**Chapter-II**

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Steven W. Smith. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009, *Dying to Preach: Embracing the Cross in the Pulpit*. Steven W. Smith’s *Dying to Preach* focuses on the heart of Christian ministry in general, and Christian preaching in particular. Smith calls the pastor to live out Paul’s model of dying that others may live (2 Cor 4:12). While other books rightly champion the need to preach the cross, Smith provides a wonderful contribution to the field by urging the preacher to take up the cross personally, as well. In Smith’s words, “The principle metaphor for the act of preaching the Gospel is the Gospel” Therefore, while this is not a practical “how to prepare sermons” book primarily, it is a book on how one “prepares himself ” to preach expositional sermons. Smith urges the preacher to prepare himself by dying to himself and purposing to preach not for the praise of man, but for the glory of the crucified and risen Redeemer. Due to the importance of his selected subject, I would recommend this book to students and pastors for at least five reasons.

First, Smith’s work is thoroughly biblical, which makes it trustworthy. Smith’s primary focus of source material is Paul’s words to the Corinthians, along with other key biblical texts. In chapter 1, Smith provides an excellent summary table of how the cross of Christ informed Paul’s view of ministry. Smith records, “No less than twenty times in his two extant letters to Corinth, he [Paul] alludes to this idea of suffering for others” (28). In chapter 2, Smith expounds 1 Corinthians 2 clearly, and draws out implications for preaching. Chapters 3-6 make up part 2 of the book, which deals with how the cross impacts preaching more practically.
Chapter 3 is an exposition of 2 Corinthians 4; chapter 4, an exposition of Colossians 1:24; chapter 5, an exposition of Heb 13:11-14; and in chapter 6, Smith focuses on Phil 2:5-7. Each of these chapters actually models faithful exposition, as the author develops his Christocentric thesis. Second, Smith writes with pastoral vulnerability, which makes the book encouraging. In other words, he is aware of the inner struggles of the pastor. For example, he identifies with the discouraged pastor when he writes, “We lay our guts out in the pulpit, and in response see stonecold faces with no ambition toward godliness or motivation to change” (24). What pastor cannot identify with this struggle? Smith offers needed encouragement in light of these types of realities. Third, Smith reminds us of the theological underpinnings of preaching, which makes the book timeless. For example, he reminds us that we should preach with a “healthy fear of God’s judgment” instead of succumbing to the pressure to perform and entertain (47). Fourth, Smith includes some helpful reminders from the history of preaching (mainly from Francois Fenelon’s Dialogues on Eloquence), which makes the book informative and inspiring. I always appreciate references to homileticians from years past. One of the reasons for various contemporary pitfalls in preaching seems to be the lack of reflection on preaching history. Fifth, Smith reminds us of the true essence of expository preaching—that is, being surrendered to the text of Scripture (chapters 7-9—the final three chapters), which makes the book useful for personal reflection and instruction. I found myself throughout the book saying “Amen” to particular points, examining my heart at other places, and praying for the outworking of his thesis in my own life throughout the book. Seasoned pastors, young pastors, and others who handle God’s Word would benefit from hearing this call to bear the cross in the pulpit.
In 2008 the much anticipated *ESV Study Bible* was released, and it did not disappoint. When the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association awarded it top honors at the 2009 Christian Book Awards, it marked the first time that a Bible had won not only best Bible but also Christian Book of the Year. Given how well the English Standard Version (ESV) has been received as a translation by many evangelicals, it is not surprising that various editions continue to be produced. Two recent ESV editions—that have perhaps been overshadowed by the *ESV Study Bible*—are well worth mentioning.

