Invisibility and Inclusivity: Approaches to religious difference in schools

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> The religious education of the future generations is of crucial importance. It is important to teach them respect for the religious other, so that they learn to tolerate, but that is not enough. Whenever possible, we need to teach them also about the truth, the good and the holy as reflected in other religions, so that they will learn to appreciate them. But, again, this is not enough…May I suggest that all of us start looking self-critically at our own religious tradition and discover those negative, denigrating images of the religious others which are built into its religious narratives, rituals, liturgical texts….
> Peter Schmidt-Leukel.

This chapter provides an overview of alternative approaches to religious difference or to what Schmidt-Leukel terms 'the religious other' in schools. The debate focuses on two key themes as they are embodied in the legislation and educational systems of selected countries. The first theme concerns legislation prohibiting or excluding public displays of religious symbols, of religious otherness, in state schools in a number of European countries. Religious symbols and clothing are a visible and public manifestation of religious difference. In many instances the impact of the legislation is to eliminate signs of religious difference and to render it invisible in the public school context.[1] This European legislation forms a general contextual backdrop for the second theme which explores approaches to religious difference in Catholic primary schools. Here the Church's teaching on Catholic schools as centres of inclusivity provides a framework for understanding religious otherness.[2]

1. Faith and symbols of faith in European Schools

In recent years a renewed emphasis on the importance of religion in contemporary Europe has resulted in many positive developments. In 2002 the Council of Europe focused on the religious dimension of Intercultural Education (ICE) and posited that inter-religious education might help to contribute a solution to intercultural problems. In 2003 European Education Ministers made ICE, including its religious dimension, a priority for further work. In 2007 the Council of Europe published a reference book for teachers on religious diversity in Europe.[3] Significant networks such as Teaching Religion in a Multicultural European Society (TRES), the European Community Framework 6 project on Religious Education, Dialogue and Conflict and The European Network for

Religious Education through Contextual Approaches, have initiated large scale research into documenting and improving the teaching of religion in Europe.[4]

Many European countries have hosted recent debates on the role of religion as well as religious symbols and clothing in their societies and in their educational systems.[5] The association of religion with acts of terrorism such as 9/11, the Madrid (2004) and London bombings (2005) has also had negative consequences. It goes without saying that many dispute the legitimacy of the link between religion and violence. At the 2004 Parliament of World Religions 'The use of violence, especially when it is given a religious justification, was ritually denounced by almost every speaker'.[6] However other commentators conclude that religion contributes to social conflict and potentially inhibits adherents from integrating into society.[7] Indeed it is estimated that religion was 'a contributory cause in more than half of the 115 armed conflicts which occurred between 1989 and 2001'.[8] Many view religious difference as a potential cause of social, cultural and political conflict. John Bowker argues that without religion:

> 'it is impossible to understand the nature of so many bitter conflicts in the world today. For years I have been pointing out that religions are likely to destroy human life as we know it now on this planet….'[9]

Bowker states that one can predict future conflicts of a serious kind by taking a map of the world and drawing the boundaries where religions or sub-systems of religions meet. Wherever these points of religious difference converge fault lines emerge indicating possible future sources of conflict. While Bowker is not advocating the elimination of religious difference in the hope of avoiding conflict, he stresses that Religious Education is crucial in facilitating a deep understanding of religious difference with the consequence of avoiding future conflict.

Within many European societies proponents have argued that religion, and in some cases explicit symbolic indicators of religious faith (wearing headscarfs, crucifixes, turbans etc.), should play no role in the formal public or state school system.[10] In effect there is nothing new in these lines of argumentation.[11] For instance the French Republic is based on the principle of *Laicité* or non-confessionalism and while the Alsace and Moselle regions have state-funded optional confessional Religious Education in their schools, they represent the exception rather than the rule.[12] In France the public or government operated school is a religiously neutral space. A law that came into effect on September second, 2004, banned the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in French public primary and post-primary schools.[13] The legislation was intended to accord equality of opportunity

and treatment to all students and teachers regardless of religious affiliation. This meant that the wearing of large Christian crosses, Sikh turbans, Jewish yarmulkes, Muslim headscarfs (*hijab, khimar* or *burqa*) as well as any other ostentatious or noticeable religious symbol was prohibited. This controversial law was resisted and amid protests and public debate in August, 2004, Iraqi Islamic militants kidnapped two French journalists, Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot. The militants demanded that the French Government revoke the ban on religious symbols and clothing. France upheld its ban and in December 2004, both hostages were released. However the debate over the right to a religiously neutral learning environment depleted of religious clothing and symbolism continues in France. In a controversial letter to teachers and parents in 2007, which threw secularists into disarray, President Nicholas Sarkozy spoke of a radical reform of the French school system so that the teaching of religion would not be excluded from school.

