

**THE USE OF SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
IN VICTORIAN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Submitted by

MICHAEL JAMES GRACE Dip. Theol. St., B. Ed., B. Theol., M. Ed.

**A thesis submitted in total fulfilment
of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

School of Religious Education

Faculty of Education

**Australian Catholic University
Office of Research
Locked Bag 4115,
Fitzroy, Victoria 3065
Australia**

September, 2003

In loving memory of
KEVIN JAMES GRACE
(1924 – 2001)

STATEMENT OF SOURCES

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 the thesis.

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

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

ABSTRACT

Aims

This thesis examines the use of scripture by religious education teachers with their students in Victorian Catholic secondary schools in late 1999.

The aims of the research were: to present a picture of the incorporation of scripture into the religious education program of Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999, and in particular the incorporation of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship (focus will also be placed on the purpose for which scripture is used, the extent to which it is used and the methods employed in its use); to investigate how and to what extent VCE *Texts and Traditions*¹ Units 1 to 4 have been adopted by senior Victorian Catholic secondary students and its influence on Years Seven to Ten religious education curriculum; and to extend the work of Stead (1996b) into the use of scripture in Victorian Catholic primary schools.

Scope

This study is built on an understanding of religious education based on an educational rationale, and it examines the use of scripture in the light of modern critical biblical scholarship, particularly the historical-critical method. Religious Education Coordinators from 67 of the 99 Victorian Catholic secondary schools and 61 teachers of Years Seven to Ten religious education in these same schools completed self-administering questionnaires in this area.

¹ *Texts and Traditions* is a Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) study which has the historical-critical method of biblical scholarship as its method for the study of passages from the bible.

Conclusions

The research demonstrated that while there is an extensive range of good modern biblical scholarship material present in these schools, there is no policy concerning how scripture is to be used in the curriculum, questionable translations of the bible are used, and there is a limited use of many sections of the bible. A key finding of the research is that a thematic, proof-texting use of scripture is prevalent in these schools. This thematic use can lead to a literal, fundamentalist use of scripture within Catholic secondary religious education. This approach is linked with many religious education teachers' predominantly catechetical understanding of the nature of religious education.

The self-administering questionnaires asked for an indication of the personal practice of respondents in their own religious education classrooms. The data indicated the presence of the historical-critical method in the classrooms of Victorian Catholic secondary schools, however there was an over-reliance on the student text and the predominance of a thematic, literal, non-critical use of scripture. This thesis indicates that this misuse of scripture comes about from teachers' catechetical understanding of the nature of religious education. In particular the study of scripture in Years 11 and 12 is an area of concern. Except for a small percentage of students studying Texts and Traditions (13%), the use of the historical-critical method of biblical studies is almost non-existent.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis has been brought together with a great deal of support and assistance. I would like to gratefully acknowledge the guidance, encouragement and dedication of my principle supervisor, Dr Kath Engebretson, state co-ordinator, School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University, Fitzroy Campus and my co-supervisor Dr James McLaren, Acting Head of School, School of Theology (Victoria) Australian Catholic University, Fitzroy Campus.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Ken Smith, Head of School, Trescowthick School of Education (Victoria), Australian Catholic University, Fitzroy Campus in the preparation and analysis of data using Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS). Also, Dr Veronica Lawson, Senior Lecturer, School of Theology (Victoria) Australian Catholic University, Fitzroy Campus for her assistance with the analysis of open ended questions.

Thank you to all the Principals, Religious Education Co-ordinators and teachers of Years Seven to Ten religious education throughout Victorian Catholic secondary schools who gave of their time to complete the self-administering questionnaires. In particular I would like to thank the staff and students of St. Monica's College in Epping, Victoria for their encouragement and support, especially the Principal, Mr Brian Hanley for his practical assistance with sponsorship through time release. Also, I wish to acknowledge the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne, Victoria for encouraging me through part-time study sponsorship in 1999 and 2000.