The *ESV German / English Parallel Bible* combines the ESV and the 1984 German Luther Bible. As the KJV influenced the English language, so translation had a significant impact on the German language. The 1984 update to Luther’s classic translation, first printed in 1534, is widely used by German Protestant) readers today. According to historian Philip Schaff: “Luther’s version of the Bible is a wonderful monument of genius, learning, and piety, and may be regarded in a secondary sense as inspired. It was, from beginning to end, a labor of love and enthusiasm. While publishers and printers made fortunes, Luther never received or asked a copper for this greatest work of his life” (*History of the Christian Church*, vol. 7 [1888; repr., Hendrickson, 1996], 354). The German and English translations appear in parallel columns on each page, allowing for easy verse-by-verse comparison. Textual notes for both translations are included in the back. Given the amount of text, it is quite thick (2 in.), but the other dimensions (8.5 x 5.5 in.) make it a manageable size. The *Parallel Bible* is hardcover and includes a ribbon page marker.
This Bible can be a helpful tool for those who want to improve their German, especially students learning German for theological research. As with learning any language, vocabulary must be mastered. However, for those who have studied some German, reading through the *ESV German / English Parallel Bible* enables one to acquire German biblical vocabulary in context—a much more effective and preferable method than rote memorization of word lists. The other recent edition of the ESV is the *English Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha*, which includes the ESV translation with the Apocrypha in the back. The translation of the Apocrypha is based on the 1971 Revised Standard Version (RSV) Apocrypha (the ESV also used the 1971 RSV as its starting point) and was updated by a translation committee consisting of David A. deSilva (Ashland Theological Seminary), Dan McCartney (Westminster Theological Seminary), and Bernard A. Taylor (Loma Linda University). Besides the books customarily included in the Apocrypha, this edition also includes the books of 3 and 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151, which were added to the RSV Apocrypha in 1977. Though the entire text was compared to the original languages, the “main points of interaction,” according to the translation committee, included “updating archaic language, clarifying obscure words, removing inaccuracies, and bringing punctuation up to current American English standards” (1177). The textual basis is the Göttingen Septuagint, except for 4 Maccabees (translated from Rahlfs’s Septuagint) and 2 Esdras (translated from the 1983 Vulgate published by the German Bible Society). The *English Standard Version with Apocrypha* is hardcover and relatively slim in spite of the added content. In contrast to Roman Catholics, evangelicals do not, of course, recognize the Apocrypha as inspired or canonical. Unfortunately, for many
evangelicals, non-canonical translates as unimportant or something to be avoided. However, this was not the response of early Protestants. Martin Luther rejected the canonicity of the books of the Apocrypha, but he and other Reformers affirmed their value and encouraged Christians to read them. Sixteenth century translations of the Bible, like Luther’s German Bible and Coverdale’s English Bible, included the Apocrypha (along with a caveat that its contents were not equal in authority to the Scriptures). Even the venerable King James Version (1611) included it. The Apocrypha is a significant part of the Jewish literary and theological context out of which Christianity and the New Testament arose. Not only do we gain from it important knowledge of the history, culture, and piety of Second Temple Judaism, but we can also trace the articulation of theological views and the use of relevant words that are crucial to questions of biblical interpretation. For the serious exegete of the Scriptures, the Apocrypha is not to be ignored. I am glad to see this updated translation coupled with the ESV.

The nature of spirituality and its relationship to religion or religiosity:

In the first instance, it is important to understand the nature of spirituality and its relationship to religion or religiosity. Given that spirituality has traditionally been inextricably linked with religion and religiosity, it would be helpful for the sake of clarity to begin this review by understanding the term religiosity. Most simply religiosity is understood as religious spirituality as defined by Rossiter (2010a), "religiosity is a spirituality that is clearly referenced to religion" (p. 7), and also religiosity can be understood as a "measure of religious behaviour such as attendance at church/synagogue etc., frequency of prayer, engagement in a local community of faith" (Rossiter, 2010b). However,
there is a widespread lack of consensus regarding a clearly articulated definition or description for spirituality (Eaude, 2003, 2005; Harris, 2007; Hyde, 2007; Liddy, 2007; Roehlkepartain, King, Wagener, & Benson, 2006; Tacey, 2004). Some place emphasis on people's relationship with the Divine or Ultimate, others on their relationship with themselves, others and nature, while others emphasise the notion of transcendence. Overall though, all agree that spirituality cannot be explicitly defined as such, but rather tends to be described in terms of its attributes or characteristics (Best, 1995; Eaude, 2003; Hart, 2003; McCreery, 1994; Watson, 2006). One aspect of this lack of consensus is linked to the nature of the relationship between spirituality and religiosity or religion. For the purpose of this review, one way of perceiving the many diverse descriptions and definitions for spirituality is to place them between two ends of a continuum. At one end, spirituality is described within humanist or secular phenomena that do not include a religious aspect, such as belief in God or an Ultimate. At the other end, spirituality is more closely aligned with, or wholly described within, religion.

At the humanist or secular end of the continuum, spirituality is described inclusively, that is not synonymous with religion and understood to be able to find expression outside of, as well as within religion (Rossiter, 2010a, 2010b; Ryan, 2006; Tacey, 2000). Within this space all people are understood to be spiritual but not necessarily religious (Hay & Nye, 2006; Nye & Hay, 1996; O'Murchu, 1997). One example of a humanist approach to describing spirituality is that offered by the British Humanist Association (1993, as cited in White, 1996):

Religious believers and Humanists, theists on the one hand, agnostics and atheists on the other, agree on the importance of spirituality,
but they interpret it differently. Despite these different interpretations, however, all can agree that the 'spiritual' dimension comes from our deepest humanity. It finds expression in aspirations, moral sensibility, creativity, love and friendship, response to natural and human beauty, scientific and artistic endeavour, appreciation and wonder at the natural world, intellectual achievement and physical activity, surmounting suffering and persecution, selfless love, the quest for meaning and for values by which to live. (p. 34)

Put in another perhaps more succinct way, Meehan (2002) describes spirituality at this end of the continuum, "secular spirituality' seeks to find meaning and purpose in universal human experience rather than religious experience per se" (p. 292). Also within this space, spirituality is understood to be concerned with wholeness, connectedness or relationship with oneself, with others, with nature or the world, but not necessarily with God or an Ultimate (Eaude, 2005; Hay & Nye, 2006; Tacey, 2000).

