base for this teaching method comes from work on animals such as rats and pigeons. If we consistently and exclusively use such a teaching method, what are we communicating about human learning? Probably that there are only right and wrong answers; our job as learners is then to repeat the right answers that we are given by our teachers. I have seen Bible study programmes for young people developed using this approach. Open-ended questions are not included in case students come up with the wrong answer. But if we use such a methodology to teach beliefs and values are we not contradicting the Christian view that people are responsible for making their own decision before God? I certainly don’t see Jesus employing behaviourist psychology.<sup>xii</sup>

Again turning to David Smith, I have found his reflections on teaching method in languages offer fascinating insights<sup>xiii</sup>. For example, he deals at length with the particular issue of preparing students for oral exams where they will be asked questions on topics such as their family and their career aspirations. The question Smith poses is should Christians adopt the accepted procedure of telling students to make up fictitious answers so they can work within the constraints of their limited vocabulary? His concern is that this practice encourages pupils to use language for utilitarian ends rather than for genuine communication. As far as he is concerned, this does not sit comfortably with the

communicative approach which encourages pupils to use the language as a rehearsal of real communication. As a method, it lacked integrity. Smith admits that his concern with truth-telling might be seen as excessive. But his substantive point is surely important. The methods we adopt should reflect our understanding of life in the fifth act.

Let me finish this section with a suggestion derived from my experience of compulsory religious education in schools in Britain. Since the 1970s this has been multifaith in its approach, reflecting the changing nature of society. For many years the assumption was that the purpose was to teach pupils information about other religions in order that they should become more tolerant of those who held beliefs different from their own. This was not a success and was criticised as being little more than “saris, samosas and steel bands”, “a Cook’s tour of religion” or “a dry naming of parts”, if any of these allusions mean anything in Australian speak. The problem was that the approach was irrelevant to the daily lives of the pupils. Then a scholar called Michael Grimmitt suggested that religious education should actually contribute to the personal development of the pupils and he coined the phrase that pupils should “learn about religion in order to learn something about themselves from religion”. The point is this; religious education should not just focus on the communication of information about the religion being studied but should also focus on assisting the pupil in gaining insights about themselves from the study of that religion. I think this is an incredibly important point and as I listen to Christian teachers and preachers in different churches and conventions it seems to me that it is one that the Christian community has much to learn from. How often is the Bible taught simply as a comprehension exercise, where we are required to learn stories and doctrines with no reference to our own spiritual development?

A helpful analogy is to think of an effective teaching method as consisting of two elements, the window and the mirror<sup>xiv</sup>. The window element is where we teach the academic content using methods that enable the student to look through the subject matter in order to gain greater knowledge and understanding. In my biological example of teaching the variety of life, our booklets did this by introducing students to the characteristics of the different vertebrates. The mirror element is where the subject matter is taught in such a way that the student can look into it and learn something new about themselves. This is where reflection on values and the promotion of spirituality happens. In my variety of life example, the booklets asked the pupils to ponder the miracle of adaptation so as to encourage them to reflect on their own understanding of and relationship to the natural world. In teaching any subject, it is essential to include both window activities and mirror activities if we are to promote a reflective, values-based approach to the subject. And what is undoubtedly true is that mirror type teaching activities have to encourage open-ended responses through discussion methods and those associated with the thinking skills movement<sup>xv</sup>. This may pose particular challenges for those disciplines that are not used to more open-ended methodologies and are more used to convergent teaching methods.

## **The Anglican Heritage**

One of the themes of our conference is the celebration of our Anglican heritage. That sounds very backward looking, but I want to explore some of the forward looking thinking that is emerging within the Church of England and which has direct relevance to our subject of a value-added curriculum.

In England there is now a long-standing tradition of the Anglican Church running schools as part of the state system. As an established Church there has always been a tension between the service of the Church to the whole community, irrespective of family religious backgrounds, and the nurture of children from Christian families in the faith of the Church. Until quite recently there had been an increasing tendency to emphasise the service function at the expense of the nurture function. However in 2001 the Church produced a ground-breaking report<sup>xvi</sup> that heralded a new confidence in the nurture function of church schools and called for the setting up of 100 new secondary schools by 2010. It is my privilege to be involved in the development of one such school in Gloucester that will open in September 2006. The vision for these schools is that they should be distinctively Christian, but inclusive of students from a variety of backgrounds.