I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my wife, Maria, my children, Jessica and James and my parents, Kevin and Veronica for their faith and love. It was from them that my love of scripture comes. It was my Father on hearing that I had shown interest in the bible who said, “Here have mine, I’ll buy another one”.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Statement of Sources	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	vi
List of Tables	xiv
List of Figures	xx
Abbreviations.....	xxii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Nature of Religious Education in Catholic Schools.....	4
1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 The Kerygmatic Method of Catechesis (1960's)	5
1.3 The Life-centred Method of Catechesis.....	6
1.3.1 Revelation.....	6
1.3.2 The Renewal of the Education of Faith.....	8
1.3.3 The General Catechetical Directory of 1971 and Amalorpavadass...9	
1.3.4 Evangelii Nuntiandi	11
1.3.5 The Melbourne Religious Education Guidelines.....	11
1.3.6 Catechesi Tradendae	12
1.3.7 Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith.....	14
1.3.8 The 1984 Melbourne Religious Education Guidelines	14
1.3.9 The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School.....	16
1.3.10 The 1995 Melbourne Religious Education Guidelines	17
1.3.11 Summary.....	20
1.4 The General Catechetical Directory of 1997	20
1.5 British influences on Australian religious education.....	23
1.5.1 The influence of phenomenology	24
1.5.2 Typology.....	26
1.5.3 Victorian Certificate of Education	26
1.6 Contemporary Australian Writers	30

	Page
1.7 Religious Literacy in the 1990's.....	33
1.9 Melbourne Diocesan Texts	35
1.10 Summary	37
Chapter 2: Critical Biblical Scholarship and the Catholic Church	40
2.1 Introduction	40
2.2 Modern Biblical Scholarship.....	42
2.2.1 Textual Criticism	42
2.2.2 Historical Critical Method.....	44
2.2.2.1 Historical Criticism.....	44
2.2.2.2 Form Criticism.....	45
2.2.2.3 Source Criticism	46
2.2.2.4 Redaction Criticism	47
2.2.3 Literary Critical Method.....	48
2.2.3.1 Narrative Criticism	49
2.2.3.2 Structural Criticism.....	50
2.2.3.3 Rhetorical Criticism.....	51
2.2.4 Reader Response Criticism.....	52
2.2.5 Conclusion.....	55
2.3 The Catholic Church and Critical Biblical Scholarship.....	55
2.3.1 Introduction	55
2.3.2 Providentissimus Deus	55
2.3.3 1902 to 1920 and Divino Afflante Spiritu.....	56
2.3.4 Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels.....	57
2.3.5 Dei Verbum	58
2.3.6 1993: The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church.....	60
2.3.7 Summary.....	62
2.4 Conclusion.....	63
Chapter 3: Scripture and the adolescent – a review of literature	64
3.1 Introduction	64
3.2 Changes in the Use of the Bible in Australia's Catholic schools	64
3.3 The Difficulties Faced by Teachers of Scripture.....	66

	Page
3.4 The Problem of Fundamentalism	68
3.5 Developmental Psychology and the Use of the Bible	70
3.6 Why Teach Scripture? - An Educational Rationale.....	78
3.7 Approaches and Methodologies in Teaching Scripture.....	82
3.8 Recent Research	89
3.8.1 D. Madgen - The Use of the Bible in Australian Catholic Primary Schools, 1993.....	89
3.8.2 M. Carswell - Educating into Discipleship, 1995	91
3.8.3 B. Stead - The Influence of Critical Biblical Study on the Teaching and Use of Scripture in Catholic Primary Schools in Victoria, 1996.....	93
3.8.4 J. Hartley – Current Practice in Teaching the Scriptures in Catholic Secondary Schools, 1999	95
3.9 Summary	97
Chapter 4: Methodology, research problem, design and setting	100
4.1 The problem	100
4.2 Social Research	101
4.2.1 Introduction	101
4.2.2 Qualitative verses Quantitative Methodology	103
4.3 Methodology of Research	104
4.3.1 Introduction	104
4.3.2 Research Design.....	105
4.3.3 Research Questions	109
4.3.4 Research Analysis	111
4.4 Profile of Participants	114
4.4.1 Introduction	114
4.4.2 Religious Education Co-ordinators.....	115
4.4.3 Classroom Teachers of Religious Education.....	121
4.5 Summary	127