The birth of the great religions and their visions of humanity and the world must be studied, not of course to proselytize in any way, or as part of any theological approach, but in the context of a sociological, cultural and historical analysis which can give pupils a better understanding of the concept of religious faith. Spirituality and a sense of the sacred have accompanied the human adventure since the dawn of time. They are at the wellsprings of every civilization. It is easier for us to open up to others, to talk to them when we understand them. [14]

The German state school has also become the locus for a conflict between secular ideology and religious commitment as expressed through the wearing of religious clothing and symbols. In 2003 Germany's constitutional court ruled that individual states in Germany could pass independent legislation to ban teachers wearing religious apparel in schools which might unduly influence children. While there is no uniformity in the German legistlation some states provide teachers with a limited right to wear Christian symbols (e.g. Hessen) while others ban religious symbols which are not harmonious with Christian values (e.g. Bavaria). In Germany the legislation has had greatest impact on female Muslim teachers who wear the headscarf. It is worth noting that while Germany is home to the largest ex-patriot Turkish community in the world, as a secular state Turkey prohibits the wearing of male and female religious headcover in its schools and government buildings.[15] By 2006 Muslim teachers in half of all German States were forbidden to wear headscarves. An exception was made for Religious Education class where the wearing of the hijab was permitted. Furthermore, a distinction can be seen between states in the former east Germany who seem disinterested in banning the veil and those in the west of Germany where the veil is mainly banned. Critics argue that what really lies beneath the law banning the headscarf or veil is an unsubtle conflation of ideas about terrorism, extremism, political fundamentalism and Islam. Wearing the veil appears to symbolise

political activism and fundamentalist Islam. Also in Germany there appears to be a greater level of tolerance towards symbiology associated with Christianity.

In the Netherlands the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) party's pledge to ban the full-length veil or *burqa* became a major issue during the 2006 elections. Since then the Dutch government pledged to introduce legislation to enforce the ban. The ban concerns all forms of coverings of the full face including motorcycle helmets with visor down, ski masks and *burqas* when they are worn in public places including schools. Islam is the religion of six per cent of the Netherland's population and only a tiny minority (some estimates suggest as few as thirty people) of these wear the *burqa* or full Islamic head to toe dress. After the murder of the Dutch film maker Theo Van Gogh, an outspoken critic of Islam, the banning of the *burqa* became a major political issue. The Netherland's immigration minister Rita Verdonk, stated that it was not desirable 'that face-covering clothing - including the *burqa* - is worn in public places for reasons of public order, security and protection of citizens….From a security standpoint, people should always be recognizable and from the standpoint of integration, we think people should be able to communicate with one another'.[16] The banning of face covering clothing, including the *burqa*, in public places including schools, was interpreted by some as a vital reassertion of the principles of a secular Dutch society as well as a protection of the equal status of females.

In 2007 the Italian Government issued Guidelines for immigrants, which although not legally binding, nonetheless outlined what it viewed as undesirable religious clothing.
'Types of clothing that cover the face are not acceptable because they prevent the identification of the person and are an obstacle to the interaction with others.' [17]

While Italy has stopped short of a ban on the *hijab* or other conspicuous religious emblems in school its concern that the *hijab* might pose a risk to national security as well as the lack of assimilation of the religious other is consistent with many European countries. In Belgium, in the city of Antwerp, municipal staff working as counter clerks have been banned from wearing visible religious symbols, including Christian crosses and Muslim headscarves. Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom the Government, in the interests of effective learning, security and safety, has given school principals the right to prohibit Muslim girls from wearing a full covering of the face (*niqab*). In a high profile case in 2006, a Muslim bilingual support worker, Aishah Azmi, lost the case of religious discrimination that she took against a school which asked her to remove the full-veil in the classroom while working with children. Supporters of the ban emphasise that there are circumstances where it is inappropriate for a teacher or student to have their whole face covered, for instance where it impedes the teaching

and learning of hearing impaired children, English as a Second Language children, visual learners or where it might pose a health and safety risk in laboratory work. In Ireland there have been successive calls for the Minister of Education to issue guidance on the wearing of the *hijab* in schools although there has been no legislation or issuing of guidelines.[18]