At the other end of the spectrum, spirituality is described more exclusively, that is, within a religious understanding. Within this space spirituality includes not only all those characteristics associated with a humanist or secular description, but also at the heart of a person's spirituality is his/her relationship with the Divine or Ultimate. Indeed some such as Carr (1996, as cited in Eaude, 2005) suggest that spirituality is so intimately rooted in religion that to separate it from religion makes little or no sense. This sentiment is also expressed by Thatcher (1996) who claims that spirituality can only be taught within a faith context. Others, such as Fisher (2007, 2010) argue that one cannot be spiritual unless they have a relationship or connectedness with God. Within this understanding of spirituality there are those such as Lambourn (1996, as cited in Eaude,
2005) who reject outright the more inclusive humanist understanding of spirituality arguing that such inclusive descriptions of spiritual development "become so vague that they really constitute no more than good personal and social education" (p. 240).

These two understandings of spirituality - that is religious and secular - have also been distinguished as either 'religiously tethered' or 'religiously untethered' and when linked to education in spirituality are described as education 'from the inside' meaning from within a specifically religious context, and education 'from the outside' which refers to spiritual education outside of an exclusivist religious context (Alexander & McLaughlin, 2003 as cited in Best, 2008).

Sagberg (2008) suggests that within all accepted descriptions of spirituality there are two common elements. The first is our ability to transcend and urge towards transcending the immediate, transcending the present time, and transcending the actual place in a search for meaning and coherence in life. The second is a moral sense of what it is to be truly human. This sense may be expressed in religious as well as in humanistic terms. Others also emphasise the aspect of transcendence within spirituality (Tacey, 2000; Wong, 2006). Hay (1998) argues that spirituality by definition is always concerned with self-transcendence, which "requires us to go beyond egocentricity to take account of our relatedness to other people, the environment and, for religious believers, God" (p. 172). Another significant characteristic is described as an eternal yearning for something more or beyond ourselves (Tacey, 2000) or to be connected with something larger than our own egos (Palmer, 2003, as cited in Harris, 2007), which McCreery (1994) refers to as "spirituality as 'something other'" (pp. 96-97).
The universal search for meaning and identity are also attributed to spirituality (Adams, 2009; Tacey, 2000). The spiritual aspect of identity pays attention to who an individual really is, and their place and purpose in the world (Eaude, 2006, as cited in Adams, 2009). Fundamental to spirituality is the notion of relationship (Adams, Hyde, & Woolley, 2008; Hay & Nye, 2006; Nye, 1998; Nye & Hay, 1996) which Hay and Nye (1998, 2006) refer to as 'relational consciousness' while others use the term 'connectedness' (Tacey, 2000). According to Hart (2003, as cited in Moriarty, 2009) contributing to this dimension of relationality (as well as to sensitivity) are five capacities of spirituality which he names as "listening to wisdom, wonder, wondering, between you and me, and seeing the invisible" (p.48).

Whilst Bradford (1999) differentiates between secular and religious understandings, he adds a third facet of spirituality which he names 'practical spirituality'. His three facets of spirituality include:

1. Human spirituality: aspects which relate to the meeting of our human needs, that is, for love, security, reflection, praise and responsibility;
2. Devotional spirituality: our propensity for religious response and involvement;
3. Practical spirituality: a combination of human and devotional spirituality which represents the engagement of our combined spirituality with day-to-day living and being, including our contribution to the society in which we live. (p. 3]

encouragement and support; and responsibility and participation. Of particular significance within Bradford's three-faceted description of spirituality is his explanation of the relationship between human spirituality and devotional spirituality which he displays in the following ways:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SPIRITUAL</th>
<th>RELIGIOUS</th>
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<tr>
<td>i. being loved</td>
<td>becomes identity as a member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. feeling secure</td>
<td>becomes nurtured in tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. responding in wonder</td>
<td>becomes framework for worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. being affirmed</td>
<td>becomes empowerment for service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. symbolic sharing</td>
<td>becomes experience of community</td>
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Bradford sees the relationship between the religious and humanist understandings of spirituality as, "religion as transforming, giving order to and endorsing human spirituality" and says that "the factors listed as spiritual (in the above table) are fundamental to religious identity of all kinds" (p. 6). For Bradford, "a religion makes the invaluable contribution of providing a language, culture and tradition within which the significance of personal and ultimate issues can be articulated, shared and reflected upon" (p 6).

