The role of the imagination in the religious conversion of adolescents attending Catholic secondary schools

Richard Patrick Branson
University of Notre Dame Australia

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The role of the imagination in the religious conversion of adolescents attending Catholic secondary schools

Richard Patrick Branson

Doctor of Philosophy
College of Education
University of Notre Dame Australia
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Declaration

This thesis is my own words and no part of it has been submitted for a degree at this, or any other, University. Due acknowledgement is made to the work of others used in this thesis.
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Abstract

The mission of the Catholic Church is evangelisation, the purpose of which is conversion. At a diocesan level, the mission is carried out through the agencies of family, parish and school. Every Catholic school is mandated to carry out its part in the Church’s mission through its curriculum that incorporates both Religious Education and planned catechetical experiences. This study was devised to find out some students’ perceptions of their faith, the influences that they perceive on changes to their faith, and to describe how the imagination assisted their faith development and religious conversion. Fifteen Catholic secondary school students from four schools in the Archdiocese of Perth, Western Australia were interviewed in their final year of school. Some also kept journals and some were interviewed again in the year after they left school. The data collected was analysed using methods associated with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Conclusions were drawn about how the imagination assists faith development and religious conversion. The findings were aligned with the Western Australian Catholic Bishops’ Mandate Letter to the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) (2009) and recommendations were made to assist the evangelisation of youth in Catholic secondary schools.
Chapter 1: Evangelisation and Catholic education
  Introduction ................................................................. 12
  The research intention .................................................... 13
  Background to the study .................................................. 14
  The research problem ..................................................... 19
  Substantial and original contribution to knowledge .................. 21
  Research questions ....................................................... 22
  Definition of terms ....................................................... 23
  Summary ........................................................................... 25

Chapter 2: A review of related literature
  Introduction ........................................................................... 26
  Faith .................................................................................... 27
    Human faith ...................................................................... 27
    Religious faith .................................................................... 30
    Christian faith ................................................................... 33
  Conversion ............................................................................ 35
    Christian conversion ....................................................... 39
    The process of conversion .............................................. 41
  The imagination ................................................................. 44
    Religious imagination ...................................................... 51
  Religious education and catechesis ....................................... 55
    Religious education ......................................................... 57
    Catechesis ....................................................................... 61
  Approaches to research ..................................................... 64
    Contrasting research methodologies .................................. 65
    Movement one: Researching Catholic education in Australia .... 69
    Movement two: Epistemology ............................................ 71
    Movement three: Hermeneutics ......................................... 72
    Movement four: Phenomenology ....................................... 75
      Research design: Interpretative phenomenological analysis .. 76
    Movement five: Structural developmental theories ............... 79
    Movement six: Psychology of religion ................................ 80
  Ethical considerations ....................................................... 81
The influence of significant others .......................................................... 213
  Kevin’s relationship with his parents .................................................. 214
  Kevin’s relationship with her peers .................................................... 215
Owning faith in God .............................................................................. 216
Concluding remarks ............................................................................... 217
Elizabeth’s conversion .......................................................................... 218
Changes in Elizabeth’s relationship with God ....................................... 220
The influence of significant others ....................................................... 222
  Elizabeth’s relationship with her parents and siblings ......................... 223
  Elizabeth’s relationship with her friends ............................................. 224
Owning faith in God ............................................................................... 227
Concluding remarks ............................................................................... 229
Stephen’s conversion ............................................................................. 230
The adolescent’s sense of God ............................................................... 232
Changes in Stephen’s relationship with God ......................................... 234
The influence of significant others ....................................................... 235
Owning faith in God ............................................................................... 240
Concluding remarks ............................................................................... 241
Summary ............................................................................................... 249