Any analysis of these debates in European countries must be sensitive to the specificity and complexity of each context. Legislation is not uniform and even within individual countries interpretation and implementation of it varies. In French state schools wearing the symbol of a religious community is interpreted as resistance to social integration, dilution of the secular principles of the state's educational system and a cause of potential offense to other faith and secular groups. In Holland and the UK the rationale behind the ban tends to focus on security, health and safety as well as issues of integration. In France the ban focuses on teachers and children while in Germany it focuses on teachers. While Italy presents guidelines, Germany provides legislation which is variously interpreted and implemented in different states. In the UK the school principal uses discretion to enforce the ban whereas in France, in state schools the ban is blanket. In all countries the ban impacts on Muslim women more than any other group. This has led some to allege that what is operative here is a form of post-9/11 Islamaphobia[19] inspired by the association of Islam with political fundamentalism and terrorist attacks. Governmental attention has linked religious symbols to political activism with a clear focus on Islam. [20]

In all countries where religious symbols and clothing are banned a major issue that arises is the status and role of religion within society and within the public school system. This prohibition of religious symbolism raises the question of the treatment of religious and cultural difference. Many view the elimination of all visible religious symbols and therefore evidence of religious difference as an important prerequisite for equality of opportunity in secular state schools. It is ironic that legislation designed to foster tolerance and equality has resulted in what many perceive as the discriminatory, marginalisation and suppression of religious believers. For the religious believer, the wearing of a religious symbol is a natural private and public expression of religious faith and belief. Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child reads:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.[21]

Forbidding the expression of religious identity that is interconnected with cultural and personal identity has serious implications, not just for one religious community but for all religious communities and indeed for the whole of society. Furthermore the assumption that the wearing of religious symbols is offensive to or invasive of others needs to be challenged. Mona Sahlin, Swedish minister for democracy and integration issues emphasises that:

> 'By stressing the factors that separate people rather than those in common, ethnic conflicts can be stirred up. Better instead that respect for difference apply not only to groups but to individuals, and that integration policies therefore be based on the rights of individuals. In short, respect for human rights should be equal, regardless of ethnic or cultural group or religion.'[22]

One could argue that legislation directed at the elimination of religious symbols associated with the 'religious other' in schools fractures the relationship between home and school and signals a lack of equality for religious believers who become marginal and invisible in status.

2. Catholic schools as centres of inclusivity

The word catholic originates from the Greek *kath'holou* which means 'according to the whole' or 'universal'. To be Catholic is to be called to live a life focused on inclusivity. It recognizes the unity and dignity of all human life since 'humankind form but one community...all stem from one stock which God created'.[23] Successive recent Church documents testify to the fact that inter-religious dialogue is not an option but a crucial imperative for Catholics.[24] Addressing the Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Research and Dialogue in 2007, Pope Benedict XV1 insisted 'research and interreligious and intercultural dialogue are not an option but a vital necessity for our time.'[25] In a sense the controversy surrounding his Regensburg address in September 2006 has served to augment and reinforce the Pontiff's emphasis on the need for inter-religious dialogue.[26]

When it comes to schooling the Church sees that there is no such thing as a value- or a religiously-neutral school since 'To claim neutrality for schools signifies in practice, more times than not, banning all reference to religion from the cultural and educational field....'[27] The goal of Catholic education 'focuses on the human person in his or her integral, transcendent, historical identity'.[28] This involves the promotion of the physical, moral, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and religious welfare of the human person. The individual or group's religious identity, as it is expressed through the wearing of religious symbols and clothing, is respected by the Church. However the Church acknowledges that in a Catholic school not all members of the school community are Catholic and it

offers general principles on how Catholic schools might include and celebrate the religious other while being true to its own mission and teaching.[29] Vatican 11 Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (GE), makes it clear that 'the Church considers very dear to her heart those Catholic schools, found especially in the areas of the new churches, which are attended also by students who are not Catholics.'[30] The Church affirms that the Catholic school is not restricted exclusively to Catholics and is open to all those who appreciate and share its qualified educational project.[31]

Not all students in Catholic schools are members of the Catholic Church; not all are Christians. There are, in fact, countries in which the vast majority of the students are not Catholics - a reality which the Council called attention to. The religious freedom and the personal conscience of individual students and their families must be respected, and this freedom is explicitly recognized by the Church.