For Bradford spiritual development is:

the process by which our human spirituality is (i) established, (ii) grows in relationship with and concern for others, (iii) is extended into devotional spirituality, (iv) responds to questions and is supported by membership of a faith community, and (v) becomes integrated within a human-spirituality/devotional spirituality profile of a practical spirituality - or day-by-day inter-personal engagement - in a world for which one is both thankful and committed to contribute towards the struggle for good. (p. 15)
This understanding is a significant insight with implications for the nurturing of young children's spiritual and religious development particularly in steps (i) and (ii) wherein spirituality is established and grows. Such implications will be discussed more fully in Section 3: The nurturing of young children's spiritual development, of this review.

Another way of describing the relationship between spirituality and religion is offered by Tacey (2000):

Religion and spirituality thus face each other as paradoxical twins. Without religion, we have no organised way of communicating or expressing truth, no sacred rituals to bind individuals into living community. Yet without spirituality, we have no truth to celebrate and no contact with the living and no ongoing nature of divine revelation. We need both - form and substance - but each can attack and cancel out the other if the conditions are not propitious, (p. 28)

In this understanding of the relationship between spirituality and religion, Tacey seems to reflect the Latin origin of the two words. The word spiritual comes from the Latin word *spirare* meaning to breathe whilst the word religious comes from the Latin word *religare* meaning to bind together (Ryan, 2006, pp. 68-69]. Ryan (2006] explains that the connection between breathing and spirituality "is the idea of both being vital or essential aspects of life: breathing is the thing which gives life to the individual" (p. 69]. The notion or characteristic of spirituality being vital was emphasised by McCreery (1994] linking the spiritual with "being active, energetic, vibrant, vigorous and vital" (p. 97]. Grey (2006) Grajczonek Spiritual Development & Religious Education in the Early Years 8 emphasises the breathing notion of spirit connecting it to the Hebrew word *ruah* as it is used in Genesis 1:1. In Grey's understanding
ruah, brings the sense of the elemental, creative, formless energy, the energy of connection breathing life into all creatures (Gen. 1:1). This breath of life emerges from chaos and formless void, the tehom, or watery chaos/womb and the moist, watery depths, (p. 19)

Grey then connects this understanding with children's play, "children need order and structure, but their need for messy, creative play, reawakens us to the often swept-aside creative potential of relating to nature" (p. 19).

The Latin word religare meaning to bind connotes a more formalised or organised understanding than spirare and Ryan (2006) explains that the word came to refer to oaths made which would bind humans to the gods, "to be religious meant to bind oneself to a community of people by swearing oaths and making commitments" (p. 68).

It is important to both distinguish between the two terms spiritual and religious, and understand the nature of their relationship with each other. Ryan (2006) suggests that "whereas spirituality is a characteristic of all humans, religious means that the person's spirituality has been defined by the language and practices of a particular religion" (p. 60). Trousdale (2005) suggests that spiritual development can occur independently of religion but many find religion a path toward developing spirituality.

The understanding of the distinction and relationship between these two dimensions has implications for any framework that will inform religious education in settings such as Catholic child care centres and early years settings. These implications will be elaborated in Section 4 of this review. The following section summarises the key insights arising from the literature concerning the various understandings of spirituality, religiosity and their relationship with each other.
Young children's spirituality, spiritual and religious development

First, in Section 2.1, initial research into children's spirituality is considered, followed by in Section 2.2, an overview of research that investigated children's religious development. Following such research, the interest again centred on children's spirituality and their spiritual development and this research is reviewed in Section 2.3. Finally Section 2.4 summarises the key insights of this section of the review.

Early research into children's spirituality

Research into children's spirituality is an emerging field that "has developed from two prior streams of thought: the idea of an inherent spirituality, primarily reflected in research with adults, and religious concept development research" (Ratcliff & Nye, 2006, p. 473). Ratcliff and Nye go on to explain that the former idea of inherent spirituality, informed by earlier research studies investigating adult recollections of childhood spiritual experiences, refers to the understanding that spirituality is a biological aspect of the human person. Religious concept development research however, "studied actual children...emphasising children's thinking about religion rather than their spiritual experiences" (p. 473).

The earliest studies exploring children's spiritual and/or religious experiences came out of the Religious Experience Research Unit from Sir Alister Hardy (1965) who claimed that religious experience was a central feature of people's lives. Respondents to Hardy's research described experiences from their childhood that had significance on their lives.

Later studies focused more directly on young children's religious development. Goldman (1964, 1965) and Fowler (1981) both conducted studies that reflected Piagetian research (with its emphasis on cognitive development) into young children's religious development. As a result of
their studies, both imposed restrictions on what children could be taught, particularly Goldman's (1964) conclusions to limit young children's exposure to the Bible. He claimed that young children's inability to think abstractly placed limitations on their religious thinking, that is, their ability to understand religious concepts, metaphors and analogies. In later research Goldman (1965) proposed the term *religious readiness* and argued that religious education for young children should focus more on real-life experiences rather than complex religious concepts, which he concluded should be omitted from religious education curricula.