	Page
Chapter 5: Findings.....	128
5.1 Introduction	128
5.2 Importance of and Confidence in Using Scripture for RECs and Teachers of Religious Education.....	128
5.3 An Overview of Teaching Concerning the Bible in Victorian Catholic schools.....	133
5.3.1 Introduction	133
5.3.2 School Policy on the Use of Scripture with Students	134
5.3.3 The Bible Purchased by Students	134
5.3.4 Scripture in Years Seven to Ten	136
5.3.5 Topics Taught	137
5.3.6 Resources Available.....	140
5.3.7 Scripture in Years 11 – 12.....	140
5.3.7.1 Introduction	140
5.3.7.2 Texts and Traditions.....	141
5.3.7.3 Non-Texts and Traditions students	141
5.3.7.4 Influence of Texts & Traditions on the Teaching of Scripture in Years 7 to 10.....	143
5.4 The General Use of Scripture in Religious Education Classrooms by RECs and RE Teachers of Years Seven to Ten.....	144
5.4.1 Introduction	144
5.4.2 Frequency of Use	145
5.4.3 Sections of the Bible Used	147
5.4.4 Factors Influencing Sections of the Bible Used	149
5.4.5 Using the Bible in Class	151
5.5 Reasons for the Use of Scripture in the Classroom – RECs & Teachers	154
5.6 Personal Practice of RECs & RE Teachers.....	155
5.6.1 Introduction	155
5.6.2 Year Seven.....	157
5.6.3 Year Eight.....	163
5.6.4 Year Nine.....	169
5.6.5 Year Ten	174
5.6.6 Year 11	179
5.6.7 Year 12	183
5.6.8 Other Responses.....	188
5.7 Summary of Findings.....	191

	Page
Chapter 6: A general overview of scripture use in Victorian Catholic secondary schools – An analysis of findings (1)	194
6.1 Introduction	194
6.2 Teacher Confidence with Scripture	194
6.3 School Policy on the Use of Scripture with Students	200
6.4 Biblical Translations Used	201
6.5 Scripture in Years Seven to Ten.....	204
6.6 Resources Available	211
6.7 Senior Secondary.....	218
6.8 The General Use of Scripture in Religious Education Classrooms by RECs and RE Teachers of Year 7 to 10.....	224
6.8.1 Frequency of Use	224
6.8.2 Sections of the Bible Used	226
6.8.3 Factors Influencing Sections of the Bible Used	232
6.8.4 Using the Bible in Class	234
6.9 Why RECs and RE Teachers of Year Seven to Ten Use Scripture with Students.....	235
6.10 Conclusion.....	242
Chapter 7: The personal practice of respondents – An analysis of findings (2)	246
7.1 Introduction	246
7.2 Passages of Scripture Used during the Year in which the Research was Conducted and in the Previous Month.....	248
7.3 Why Chosen	255
7.4 Understanding of Text	261
7.5 Aims in Using Chosen Text with Students	268

	Page
7.6 Communication of the Text and Learning Activities Employed with the Text.....	275
7.7 Students' Experience related to Passage.....	281
7.8 Resources in Respondents' Preparation and Books/Curriculum Materials Used in Presenting the Passage to Students.....	286
7.9 Conclusion.....	292
Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	296
8.1 Introduction.....	296
8.2 Key Findings.....	296
8.3 Recommendations Arising from the Research.....	300
8.4 Delimitations of Research.....	302
8.5 Directions for Future Research.....	304
8.6 Conclusion.....	305
Appendices.....	307
A Survey Questionnaire to Religious Education Teachers of Years Seven to Ten	307
B Survey Questionnaire to Religious Education Co-ordinators.....	313
References.....	320

TABLES

		Page
Table 4.1	Profile of Religious Education Co-ordinators according to age and sex.	116
Table 4.2	Distribution of Religious Education Co-ordinators by age.	117
Table 4.3	Profile of Religious Education Co-ordinators according to experience.	117
Table 4.4	Distribution of Religious Education Co-ordinators by experience.	118
Table 4.5	Number of Religious Education Co-ordinators teaching at each year level.	118
Table 4.6	Number of year levels taught by Religious Education Co-ordinators.	119
Table 4.7	Qualifications of Religious Education Co-ordinators.	120
Table 4.8	Profile of classroom teachers of Religious Education according to age and sex.	122
Table 4.9	Distribution of classroom teachers of Religious Education by age.	123
Table 4.10	Profile of classroom teachers of Religious Education according to teaching experience.	123
Table 4.11	Distribution of classroom Religious Education teachers by experience.	124
Table 4.12	Number of classroom teachers of Religious Education teaching at each year level.	125
Table 4.13	Number of year levels taught by classroom teachers of Religious Education.	125
Table 4.14	Qualifications of classroom teachers of Religious Education.	126
Table 5.1	Religious Education Co-ordinators' confidence in the use of scripture with their students	130
Table 5.2	Religious Education Co-ordinators' reasons for confidence in the use of scripture with students.	130