Catholic teaching on religious freedom is consistent with other foundational texts on religious freedom including Article 2 of the Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Principle One of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959).[32] The Church is at pains to stress that catechesis or leading people to maturity of faith is incompatible with coercion and the Church teaches respect for the religious freedom of all. This includes non-Catholics in a Catholic school environment. Neither does the Catholic Church wish to render invisible the 'religious other' in the Catholic school or to coerce the religious or non-religious other into conformism to Catholic belief and practice. Rather it teaches that the:

'Catholic school offers itself to all, non-Christians included, with all its distinctive aims and means, acknowledging, preserving and promoting the spiritual and moral qualities, the social and cultural values, which characterize different civilizations.'[33]

This does not mean that the Catholic school relinquishes its mission for evangelization or proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in deference to the students of other world faiths which it serves. *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) asserts that while elements of truth can be found in world religions this does not cancel the call to faith and baptism in the Catholic Church.
….a Catholic school cannot relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the values to be found in a Christian education; this is its right and its duty. To proclaim or to offer is not to impose, however; the latter suggests a moral violence which is strictly forbidden, both by the Gospel and by Church law.[34]

So the manner in which a Catholic school includes and educates members of different faiths is crucial and it prohibits coercion. The Church places emphasis on the Catholic school as a lively center of proclamation, apprenticeship and dialogue between people of different social and religious backgrounds.[35] The Catholic school has a variety of approaches and methodologies to enable it to welcome and educate the 'religious other' in its schools. A respect for the religious other permeates the entire curriculum of a Catholic school and includes ICE as well as a recognition of the inter-cultural diversity of Catholicism and Christianity. This includes a respect for the religious symbolism and clothing of other religious traditions. It also includes the teaching of Other World Faiths (OWR) or World Religions.

Religious Education in a Catholic school includes providing children with accurate knowledge and respectful understanding of the beliefs and practices primarily of the Catholic faith but also, and inevitably to a lesser extent, of a variety of world faiths. This is an important part of the Religious Education of Catholic children as well as children of other faiths. In Scotland the guidelines for Catholic Schools focus on the three areas of 1) Christianity, 2) OWR and 3) Personal Search. While the main focus in the Scottish Catholic school is on the Catholic faith, time 'should also be found within the programme to lead pupils to an understanding of and respect for the beliefs and traditions of other Christian traditions and other major religions.'[36] For Catholic primary Schools in England and Wales using the '*Here I am*' scheme of work this translates generally into five per cent of the total time allocated for Religious Education.'[37]

The study of other World Religions, where appropriate, can help pupils to appreciate that religious questions are universal, addressed not only by Catholics and other Christians, but also by people of all faiths. Catholic Religious Education, which aims to communicate the fullness of the revelation in Jesus Christ, is enriched by appreciating the search for truth sincerely made throughout the centuries in other religions. At the same time, the study of other World Religions can help to promote attitudes of respect for others, based on knowledge of their heritage of faith and prayer.[38]

Minority faith children in Majority faith Schools: The Catholic primary school context
While the preceding section outlined the Catholic Church's positive teaching on acknowledging and celebrating religious difference as part of Inter-religious dialogue and the call to religious inclusivity, this is not matched by a large body of research on the issue of inclusion in Catholic schools. Indeed J. Kent Donleavy states that while reviewing the literature on non-Catholic students in Catholic schools:

…there was a paucity of information dealing with the topic. In fact, after a search which included contacting individuals in the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America, and Canada, all that was revealed was a small 25-page, opinion-based pamphlet…a short comment in a recent book…a series of qualitative studies primarily from one researcher…and a tangentially relevant number of doctoral and masters degree theses….In all other respects, the academic literature was silent. Ostensibly, the topic seemed by this lack of attention to be of little significance to the Catholic community.[39]