Fowler's (1981) research which relied upon the work of the developmental psychologists Piaget, Erickson and Kohlberg sought to unlock children's faith/religious/spiritual development. He proposed that faith develops in stages but the term faith is broader than religious faith; it is more about the *what* rather than the *how*. All people have faith in the sense that people can admit a trust or loyalty to a cause or causes beyond themselves. The two stages of Fowler's theory that are pertinent to early childhood are Stage 1 - Primal Faith and Stage 2 - Intuitive Faith.

During Stage 1, Fowler claims that significant aspects for our lives of faith "occur in utero and in the very first months of our lives" (p. 102). He goes on to explain that this primal faith forms ahead of language through the ritual of care and it is a pivotal time when trust is established and a "rudimentary faith" enables infants to overcome separation anxiety. This is a critical stage during an infant's development as it establishes the foundation on which later faith is built.

Stage 2 emerges with the acquisition of language and it is a significant stage when imagination, stimulated by stories, gestures and symbols, combined with perception and feelings, creates long-lasting faith
images. During this stage, young children copy and reproduce behaviour of closely related adults and their representations of God are formed by the children's experiences of parents and significant adults. It is a time when young children, although unable to reason, yearn for meaning and tend to make meaning by intuition and imitation. They are unable to differentiate fact and fantasy and their images are influenced by the media and family experiences.

According to Gottlieb (2006) both Goldman and Fowler posited a three-stage developmental model, two of which are directly related to early childhood:

1. Children pass through an intuitive stage in which they see religious identity as being bestowed by God or parents; prayers are conceptualised as recipes for gratifying personal desires; and interpretations of Bible are unsystematic, fragmentary and often inconsistent.

2. At around the age of seven religious thinking enters a concrete stage; children associate religious identity with particular forms of behaviour, kinship or dress, and prayer with specific concrete activities. They also interpret Bible stories concretely depicting God as a man or a power threatening specific action, often in response to specific transgression, [p. 244)

Such approaches based on Piaget have been criticised by Eaude (2003) who argues that we need to attend to our understanding of the term spiritual development. This notion with its strong links to the Piagetian notion of development leans towards 'unfolding' with its connotations of gradient of improvement, value and end-product (Priestly cited in Eaude, 2003).
Contemporary early childhood scholarship also criticises developmental psychology because of its emphasis on (i) the *universal* child, that is the *one* child as representing *all* children (James & James, 2004); and (ii) the child as *becoming* rather than *being* (Qvortrup, 1994) which in turn produces a poor or deficit image of child (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999, 2007). Dillen (2007) criticises such developmental stage theory for its construct of the child as the not-yet-adult.

Religious traditions also tend to criticise a developmental approach and assert that "children have specific qualities, which may be lost, or hard to re-gain, as adults, and that children provide models for adults to aspire to" (Eaude, 2003, p. 152). We need to understand children's spirituality as worthwhile in its own right, rather than as an immature or embryonic version of adult spirituality by adopting a range of metaphors including health and journey, as much as development and growth (Eaude, 2003). Despite such misgivings however, such research has provided some important insights into young children's religious development.

**Recent research into children's spirituality and spiritual development**

Recent research has focused more intentionally on children's spirituality rather than their religious development or religiosity. The impetus for such interest was initiated by Coles (1990) whose study conducted with children themselves, led him to conclude that children are interested in the meaning of life, understand life as a journey and are able to ask questions of ultimate meaning.

Research which followed on from Robinson's (1977) earlier work regarding children's spirituality, was conducted by Hay and Nye (1998). Hay and Nye's research into children's spirituality has perhaps been the most influential as it has initiated much scholarly interest and response
throughout the world. After many interviews with children themselves Hay and Nye claimed that all children have an innate spirituality; a spirituality that they are born with which is not dependent on any religious affiliation. They paid less attention to cognitive awareness and argued that the 'knowing' out of which religion grows is more akin to sensory or affective awareness (p. 144).

It was with this notion of sensory awareness that led Hay and Nye (1998, 2006; Nye & Hay, 1996) to propose that young children's spiritual sensitivity comprises three categories: (i) awareness sensing; (ii) mystery sensing; and (iii) value sensing. They claim that these categories are made available or visible through observing children closely as they go about their daily activities. Awareness sensing refers to those times when young children are completely attending to, or absorbed in, whatever they are doing and includes such aspects as here and now, tuning, flow and focusing. Mystery sensing includes children's sense of awe and wonder, as well as their imagination, as they try to respond to various complex issues or events, or phenomena. The place of imagination within children's spirituality is pivotal and according to Myers (1997) is linked inextricably with children's play as, "it is through play that children become adept at imagining. It is through imagination that we, as adults, can consider new possibilities and transcend our present reality" (p. 20). Value sensing can be observed in children as they respond to events, stories, experiences and so on of which they try to make sense or meaning in ways that Hay and Nye name as delight and despair, ultimate goodness and meaning.