This new enthusiasm for Christian distinctiveness has met with predictable opposition, most notably from the British Humanist Association<sup>xvii</sup>. The objections are usually made on the grounds that religious schools are divisive and that schools should be promoting secular values; values that all thinking decent people can share. As far as the humanists are concerned, these are the only values that are required. Christian values are at best superfluous and at worst dangerous because they depend on specific religious dogmas. Arguments such as these are increasingly heard, even more so since July 7<sup>th</sup>.

The problem with this position is that it seems to rest on the now widely debunked idea that it is possible to identify neutral values that all right thinking people will accept irrespective of their own personal beliefs. A humanist in a generous mood will concede that the different religions offer reflections on these values, stories that support them and motivation to uphold them. But in the final analysis they will argue that the values are secular, meaning that they stand on their own and are independent of religious belief. The weakness of this position was brought home forcibly to me when I read a definition of the spiritual that was published by the English School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA). It said:

It has to do with relationships with other people and for believers with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity – with our responses to challenging experiences such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live.<sup>xviii</sup>

In 1999, thirteen pupils at Columbine High School in Denver, Colorado were murdered by two fellow pupils who called themselves the trench coat mafia. The startling thing was that these two young people demonstrated every characteristic of the spiritual as defined by SCAA. In particular their neo-Nazi obsessions were part of a developed search for meaning, identity and purpose. They had a strong sense of the values by which

they wanted to live. The problem was that theirs was a deeply deviant form of spirituality inspired by very destructive values. What Columbine shows us is that attempts to achieve neutral definitions of spirituality are wrong-headed. The question is what is the orientation of a person's values? We all have to make judgements of right and wrong. We all have the gift of spirituality. We don't all fulfil our God given calling to use it aright.

Secular values can never, therefore, be secular in the sense of being neutral. They are always dependent on an underlying framework of beliefs that give content, meaning, significance and orientation to those values. When humanists argue for secular values they are, in my experience, in fact arguing for a set of distinctive values that are underpinned by humanist beliefs. The truth is that no school can escape being distinctive when it comes to defining its values. The challenge is whether it can also be inclusive of those from other traditions.

This discussion has two important consequences for the enterprise of teaching a value added curriculum. Firstly it raises the question of how an Anglican School can be both distinctively Christian and inclusive of those from other traditions since the implication seems to be that there are no neutral values as humanists try to claim. Is the aggressive assertion of Christian values in the Anglican school the only alternative to promoting secular values? But this is a false dichotomy, because there are in fact many values that people of different faiths share. Those who engage in interfaith dialogue will soon discover this to be the case. The mistake is to assume that shared values are neutral or secular in character. Rather they exist because belief systems overlap and, as a Christian I find that I have many shared concerns with humanists, Muslims, Hindus and others. For example one would be to treat other humans with respect as persons. This overlapping of values means that I can share common cause with others in all sorts of projects and enterprises, including schooling. However what is most certainly not true is we all share a common reason for holding these values to be important. For example a Christian will believe that respect for other people is grounded in the fact that each is created in the image of God. A humanist will most certainly not accept this. This grounding is exceptionally important because it is our beliefs that give us the reasons to live by our values. Without beliefs, values have no foundation.

In terms of a value added curriculum in a distinctively Christian but inclusive school this has two implications. Firstly it means the curriculum becomes distinctive when the values taught are earthed in Christian teaching. Or to return to our Shakespeare play analogy, it means that we employ the biblical first four acts in our attempts to develop a Christian values-added curriculum in the fifth act. An excellent example of this is the Charis Project's development of a new rationale for languages teaching based on the biblical idea of hospitality to the stranger. Secondly the curriculum will be inclusive because there are shared values to be celebrated. The holocaust survivor that I quoted at the start of this address pleaded that we should seek to make our children more human. We do this by promoting shared values. Pupils from different traditions should be encouraged to explore the grounding of these shared values in the beliefs of their own traditions. Discussing this process of grounding will provide an experience of dialogue for students

as they seek to understand the different beliefs that underpin the shared values and, at the same time, will reinforce those shared values.