The situation, while needing improvement, is not as drastic as Donleavy presents in his synopsis of research literature. For instance in the UK there have been a number of recent reports into teaching world faiths in Catholic schools[40] while in Ireland some small-scale research has been carried out into diversity and inclusivity in Catholic schools as well as religious minorities in majority religious schools.[41] One study argues that Ireland's denominational and confessional primary school system 'does not allow for equal recognition or respect for difference'.[42] The researcher, Anne Lodge, conducted interviews with people of minority belief including members of the Bahá'í and Buddhist communities, people of personal belief,[43] and a member of a minority Christian faith, about how they and their children experienced the denominational, largely confessional Irish system of primary education. While Lodge's research sample was small, key issues emerging from the research were that: children sometimes feel alienated because of their different religious or personal beliefs; sacramental preparation heightens this sense of exclusion and alienation; bullying and teasing can be based on the perception of the child as religiously different;[44] and that both participation in and withdrawal from Religious Education can be problematic. Lodge's findings highlight the need to make manifest in our Catholic school system Church teaching which states that Catholic schools should promote 'civil progress and human development without discrimination of any kind'.[45] Lodge contends that 'differences in belief are denied in the denominational primary system and those whose beliefs are different are rendered invisible and subordinate'.[46] These are serious charges and the Catholic school system must ensure that its schools do not marginalize or ignore those who are religiously different.

So how can Catholic schools act as centres for evangelization (the call to ongoing conversion), catechesis (nurturing the faith of believers) as well as Religious Instruction (providing information about the Catholic faith and Other World Faiths)? Certain principles are important to observe:

1. It is vital that Catholic schools are confident and securely rooted in the Catholic faith so that they are able to engage in respectful, generous and open dialogue with members of other faiths. A Catholic education is devoted to the full, complete development of the human being and has as its guide the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church. The Catholic school must be anchored in its Catholic mission to care for and develop the whole human person while simultaneously proclaiming and nurturing the Christian faith.[47] Research shows that teaching children well about one religion is beneficial to other religions and children who have a personal prayer life tend to have a more positive attitude to their own religion and to the religion of others.[48] A Catholic school which is rooted in gospel values and Church teaching should be Catholic, that is inclusive, welcoming and open to others. This includes respectful dialogue with members of other religions. It is important that the Catholic school does not neglect or annul the rich spiritual and theological legacy of its own Catholic tradition. When the school community is firmly grounded in the teaching of the Catholic faith it will not marginalize or ignore people of different faith. The religious other is not invisible in a Catholic school precisely *because* it is a Catholic, inclusive school. A passive or silent tolerance of children from other faiths which never engages in consultative and supportive discussion with the child, their parents or guardians can not be counted as inclusive.

2. No matter how well intentioned teachers may be and no matter how much they wish to include children of different faiths in their Religious Education class, it is vital to take the lead from the child's parents or guardians. In Ireland the Constitution guarantees the right of any child 'not to be given inappropriate religious instruction'.[49] Since the early days of the national school system in Ireland the right of withdrawal from Religious Education has been protected. The present Rules for National Schools state 'No pupil shall receive, or be present at, Religious Instruction of which his parents or guardian disapprove.'[50] A child's legal and constitutional right to be withdrawn from Religious Education should not simply be tolerated by a teacher who largely ignores the child for the duration of the Religious Education lesson. The child's right to withdraw should be facilitated positively in a manner that signals that this right of withdrawal is a legitimate important right.

3. In the same way that it is crucial for Catholic schools to acknowledge and respect other faith traditions and non-religious worldviews, it is important that everyone (staff, parents/ guardians, children of Catholic, different faith or non-religious background) respect and agree to uphold the Catholic ethos of the school. Terence Mc Laughlin suggested that a Catholic school has a distinctive institutional framework (statements of aim and mission, recruitment, appointment, promotion of staff,

admission of students, marketing of the school, prioritisation of resources), a distinctive ethos and life (culture of the school, liturgy and worship) as well as a distinctive curriculum (in areas such as catechesis and religious education, sex education). All members of the school community have a role in upholding the school's distinctive Catholic ethos.[51]

4. The Catholic classroom should be one where everyone is respected, valued and cherished. Part of the education of children in a Catholic school involves learning about faith, principally the Catholic faith, but also, albeit to a lesser degree, the faith of other believers. This can be done in a variety of ways including Religious Education. 'It should be remembered that to introduce children to religion via Christian faith is not to demean or deny the insights of other faiths. Indeed such a way of teaching will affirm and celebrate such insights, although this is not the same as affirming everything that another faith holds dear.' [52] Now learning about diverse faiths in a classroom context is a complex activity. Often, when it comes to different faiths, the experience and knowledge of the children exceeds that of the teacher. Furthermore the teacher may have a symbolic or theoretical understanding of a world faith tradition whereas children practicing that faith will have a more intimate, nuanced and practical knowledge of it. It is possible, in such circumstances, for children to feel alienated even when the focus of the lesson is on their faith. Julia Ipgrave's research suggests that teachers must enable children to learn from each other and to 'make room for the pupils' own experiences and perspectives on those traditions, even when they challenge the teacher's own'.[53] Ipgrave suggests establishing rules of engagement for discussing religious topics in an inclusive manner. She provides an example of the rules that emerged from discussion with a Year 5 primary class.