A further significant aspect of Hay and Nye's research is the identification of another level or characteristic of spirituality which Nye (1998) named 'relational consciousness'. This relational consciousness was
observed during those times when children spoke about their awareness of all sorts of things but always in relation to someone or something: 'I-Others', 'I-Self, 'I-World' and 'I-God'...the child's awareness of being in relationship with something or someone was demonstrated by what they said and, crucially, this was a special sense that added value to their ordinary or everyday experience....In this 'relational consciousness' seems to lie the rudimentary core of children's spirituality, out of which can arise meaningful aesthetic experience, religious experience, personal and traditional responses to mystery and being, and mystical and moral insight, (p. 114)

A critical insight made by For Hay and Nye is the significant place that the notion of relationship occupies within children's spirituality.

Adams (2009) explains the difference between the social and spiritual aspects of children's relationships: whilst the social aspect is concerned with children's social skills required to facilitate their friendships, the spiritual aspect is at a deeper significant level wherein relationships are "considered in the context of how the child finds their place in the world which in turn shapes their identity" (p. 116). Myers (1997) places emphasis on children's relationships with significant adults in their lives claiming that children's development as whole human beings is dependent upon their relationships with people who love, listen, respond to and guide them.

Hart's (2003, 2006) research identified four types of experiences and capacities which he refers to as "ways of being in the world": wonder, wondering, relational spirituality, and wisdom. Hart (2006) suggests that these capacities "may help provide a multifaceted definition of spiritual life, demonstrating the diverse ways in which spirituality manifests" (p.
Hart goes on to suggest that not all four characteristics are necessarily present in any one child who can express his/her spirituality in an individualised way, "for example, one child's way of being may be especially emphatic or compassionate, whereas another may be more philosophical - asking big questions of life and meaning" (p. 165). Such an understanding resonates with Hay and Nye's (1998, 2006) notion of personal 'signature'.

Wonder according to Hart includes a "constellation of experiences that can involve feelings of awe, connection, joy, insight, and a deep sense of reverence and love" (p. 165). An interesting insight revealed in Hart's data was that the reports of wonder from children were "often indistinguishable from those of the great mystics of the world for whom wondrous moments provided a touchstone and a beacon for the spiritual life that was to come" (p. 165). Hart claims that childhood wonder can shape a worldview and even the course of one's life (p. 168).

Wondering for Hart is the asking of the big questions about life and meaning, knowing and knowledge, truth and justice, reality and death. He aligns this wondering with the notion of spiritual quest, that is, a way of entering dialogue with mystery, and in Fowler's (1981, as cited in Hart, 2006) terms "striving for the sacred". Hart contends that for far too long children's wonderings have not been taken seriously and remained unappreciated (p. 168).

Wisdom is displayed by children in the way they "often show a remarkable capacity for cutting to the heart of a matter, for accessing profound insight and wise guidance" (Hart, 2006, p. 170). He goes on to suggest that wisdom in this sense is not the amassing of information, an *entity*, but rather, it is an activity of knowing, perhaps most simply named
as a shift in a state of consciousness or awareness. In some moments children find remarkable insight as they access this contemplative knowing that complements the rational and sensory, (p. 171)

This understanding is similar to the 'knowing' to which Hay and Nye (1998) refer to as essential to religious development. Hart cautions us that when unacknowledged, children's wisdom can lead to a sense of alienation.

Relational spirituality is referred to by Hart as "between you and me" as he explains that "spirituality is often lived out in the intersection of our lives" (p. 172) and is recognised as love or compassion that begins as an experience of empathy and can lead to deep understanding. Relational spirituality argues Hart is "about communion - a profound sense of interconnection with the cosmos; connection - a sense of intimacy with someone or something; community - a sense of belonging to a group; and compassion - the drive to help others" (p. 174).

For Hart the foremost concern regarding enhancing children's spiritual life is to respect each child's innate spiritual capacities.

Significant research conducted with primary school students in Australia by Hyde (2008) built on Hay and Nye's earlier studies, and identified four characteristics of children's spirituality:

i. The felt sense, which Hyde describes as attending to the "here-and-now of experience" and refers to the "intensity and immediacy of awareness of the present moment" (p. 120). This description closely aligns with Hay and Nye's (2006) awareness sensing category. Within this felt sense characteristic, Hyde emphasises the relevance of a person's bodily awareness of situations, persons, or events, ii. Integrating awareness which relates to a person's ability to consciously attend to different levels
of an activity or activities at once in ways that pay attention to everything in which they are involved (pp. 121-122). iii. *Weaving the threads of meaning* is a characteristic that Hyde describes as children's ability to "draw on sense of wonder to make meaning of events and to piece together a worldview based around their attempts at meaning making" (pp. 122-123). This characteristic has close parallels to several theories that identify wonder and imagination as essential characteristics of spirituality including Hay and Nye's (2006) mystery sensing category, iv. *Spiritual questing* which Hyde describes as involving "a genuine searching for authentic ways of being in the world, and of relating to others" (p. 125).