Chapter 6: The imagination and religious conversion

Introduction ........................................................................................... 254
A model of how the imagination assists faith development ..................... 256
  Reaching back: memory, emotion and the imagination ....................... 258
    Information processing theories ....................................................... 260
    Cognitive development and the imagination .................................... 261
  Leaning forward: the imagination, understanding and will .................. 262
    The imagination and understanding ................................................. 263
Maria Harris’ model of religious imagination ........................................... 265
  Contemplative imagination and faith development ............................ 267
  Ascetic imagination and faith development ....................................... 269
  Creative imagination and faith development ..................................... 270
  Sacramental imagination and faith development ............................... 271
Concluding remarks ............................................................................... 273
The imagination and religious conversion ............................................ 274
  Mikaela’s conversion .......................................................................... 275
  Kevin’s conversion ............................................................................ 280
  Elizabeth’s conversion ...................................................................... 281
  Stephen’s conversion ......................................................................... 282
Concluding remarks ............................................................................... 284
Summary ............................................................................................... 288
Chapter 7: Religious education, conversion and the role of the imagination in evangelisation

Introduction ................................................................. 329
Catholic education in Western Australia ......................................................... 330
  Christian witness and faith development .................................................. 334
  Evidence of the role of the imagination in constructing images of faith from the witness of people of faith .................................................. 341
  Christian witness and conversion ................................................................. 344
  Evidence of the role of the imagination in constructing images of the possibility of conversion from the witness of people of faith .................. 348
  Christian witness, faith and adolescent psychological development ........ 350
  Ministry of the word and faith development .................................................. 354
  Primary proclamation and faith development .................................................. 354
  Primary proclamation and conversion .......................................................... 356
  Initiatory catechesis and faith development .................................................. 362
  Religious education ....................................................................................... 368
    Students’ perceptions of religious education .................................................. 370
    The pedagogy of religious education .............................................................. 374
    Religious education methods ........................................................................ 378
Teachable moments ......................................................................................... 384
Summary ......................................................................................................... 388

Chapter 8: Findings and recommendations
The mission of the Church: evangelisation ...................................................... 390
The context of the study ................................................................................... 391
The power of Christian witness ...................................................................... 392
  Ministry of the word: Primary proclamation .................................................. 394
  Ministry of the word: Initiatory catechesis ..................................................... 394
  Ministry of the word: Religious education ....................................................... 395
Methodology: A phenomenological study ......................................................... 396
The work of the imagination .......................................................................... 399
Recommendations ............................................................................................ 399
Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 401

References ....................................................................................................... 403

Appendix 1: Letter to student ........................................................................... 423
Appendix 2: Letter to parent/caregiver ............................................................... 425
Appendix 3: Acceptance form ......................................................................... 427
Appendix 4: Interview schedule #1 ................................................................. 428
Appendix 5: Interview schedule #2 ................................................................. 429
Appendix 6: Journal statements ....................................................................... 430
Appendix 7: Use of closed questions and rich data ........................................ 431
List of figures

Figure 1: Theoretical framework for research ................................................. 69
Figure 2: Category coding tree ................................................................. 112
Figure 3: Reaching back: Memory, emotion and the imagination .................... 258
Figure 4: Leaning forward: The imagination, understanding and will.............. 258
Figure 5: A model of how the imagination assists the faith development and religious conversion of adolescents ................................................. 260
List of tables

Table 1: The differences between catechesis and religious education ............ 63
Table 2: The interviews and journals ....................................................... 93
Table 3: The general categories and their definitions ................................. 109
Table 4: The major and minor themes derived from the data analysis .......... 124
List of abbreviations used

AG  Ad gentes divinitus. Vatican II (1965)


CSTTM  The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium
Congregation for Catholic Education (1997)


FC  Familiaris consortio, Pope John Paul II (1982).


IC  Inter oecumenici [Instruction on the proper implementation of the

LC  Lay Catholics in schools: witnesses to faith. Congregation for Catholic
Education (1982).

M01  Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia
2001-2007

M09  Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia
2009-2015

RD  The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school. Congregation


The use of inclusive language in documents published by the Catholic Church is
a vexed issue. Out of respect for the authors of the texts cited above, the original
language has been retained. No attempt has been made to make the language
gender-inclusive.