	Page	
Table 5.3	Religious Education Co-ordinators' reasons for lack of confidence in the use of scripture with students.	131
Table 5.4	Religious Education teachers' confidence in the use of scripture with their students.	132
Table 5.5	Reasons given by classroom teachers of Religious Education for their confidence in the use of scripture with students.	132
Table 5.6	Religious Education Teachers' reasons for lack of confidence in the use of scripture with students.	133
Table 5.7	Bible translations required to be purchased by students.	135
Table 5.8	Topics taught – Year 7.	138
Table 5.9	Topics taught – Year 8.	138
Table 5.10	Topics taught – Year 9.	149
Table 5.11	Topics taught – Year 10.	149
Table 5.12	General scripture topics.	140
Table 5.13	Resources available for teaching and using scripture with students.	140
Table 5.14	Texts & Traditions units taught.	141
Table 5.15	Year Levels at which Texts & Traditions are taught.	141
Table 5.16	Percentage of non-Texts & Tradition students in Years 11 & 12.	142
Table 5.17	Type of Religious Education for non-Texts & Traditions students.	142
Table 5.18	Explanation of type of Religious Education for non-Texts & Tradition students in VCE.	142
Table 5.19	Year Level at which non-Texts & Tradition units taught.	143
Table 5.20	Topics on scripture in Years 11 and 12.	143
Table 5.21	Influence of the teaching of Texts & Traditions on the teaching of scripture in Years 7 to 10.	144

	Page	
Table 5.22	Teacher Group Association on the General use of Scripture in Religious Education Categorical Variables	145
Table 5.23	RECs: Frequency of use of scripture.	145
Table 5.24	RECs' explanations as to frequency of use of scripture with students.	146
Table 5.25	RE Teachers: Frequency of use of scripture.	146
Table 5.26	RE Teachers' explanations as to frequency of use of scripture with students.	146
Table 5.27	RECs' responses to, "Why use scripture with students?"	155
Table 5.28	RE Teachers' responses to, "Why use scripture with students?"	155
Table 5.29	Teacher Group Associations on the Personal Practice of RECs and RETs Categorical Variables	157
Table 5.30	Year 7 – Scripture used this year.	158
Table 5.31	Year 7, Why scripture was chosen for use with students.	159
Table 5.32	Year 7, Understanding of text chosen.	159
Table 5.33	Year 7, Aims in using selected passage with students.	160
Table 5.34	Year 7, Communication of scripture.	160
Table 5.35	Year 7, Learning activities employed.	161
Table 5.36	Year 7, Resources used in preparation.	162
Table 5.37	Year 7, Books/curriculum materials found useful.	162
Table 5.38	Year 7, Relating to students' experience.	163
Table 5.39	Year 8 – Scripture used this year.	164
Table 5.40	Year 8, Why scripture was chosen for use with students.	165
Table 5.41	Year 8, Understanding of text chosen.	165

	Page	
Table 5.42	Year 8, Aims in using selected passage with students.	166
Table 5.43	Year 8, Communication of scripture.	166
Table 5.44	Year 8, Learning activities employed.	167
Table 5.45	Year 8, Resources used in preparation.	167
Table 5.46	Year 8, Books/curriculum materials found useful.	168
Table 5.47	Year 8, Relating to students' experience.	168
Table 5.48	Year 9 – Scripture used this year.	169
Table 5.49	Year 9, Why scripture was chosen for use with students.	170
Table 5.50	Year 9, Understanding of text chosen.	170
Table 5.51	Year 9, Aims in using selected passage with students.	171
Table 5.52	Year 9, Communication of scripture.	171
Table 5.53	Year 9, Learning activities employed.	172
Table 5.54	Year 9, Resources used in preparation.	172
Table 5.55	Year 9, Books/curriculum materials found useful.	173
Table 5.56	Year 9, Relating to students' experience.	173
Table 5.57	Year 10 – Scripture used this year.	174
Table 5.58	Year 10, Why scripture was chosen for use with students.	175
Table 5.59	Year 10, Understanding of text chosen.	175
Table 5.60	Year 10, Aims in using selected passage with students.	176
Table 5.61	Year 10, Communication of scripture.	176
Table 5.62	Year 10, Learning activities employed.	177
Table 5.63	Year 10, Resources used in preparation.	177