Eaude (2009) claims that three characteristics essential to children's happiness, well-being and mental health include: (i) the search which is aligned with Hyde's notion of 'spiritual questing' and related to children's sense of identity, (ii) meaning and (iii) connectedness. First, the sense of search Eaude argues is linked to those existential questions children ask, "Who am I?, Where do I fit in?, Why am I here? - related to identity, place and purpose" (p. 189). The second aspect is that this search is a search for meaning which Eaude explains is always in retrospect because, "we understand events, if at all, only with hindsight" (p. 190). In other words the sense of reflection is essential to our meaning-making. An interesting aspect of Eaude's insights is his argument that a search for meaning necessarily involves trying to make sense of difficult issues such as suffering, pain and loss, and that too often this is the one aspect of children's spirituality that adults avoid perhaps in their overriding desire to protect children. However, Eaude argues that it is as important for children to try to make sense of such issues as it is for adults. The third aspect of children's spirituality emphasised by Eaude is connectedness, identified
and categorised into four elements by Hay and Nye (1998, 2006) as awareness of self, awareness of others, awareness of the environment, and (for some people) awareness of a Transcendent Other. Eaude goes on to claim that this aspect of children's spirituality involves them "recognising both their independence and interdependence" (p. 190). Eaude's argument is that children's resilience and sense of agency are reinforced and indeed children will flourish if given the chance to explore, to search, and to reflect on, all aspects of their spirituality.

**Nurturing young children's spiritual and religious development**

It is helpful to understand both the distinct natures of children's spiritual development and their religious development, as well as the nature of how they relate to each other. The first part, Section 3.1, elucidates the key research and findings concerned with the development of young children's spirituality, while Section 3.2 overviews research related specifically to the development of their religiosity. Finally Section 3.3 presents a summary of the key insights highlighted in the literature concerning the nurturing of young children's spiritual and religious development.

**Nurturing young children's spiritual development**

The intentional nurturing of young children's spiritual development is argued to be of the highest and most significant importance with many claiming that if young children's spirituality is not intentionally nurtured it will fade and be lost (Crompton, 1998; Eaude, 2003). In the context of early childhood Christian settings, many advocate that the starting point for religious education for young children should begin with, and seek to develop, their spirituality ahead of a more formal religious education (Hyde, 2007; Liddy, 2007; Nye & Hay, 1996). This argument is premised
on two contemporary realities: first, young children entering early childhood settings reflect our increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious society; and second, that an increasing number who are not practising members of their own faith communities, lack or have limited knowledge and language to engage with specific complex religious concepts. Indeed, although referring to the rich diversity of students who attend Catholic schools, nevertheless the following claim by Liddy (2007) also applies to young children entering all Christian early childhood settings, "...it leaves me asking if we can really undertake contemporary religious education unless we have a much richer understanding of the worldviews and meaning-making of the students in Catholic schools" (p. 6). In other words, as in other Key Learning Areas, teachers' starting points in religious education need to be with children's own experiences and understandings of life and relationships, their spirituality. Following is an overview of approaches that seek to nurture children's spiritual development that can be implemented in various contexts including childcare centres and educational settings. Such approaches provide a number of practical ideas, strategies, and activities that could contribute significantly to the design and development of a religious education framework that seeks to nurture young children's spiritual and religious development.

Bradford (1999) proposes by nurturing and satisfying children's fundamental needs -that is nurturing the "human spirituality" - can lead to the development of a more "religious (devotional) spirituality". The fundamental human-spiritual aspects of the essential needs of children according to Bradford include the need for: i. the experience of a profound quality of love; ii. a sense of ultimate security; iii. play, exploration,
humour, hope and wonder; iv. affirmation of others; and; v. encouragement to participate in and contribute to the spiritual and social well-being of their family, friends and community, (pp. 3-4)

These aspects can be simplified as love, peace, wonder, joy and relatedness. As noted in Section 1 (see p. 6) of this review, Bradford argues that these five essential needs or categories are fundamental to religious identity of all kinds. In other words, if a child's fundamental human-spiritual needs are not met or indeed not nurtured, they then have no way or means of establishing a religious identity. A critical implication that arises from Bradford's insights is that in the nurturing of these essential needs (which are fundamental to establishing a religious identity of all kinds) a pluralist approach that would acknowledge and respect all children's religious backgrounds or their diverse religiosities, would be enabled.