  i.   Respect each other's religion.
  ii.   Talk and think seriously about differences.
  iii. Listen to what other people say.
  iv.   Be ready to learn new things even about your own religion.[54]

5. It is important to acknowledge that Religious Education is just *one* manifestation of the ethos and mission of a Catholic school. Rather than administering a once-off injection on inter-religious education during Religious Education class it is more effective and important to teach all topics in a manner that celebrates and respects diversity. A once-off lesson on Islam or Hinduism can confuse children unless it is integrated

with the whole ethos of the classroom and the Catholic school which openly,

positively and explicitly addresses issues of religious, ethnic and

cultural diversity.[55]

Conclusion

While recent debates and legislation in selected European countries has resulted in a prohibition of

religious clothes and symbols in many schools thus rendering invisible the religious other, other state

schools provide effective ICE and inter-religious education which values the religious dimension of

life. The debate on the prohibition of religious symbiology and the treatment of the religious other in

European state school systems is of significance to all those involved in Religious Education. There

is an intimate inter-dependence between different religious traditions so that when 'one religion is

diminished all religions are diminished.'[56] Catholic educators should not be indifferent to the

prohibition, invisibility or marginalisation of religious clothes and symbols in any school sector. The

European debate on the role of religion in society and in state schools provides a broad contextual

backdrop to current thinking on the status of the religious other in Catholic schools. When it comes to

Catholic schools the Catholic Church has a body of positive teaching on inclusivity which provides

guidelines for Catholic schools to value, respect and acknowledge the religiously other.

Unfortunately research into the treatment of members of other faiths in Catholic schools is in its

infancy and some of the existing research suggests that religious minorities can be marginalized in

Catholic schools which are not as inclusive as they should be. With this in mind Catholic schools

need to revisit seminal Church teaching on respecting the religious other so that they can become

genuinely Catholic.

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[1] I use the term religious other to refer to anyone explicitly professing religious belief or wearing religious clothing and symbols in a state or public school context which is founded on secular or non-confessional principles.

[2] In the Catholic school context any member of a non-Catholic tradition or faith represents the 'religious other'. This includes other Christian denominations as well as members of other world faiths.

[3] *Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education: a reference book for schools,* Council of Europe, 2007.

[4] TRES is a trans-national cooperation project in the form of a thematic network funded by the Socrates Programme that started in the autumn of 2005. The TRES launching conference took place in Uppsala, Sweden, in 2006. For further examples of research groups and networks see the Oslo Coalition's project on education for freedom of religion or belief; the European Community Framework 6 project on Religious Education, Dialogue and Conflict; The European Network for Religious Education through Contextual Approaches and the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV).

[5] For a synopsis of the debate on faith based schools in England and Wales see Robert Jackson 'Should the State Fund Faith Based Schools: A Review of the Arguments' in *British Journal of Religious Education*, (BJRE) Vol. 25, No.2, Spring 2003, pp. 89-102. This whole volume of the BJRE is devoted to debates surrounding faith-based schools and community schools.

[6] Cf. Marcus Braybrooke, 'The Interfaith Alternative to Terror and the war Against Terror' in *Interreligious Insight A Journal of dialogue and engagement*, Vol. 5, No.2, April 2007, p.41.

[7] A study of discrimination and racism post-9/11 concluded that 'religion may sometimes be a stronger motivator for discriminatory sentiment and behavior than race or ethnicity'. L Sheridan, 'Discrimination and Racism, Post-September 11', University of Leicester, 2002, http://www.le.ac.uk/ua/pr/press/discriminationandracism.html (accessed June 22, 2008).

[8] See Oliver Mc Tiernan, *Violence in God's Name*, New York: Orbis, 2003, p.xiii.

[9] John Bowker, 'Introduction' in Brian Gates, ed., *Freedom and Authority in Religions & Religious Education*, London: Cassell, 1996, p.3-4.

[10] The president of the National Secular Society in Ireland has lamented that 'it still seems beyond the imagination of most educators in Ireland – even the ones who recognise there are problems with religious influence – that a secular system that requires pupils to leave their religion (if they have one) at home would be the answer'.