	Page	
Table 5.64	Year 10, Books/curriculum materials found useful.	178
Table 5.65	Year 10, Relating to students' experience.	178
Table 5.66	RECs: - Year 11 – Scripture used this year.	179
Table 5.67	RECs – Year 11, Why scripture was chosen for use with students.	180
Table 5.68	RECs – Year 11, Understanding of text chosen.	180
Table 5.69	RECs – Year 11, Aims in using selected passage with students.	181
Table 5.70	RECs – Year 11, Communication of scripture.	181
Table 5.71	RECs – Year 11, Learning activities employed.	182
Table 5.72	RECs – Year 11, Resources used in preparation.	182
Table 5.73	RECs – Year 11, Books/curriculum materials found useful.	183
Table 5.74	RECs – Year 11, Relating to students' experience.	183
Table 5.75	RECs: Year 12 – Scripture used this year.	184
Table 5.76	RECs – Year 12, Why scripture was chosen for use with students.	185
Table 5.77	RECs – Year 12, Understanding of text chosen.	185
Table 5.78	RECs – Year 12, Aims in using selected passage with students.	186
Table 5.79	RECs – Year 12, Communication of scripture.	186
Table 5.80	RECs – Year 12, Learning activities employed.	187
Table 5.81	RECs – Year 12, Resources used in preparation.	187
Table 5.82	RECs – Year 12, Books/curriculum materials found useful.	188
Table 5.83	RECs – Year 12, Relating to students' experience.	188
Table 5.84	Summary of responses on general scripture use.	191

		Page
Table 5.85	Summary of major responses concerning the personal practice of respondents.	192
Table 6.1	Total responses to, “Why use scripture with students?”	235
Table 7.1	Total scripture used this year.	248
Table 7.2	Total scripture used in the past month.	250
Table 7.3	Total: Why scripture was chosen for use with students.	255
Table 7.4	Total: Understanding of passage used with students in the past month.	262
Table 7.5	Total: Aims in using selected passage with students.	268
Table 7.6	Total: Communication of scripture.	275
Table 7.7	Total learning activities employed.	276
Table 7.8	Total relating to students’ experience.	282
Table 7.9	Total resources in preparation.	287
Table 7.10	Total books/curriculum materials found useful.	289

FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1.1	Orientation in Religious Education in Schools	39
Figure 4.1	Distribution of responses from Religious Education Co-ordinators by education zone.	115
Figure 4.2	Distribution of responses from classroom teachers of Religious Education by education zone.	121
Figure 5.1	Role of scripture in the life of Religious Education Co-ordinators	129
Figure 5.2	Role of scripture in the life of classroom teachers of Religious Education.	131
Figure 5.3	Units on scripture – Year Levels taught.	137
Figure 5.4	RECs: Sections of the Bible, frequency of use (percentage of respondents)	148
Figure 5.5	RE Teachers Years 7 to 10: Sections of the Bible, frequency of use (percentage of respondents)	149
Figure 5.6	RECs: Factors influencing sections of the Bible most frequently used.	150
Figure 5.7	RE Teachers of Years 7 to 10: Factors influencing sections of the Bible most frequently used.	151
Figure 6.1	Major topics taught specifically on scripture Years 7 to 10.	204
Figure 7.1	Total scripture used by Year Level.	249
Figure 7.2	Scripture used in the past month by Year Level.	251
Figure 7.3	Comparison of topics taught on scripture Years 7 to 10 with actual passages used this year and frequency of sections of the Bible used.	254
Figure 7.4	Comparison of “Why chosen” with general reasons for using scripture with students (Tables 5.26 & 5.27).	260
Figure 7.5	Understanding of passage used with students in the past month: Total by Year Level.	263

	Page
Figure 7.6 Understanding of passage chosen to use with students in the past month.	263
Figure 7.7 Aims in using passage: total by Year Level.	269
Figure 7.8 Aims in using chosen text with students in the past month.	274
Figure 7.9 Communication of scripture: Total by Year Level.	276
Figure 7.10 Learning activities: Total by Year Level.	277
Figure 7.11 Relate to students' experience: Total by Year Level.	282
Figure 7.12 Resources in preparation: Total by Year Level.	288
Figure 7.13 Books/curriculum materials used: Total by Year Level.	290