The second consequence of this discussion for a value-added curriculum can be explored through another recent Church of England initiative that reflects the Anglican heritage. A report on the future of the Church<sup>xix</sup> challenged the widely held perception that England is now a Christian country with the Anglican Church representing the beliefs and values of the majority of the population. Rather it suggested that a truer picture is that the English Church is now facing the sort of missionary challenge that is traditionally associated with work in far-flung places in cultures that are far from being gospel-friendly. Indeed the report argued that the future mission task of the Church is a cross-cultural endeavour, with the dominant culture being a consumer one that, at root, is incompatible with gospel values. In this context the report asserts that the task is for the Church to become a truly incarnational church that “imitates, through the Spirit, both Christ’s loving identification with his culture and his costly counter-cultural stance within it”<sup>xx</sup>

David Smith<sup>xxi</sup> illustrates this vision using Stephen Neill’s vivid description of the mission to Iceland in the tenth century. The missionaries were confronted with a people who sought to excel in devotion by offering the very best of their population in human sacrifice. The missionary, incarnational response was to identify with the culture by embracing the concept of human sacrifice, but, and this is a very important but, to adopt a counter-cultural stance by transforming the idea using the Christian concept of a *living* sacrifice. Smith reflects on the fact that in his early days as a teacher he was often exhorted to be Christian by being an even better teacher than those around him. The parallel for him was the idea that the Icelandic missionaries should be even better at human sacrifices than those they sought to reach. This is clearly nonsense. Just being better at something, be that teaching or human sacrifices, is not, on its own, to be incarnational. This is what the Christian skill of living in the fifth act is all about. Christian education is not simply regular education done better; it is rather education reworked on a Christian basis. What matters is the transformation of the subject so it is more distinctively Christian. Unexamined excellence will be of little use in the cross cultural missionary calling that we as teachers have.

This vision of the church as an incarnational presence both identifying with the culture around it, but, where necessary, taking a costly counter-cultural stance against it, mirrors the descriptions that I have given of a value added curriculum. Taking the example of the languages curriculum, the loving identification with the culture is exemplified by the Christian teacher seeking to teach a language to the highest possible standards. The counter-cultural stance is represented in the refusal to embrace the consumer-oriented approach that we have seen is characteristic of many schools. However this counter cultural stance is not a negative and carping critique, but rather offers a positive transformation of the subject into something vastly superior. The concept of a curriculum that promotes hospitality to the stranger will surely be attractive to all but the most utilitarian of teachers, whatever their own personal faith?

## Conclusion

In this address I have attempted to show how a “value-added” approach to the curriculum in the Anglican school can contribute to deepening our students’ relationship with God, others, the self and the environment. I have proposed that to do this is to celebrate the Anglican heritage of being both distinctively Christian and inclusive of other people and is to pursue the cross-cultural mission which is the primary task of the Church. I have sought to demonstrate that a focus on Christian values will ensure that the heart as well as the head is warmed in the classroom. And finally, I have offered a vision for the transforming possibilities of living in the fifth act of the biblical story in the way we teach the subjects of the curriculum. I trust, thereby, that I might have inspired you to seek new ways of nurturing the spiritual life of our pupils.

To conclude, I will suggest five practical actions for implementing a values-added approach:

1. Develop and capitalise on informal values moments. This means harnessing the informal opportunities that present themselves so that our pupils learn that the values dimension of a subject is as important as, indeed more important than, the knowledge and understanding that will gain them marks in an exam.
2. Be strategic in the values that you promote. This means, as a school, being clear about the values which are important to you and which will be promoted through the curriculum.
3. Plan the curriculum as a fifth act enterprise. This means being aware of the bigger story that our subject is promoting and seeking opportunities to transform that story so that it reflects more closely a truly biblical fifth act.
4. Design teaching methods that promote reflection and response. This means deliberately creating space for pupils to consider the significance of the spiritual and to act on that in their own lives.
5. Develop specific topics with a strong values base. A curriculum is always seeking to achieve more than is possible in the time available. This strategy means ensuring the spiritual is not squeezed out by identifying a few specific topics where the spiritual values of the school are explicitly promoted in a way that is obvious to the pupils.