[11] For thousands of years religion has been an ingredient in global conflicts and in Europe the memories of the *Reconquista* (from 8th century to the 15th century), the Crusades (from the 11th century to the 13th century), the French wars of Religion in the 16th century and the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) provide evidence that religion can be an explosive ingredient when combined in a cocktail of economic, social and political unrest. Europe has been ravaged by conflicts in which religion has played a significant role – from the Balkan crisis that acted as an ignition point for World War One, to the holocaust of World War Two, to the re-eruption of the Balkan states into war in the 1990s. On a global scale recent atrocities such as the wars in Rwanda, Iraq and Darfur, reinforce the link between tribal group, religious faith and conflict.

[12] Kevin Williams 'Religious Worldviews and the Common School: The French Dilemma' in *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol.41, No.4, 2007, p.676. While up to one third of the schools in France are Catholic and are subsidised by the state (on condition that they do not impose religion on students or discriminate on religious grounds) the majority of French schools are public or state schools.

[13] *Loi n° 2004-228 du 15 mars 2004 encadrant, en application du principe de laïcité, le port de signes ou de tenues manifestant une appartenance religieuse dans les écoles, collèges et lycées publics.*

[14] A Letter to Educators, President Sarkozy, September 4, 2007.

[15] In November 2005 the European Court of Human Rights upheld Turkey's legislation as legitimate in the case of Leyla Şahin v. Turkey.

[16] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World/Rest_of_World/Holland_bans_burqa_Muslims_enraged_/articleshow/468955.cms (accessed June 22, 2008).

[17] *Charter of Values, Citizenship and Immigration*

[18] *The Irish Times*, May 19, 2008; *The Irish Times*, June 9, 2008.

[19] 'In 1997, The Runnymede Trust (the UK-based independent think-tank on ethnicity and cultural diversity) coined the term 'Islamophobia'. Islamophobia constitutes a two-stranded form of racism - rooted in both the 'different' physical appearance of Muslims and also in an intolerance of their religious and cultural beliefs.' Sheridan, L (2002) op.cit.

[20] Recent research reveals a correspondence between anti-Islamic feeling and consent to banning the veil. In the Pew report (2005) people who held a negative view of Islam were more likely to favour the banning of the scarf than those who held more positive views. 'For example, in Great Britain, 55% of those with an unfavorable view of Muslims favored a scarf ban compared with 23% of those who expressed a positive view of Muslims. A similar pattern emerged in Germany, the Netherlands and Spain while in France, support for a ban was high both among favorable (74%) and unfavorable (86%) views of Muslims.'

[21] Article 30, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted and ratified by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989. For a child friendly illustrated and simplified version of this text, adapted by Caroline Castle with a foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, see *For Every Child*, Phylllis Fogelman Books, 2000.

[22] Richard Barltrop, *Muslims in Europe, post 9/11 Understanding and Responding to the Islamic World,* St Anthony's College: Oxonian Rewley Press, 2003, p.6.

[23] NA Par.1. Many other faith traditions also emphasise the unity of humanity. This is evident in the following Bahá'í prayer which comes from 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence…..O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony. ' Abdu'l-Bahá, Compilations, Bahá'í Prayers, p.102.

[24] NA; EN; RM; DM

[25] *Zenith*, February 1, 2007.

[26] Cardinal Tauran, newly appointed President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue told Vatican Radio: "I think it (his appointment) is a sign of the importance that the Pope gives to dialogue among religions, in particular with Islam…..' Speaking about the link between his appointment and the Regensburg address in September 2006, he added 'I think it had a decisive influence, because thanks to the reactions, the Pope was able to clarify his words," the cardinal said. "By reading the Pope's speeches to the ambassadors of Arab countries, and also to those who have come

from Asia to present their credentials, you can see a common thread in the thought of the Pope, who thinks that interreligious dialogue is important for peace, and that religions are at the service of peace." *Zenith*, June 27, 2007.

[27] CSTTM Par. 10.

[28] Ibid.

[29] LCS Par. 3, RDECS Par. 6, CSTTM Par. 16.

[30] GS Par. 9.

[31] CSTTM Par. 6.

[32] Article 2 states 'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.' Principle one states 'The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. Every child, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family. '

[33] This mirrors NA Par 2 which states 'Sons and daughters to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions. Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, ***acknowledge, preserve and encourage*** the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, also their social life and culture.'