ABBREVIATIONS

Ex	The book of Exodus
Gen	The book of Genesis
Good News	The Holy Bible: Today's English Version
<i>Guidelines</i>	Guidelines for Religious Education for Secondary Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne
NRSV	The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version
PBC	Pontifical Biblical Commission
R & S	Religion and Society, VCE studies
RE	Religious Education
RECs	Religious Education Co-ordinators
REF	The Renewal of the Education of Faith
RETs	Classroom teachers of Years 7 to 10 Religious Education
RSV	The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version
SPSS	Statistical Program for Social Sciences, Version 9 for Windows 97
T & T	Texts and Traditions, VCE studies
VBOS	Victorian Board of Studies
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education

INTRODUCTION

In 1992 and 1993 Stead (1996b) pioneered research into the issue of critical biblical study and religious education. Her research was focused on Catholic primary schools in the Australian state of Victoria. Her research was important, since it was an attempt to gather empirical data on classroom teaching practice in religious education, and sought to bring together the disciplines of theology and education. At the same time, 1993, the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) mandated the use of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis.

Within Catholic secondary education in Victoria new guidelines for religious education were published in 1995, *The Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne*. The use of scripture within these *Guidelines* was criticised for not fostering a critical approach to biblical study and for being fundamentalist in nature (Collins, 1995). As well as this, the prevailing understanding of the nature of religious education had undergone a change from a catechetical understanding to an educational understanding based on students' critical intellectual skills, and on the multi-faith nature of the Catholic classroom.

This study seeks to investigate the use of the bible within Catholic secondary schools in Victoria, particularly in relation to the use of the historical-critical method of biblical exegesis and in relation to the prevalent understanding of the nature of religious education among teachers. No such study of religious education classroom practice in Victorian Catholic secondary schools has been undertaken.

The aims of this study as outlined in Chapter Four are:

- To present a picture of the incorporation of scripture into the religious education program of Victorian Catholic secondary schools in 1999, and in particular the incorporation of the historical-critical method of modern biblical scholarship. Focus will also be placed on the purpose for which scripture is used, the extent to which it is used and the methods employed in its use.
- To investigate how and to what extent VCE *Texts and Traditions* Units 1 to 4 have been adopted by senior Victorian Catholic secondary students, and its influence on Years Seven to Ten religious education curriculum, and
- To extend the work of Stead (1996b) into the use of scripture in Victorian Catholic primary schools.

In order for these aims to be addressed it was necessary in Chapter One of this thesis to present a clear understanding of the term, “Religious Education” within the context of the Victorian Catholic secondary education system. This chapter demonstrates that there has been a shift in understanding of religious education, from predominantly catechetical in nature, to an understanding that has as its focus the development of critical knowledge and skills based on cognitive and affective outcomes.

Chapter Two, explores the key approaches adopted today in modern biblical scholarship and outlines the Catholic Church’s gradual acceptance of critical biblical study. It notes the Pontifical Biblical Commissions’ exhortation to use the historical-critical method of biblical study and the concerns of this Commission about fundamentalism. Chapter Three reviews literature concerning scripture and the adolescent, taking particular note of secondary students’ psychological readiness to

critically study scripture and the need for an educational rationale for biblical study. This research is then placed in the context of similar Australian research. The issue of fundamentalism is again raised as a concern.

Chapter Four, situates this research in social research and identifies the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study. The research aims are specified, survey questions identified, methods of analysis explained and a description of the research participants given. Chapter Five presents the data, while Chapters Six and Seven discuss and analyse the findings in the context of the first three chapters of this thesis. Chapter Eight summarises the findings, makes recommendations, identifies the delimitations of the research and makes suggestions for future research.

Some decisions have been necessary with regard to terminology and presentation:

- The bible and scripture have been used interchangeably as names for the sacred text.
- Hebrew Scriptures is the name given in this thesis to the texts sacred to Judaism and Christian Scriptures is the name given in this thesis for the texts concerning the ministry of Jesus and the early Church. Where other authors or texts identify the scriptures as Old Testament and/or New Testament, they are cited as in the original.
- Capitalisation of names such as bible, scripture, gospel and god are only used when they are a citation of another author's text.
- In order to preserve the tables and figures, it has been necessary to insert page breaks before the presentation of some tables and figures leaving unavoidable spaces in some chapters.