Once at a job interview I was told that the panel wanted to appoint someone who was ambitious. I subsequently discovered that this meant ambition for the reputation and economic success of the institution, not for the personal development of the students. Developing a value-added curriculum takes time and effort. In my experience of the current British education system, such effort is not valued as it should be because it is not seen as contributing directly to academic excellence or economic productivity. However if we really care about doing more than producing clever devils, if we really heed the plea

of the holocaust survivor to make our pupils more human, then there is no more important work that we can do as a classroom teacher.

## Possible Discussion Questions

Identification of Values moments

Underlying Stories that are conveyed by their subject discipline

Methodology that might contradict their fifth act stance

## Other Issues

God language in non RE subjects

Need to listen carefully to the discipline we are incarnating into

Importance of values negotiation

Process of embedding values in curriculum

Dealing with difference and controversial issues

Example of the pluralism story in RE

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<sup>i</sup> See Luke 12:13-21

<sup>ii</sup> For example see Ruth Deakin Crick "Transforming Visions: managing values in schools" (Middlesex University Press, 2002). This book describes an extensive research project undertaken at St Mary Redcliff & Temple School, an Anglican school in Bristol, England. A briefer report is also available at [http://www.becal.net/toolkit/smrvalues/documents/values\\_project\\_st\\_mary\\_redcliffe\\_and\\_temple\\_school.pdf](http://www.becal.net/toolkit/smrvalues/documents/values_project_st_mary_redcliffe_and_temple_school.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Smith, David I (2001) *Does God Dwell in the Detail?*, Lecture delivered on April 19<sup>th</sup> at Calvin College, Michigan. Downloadable from <http://www.e-stapleford.co.uk/liveproducts/A0001.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> See 1 Corinthians 11:14

<sup>v</sup> See "The New Testament and the People of God" (SPCK, 1992 pages 139-143). Helpful modifications are made to the analogy in Walsh and Middleton "Truth is stranger than it used to be" (SPCK, 1995)

<sup>vi</sup> Wright 1992, page 140

<sup>vii</sup> Wright 1992 page 142

<sup>viii</sup> See Smith & Carvill, "The Gift of the Stranger", (Eerdmans, 2000) p. xiii and Smith, David (2001) where this idea is developed in some detail.

<sup>ix</sup> See Smith (2001) page 7.

<sup>x</sup> See "Charis Deutsch, Einheiten 1-5", (Association of Christian Teachers, 1996)

<sup>xi</sup> Reference to "Charis Mathematics Units 1-9" (Association of Christian Teachers, 1996)

<sup>xii</sup> For further discussion of this point see my chapter in "Engaging the Culture: Christians at Work in Education, Edlin, Richard (ed.), (National Institute of Christian Education, forthcoming)

<sup>xiii</sup> See 2001 pages 8-14.

<sup>xiv</sup> I am indebted to my friend and colleague Sue Hookway for this analogy. See her book "Questions of Truth" (RMEP, 2004).

<sup>xv</sup> See, for example, Robert Fisher, "Teaching Children to Think" (Nelson Thornes, 2005)

<sup>xvi</sup> Archbishops' Council, "The Way Ahead", (Church House Publishing, 2001)

<sup>xvii</sup> See for example the debate "Should School Values be Secular" in the Times Educational Supplement, 22 July 2005, page 19 and "Faith Schools: consensus or conflict" edited by Roy Gardner, Jo Cairns and Denis Lawton (RoutledgeFalmer, 2005)

<sup>xviii</sup> "Spiritual and Moral Development: a discussion paper" (SCAA, 1995)

<sup>xix</sup> Archbishops' Council, "Mission-shaped Church" (Church House Publishing, 2004)

<sup>xx</sup> op. cit. page 87.

<sup>xxi</sup> Smith, 2001, pages 1-2