[34] RDECS Par. 6.

[35] John Paul 11 Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* no. 2, see also CSTTM Par. 11.

[36] *Religious Education: Roman Catholic Schools 5-14*. These Guidelines were produced in co-operation between the CEC and the Scottish Office Education Department.

[37] 'As to the teaching of world religions in the primary school within the 'Here I am' scheme of work other faiths are taught in two weeks of the year - Judaism is taught for a week in the autumn term- , and Sikhism or Islam for a week in the summer term; the religions are approached in a systematic rather than thematic way. This works out at approximately 5% of a year's RE time is devoted to other faiths.' Ann Cassons, *The Teaching of Other Faiths in Catholic Schools in the North East*, Farmington: Farmington Fellowship, 2003. See also Catharine Speroni *Teaching Other Faiths in the Catholic Primary School*, Farmington: Farmington Fellowship, 2005.

[38] Ibid.

[39] J. Kent Donleavy, 'Ten Dimensions of Inclusion: Non-Catholic Students in Catholic Schools', in *Catholic Education*, Vol. 10, No. 3, March 2007, pp.293-4.

[40] See Cassons (2003) and Speroni (2005). Astley J., Francis L.J, Wilcox C, Burton L 'How different is religious education in Catholic schools?', in *International Journal of Education and Religion*, Vol. 1, 2, 2000). Deirdre Mc Govern, *Hospitality to the Other in Faith-based schools*, Ph.D. research, St. Andrew's College, University of Glasgow.

[41] Micheál Kilcrann, Welcoming the 'New Irish', Topley & Byrne, *Nurturing*, p.86ff; Kieran P. & Hession A. (2005) *Children, Catholicism and Religious Education*, Dublin: Veritas; Patricia Kieran, 'Promoting Truth? Inter-faith education in Irish Catholic Primary Schools', in *Teaching Religion*, 2003, pp.119-130. Masters Theses: Micheál Kilcrann, *The Challenge to Primary Religious Education posed by a Multicultural Society* (2003), Helen Bhreathnach, *Living with Difference & Discovering a Common Heritage: Bringing Nostra Aetate into the Primary School Religious Education Programme in the light of the Writings of James Dunn* (2004).

[42] Deegan, *Primary Voices*, p.32. Michael Cooke, 'Interfaith Perspectives: More questions than answers' in M. Hayes (ed.), *Contemporary Catholic Education*, Gracewing 2002; J Egan, *Opting out: Catholic Schools today*, Fowler Wright, Felderhof, Hodder and Stoughton, 1998.

[43] Lodge in Deegan, *Primary Voices*, p.22, fn. 8.

[44] See Chapter 6 on Religious Belief especially section 6.4 on 'Harassment' in A Lodge, & K Lynch, *Diversity at School*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2004.

[45] SCTTM Par. 16.

[46] Lodge, *Primary Voices*, p.32.

[47] GS Par. 35-6.

[48] Kay W K , D. Linnet Smith 'Classroom factors and attitudes to six world religions', *British Journal of Education*, Vol. 24:2, 2002, p.121. See also Kay W K, D. Linnet Smith, 'Religious terms and attitudes in the Classroom, BJRE, Vol. 22:3, 2000, pp.181-191.

[49] Lynch & Lodge, *Diversity*, p.50.

[50] Rules for National School, No. 69 (2) (a).

[51] Terence McLaughlin 'Distinctiveness and the Catholic School: Balanced Judgment and the Temptations of Commonality' in James C. Conroy Ed., *Catholic Education inside out outside in*, Dublin: Veritas, 1999, p.71f.

[52] Penny Thompson, 'Whose confession? Which tradition?', BJRE, Vol. 26, No. 1, March 2004, pp.61-72.

[53] Julia Ipgrave, 'Religious Plurality Including pupils' faith background in primary religious education' in *Support for Learning: British Journal of Learning Support*, Vol. 19, No.3, August 2004, p.116.

[54] Ibid. p.117.

[55] Kay Linnet Smith's research has shown that the more religions children studied, especially if this involved four or more, the less positive their attitude to the religions and the greater their sense of confusion. See also Kay Linnet Smith, 'Religious terms and attitudes in the Classroom', BJRE, Vol. 22:3, 2000, pp.181-191.

[56] Dermot Lane, *The Irish Times*, January 22, 2002.