

**BIBLICAL METAPHORS FOR GOD IN THE PRIMARY LEVEL OF THE
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SERIES *TO KNOW WORSHIP AND LOVE***

Submitted by

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of this thesis.

The thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to three generations of people.

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who walked ahead of me and taught me the value of both faith and education

Garry Carswell, my husband,
who walked with me throughout this study and held my hand when the going got
tough

Stephanie and Jennifer Carswell, our daughters,
who, together with all those who walk after us, are the reason that biblical metaphors
for God matter.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CCC</i>	Catechism of the Catholic Church
<i>CS</i>	The Catholic School
<i>CT</i>	Catechesis Tradendae
<i>DAS</i>	Divino Afflante Spiritu
<i>DV</i>	Dei Verbum
<i>GCD</i>	The General Catechetical Directory
<i>GDC</i>	General Directory for Catechesis
<i>GE</i>	Gravissimum Educationis
<i>HTG</i>	Instructio de historica evangeliorum veritate
<i>IBC</i>	The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church
<i>PBC</i>	The Pontifical Biblical Commission
<i>PD</i>	Providentissimus Deus
<i>RDECS</i>	The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School
<i>REF</i>	The Renewal of the Education of Faith
<i>SP</i>	Spiritus Paraclitus
<i>TKWL</i>	To Know Worship and Love

But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’

Ex 3:13, 14a (NRSV)

ABSTRACT

To Know Worship and Love is the religious instruction curriculum produced and mandated for use by the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The primary series comprises a Teaching Companion and Student Text for every level of education, Preparatory to Year 6. This study undertakes examination of the series to determine if biblical metaphors for God which contain a physical vehicle are used and presented within it in accord with the accepted exegetical practices of the Church.

The study begins by examining Church documents that pertain to both religious instruction and Scripture to determine a set of principles which should guide the use of Scripture. Notable among the six principles elucidated is the expectation that the use of Scripture should reflect accepted exegetical practices of the Church. These are defined as those which enable a clear understanding of the literal sense of Scripture, as ascertained through use of the Historical-Critical method.

In order to come to a sound understanding of the literal sense of metaphors, the study reviews how they work and what results from their use. Such a review is important for two reasons. First, in the finding that metaphors for God prompt the formation of a concept of God, the need for their valid interpretation in religious instruction is stressed. Second, it enables the articulation of eight specific requirements for the interpretation of biblical metaphors for God.

Subsequent examination of the series against what is required reveals that of the eight requirements, only one is provided within the series. No unit or activity identifies the sixty-three biblical metaphors cited in the series and no unit teaches students how they work to communicate meaning. No unit provides information of the vehicles used within their historical setting and no unit explains the historical circumstances which gave rise to the dominance of certain metaphors.

In order to explain why biblical metaphors for God are presented so poorly in *To Know Worship and Love*, the use of Scripture generally in the series is examined against the six principles drawn from Church documents. The finding that the series does not observe the principles which should guide the use of Scripture, in particular, the finding that the series does not use accepted exegetical practices of the Church, provides significant insight into the inadequate presentation of metaphors.

The study concludes by making three recommendations. First, it recommends that a process of rewriting *To Know Worship and Love* must be undertaken immediately. Second, it recommends that the use and placement of Scripture in religious instruction programmes in the future adhere to the six principles of the Church outlined in this study. Third, it recommends that the clear and accurate teaching of what metaphors and how they work be made a priority in religious instruction programmes.