Bradford argues further that, "religious practice most certainly can help a child in his or her spiritual development by providing a framework of a common code, creed and pattern of worship which values and gives space to spiritual experience" (p. 8) and suggests the following as guidelines of what membership to a healthy faith community should offer: i. a network of kind and respectful relationships - a community of friends; ii. membership in a community, which has a sense of awareness about its place in the wider scheme of things; iii. an involvement with others who are reverently and thoughtfully open to 'signals of transcendence'; iv. participation in a community which is mutually affirming in experiencing the qualities of love, trust, wonder, and so on; v. roles for contributing to shared symbolic actions expressing the values of community, (p. 8)
Whilst a church affiliated child care or early childhood centre could not be considered as a faith community as such (given the diverse and pluralist nature of the children and their families in such settings), Bradford's guidelines nevertheless provide some practical and effective actions that would nurture young children's spiritual development.

From the research conducted by Hay and Nye (1998, 2006), Hay (1998) claims that spiritual education is the reverse of indoctrination and suggests that teachers have four major responsibilities: (i) helping children to keep an open mind; (ii) exploring ways of seeing; (iii) encouraging personal awareness; and (iv) becoming personally aware of social and political dimensions of spirituality.

(i) Helping children to keep an open mind as explained by Hay begins by gently encouraging or reawakening children's natural disposition to spiritual awareness. This involves teachers creating an environment that enables children's personal freedom and self-confidence. Hay argues that matters which can be closed off in the classroom or schoolyard but need to be openly addressed include: discovering a purpose in life, understanding their dependency on the community in which they find themselves, what it means to be just, facing the reality of their own death, the need for meaning, what it is to be a free human being and how to stand alone (pp. 163-165).

(ii) Exploring ways of seeing involves encouraging children to take different perspectives on issues and not feel pressured to conform to a particular way of seeing or illegitimating different interpretations. This would entail open discussion that seeks to counter narrow views (pp. 165-168).
(iii) Encouraging personal awareness which is related to relationship, relatedness or connectedness with one self. Time is needed to enable children to come to know themselves deeply, to be conscious of who each is: their gifts, likes, dislikes, responses to certain stimuli and so on; and how they do things, such as eat an apple (pp. 168-172).

(iv) Becoming personally aware of social and political dimensions of spirituality requires teachers' own consciousness of all that is the realm of spiritual education. Spirituality is expressed in and through a range of stories, rituals, symbols, art, architecture and so on and can be revealed in all subjects. A critical aspect of this awareness argues Hay, is to acknowledge that spirituality is not the preserve of religious education and indeed needs to be integrated in and across all disciplines and school life which in turn has both social and political implications for the school curriculum (pp. 163-175).

This same point has also been highlighted by Ryan (2007b), being religious is a condition known to children inclusively, regardless of religion, culture or social background. Adults need not be concerned with instructing children in the beliefs, narratives and practices of a particular tradition. In early childhood, the child's education and religious education are not distinguishable; whatever is education for the young child is religious education, (p. 39)

Both Hay and Ryan's insights suggest that given the natural and ordinary nature of children's religious or spiritual experiences in the early years, as well as the varied ways through which spirituality is expressed, an integrated approach which included all aspects of the curriculum would be an effective means of developing young children's spirituality.
Children have a range of ways in which they express their spiritual experiences or thoughts. Some simply describe the experience (Hart, 2003 as cited in Adams, 2009), others express through questions (Hyde, 2008 as cited in Adams, 2009), whilst others may be observed being absorbed in moments of awe and wonder (Champagne, 2001 as cited in Adams, 2009). Many such experiences are significant or profound and are carried into adulthood (Robinson, 1991; Scott, 2004 as cited in Adams, 2009). However, many remain silent about their experiences or thoughts for fear of ridicule, dismissal or embarrassment (Adams, 2009).

An important aspect in relation to enabling children's personal freedom in expressing their thoughts and experiences is their sense of feeling safe which in turn can contribute to "increased self-confidence and self-esteem which play an important part in shaping identity; identity being a key factor in spirituality" (Adams, 2009, p. 118). Therefore the learning and teaching environment not only needs to be open so that children feel safe to express their thoughts and experiences, but it also needs to be sensitive to the spiritual. Further, according to Adams teachers and adults need to reflect on their own spirituality and be attentive to the spiritual.

Teachers' roles are also key at the planning stage of a curriculum that seeks to nurture children's spirituality and are urged to not only attend to the cognitive domain in their planning, but also to both the affective (the felt sense) and spiritual domains (De Souza, 2004; Hyde, 2006). De Souza and Hyde (2007) argue that teachers need to go beyond the cognitive domain as it pays little attention to the development of spiritual qualities and characteristics, "in other words, do they (teachers) provide time and, perhaps, silence for inner reflection, for creative, imaginative and intuitive
responses, and for transformed action?" (p. 100). Such a stance finds alignment with Francis (1979) and Priestley (1981) both of whom advocated for an inclusion of the affective and sensory domains.

Hyde's (2008) own research conducted in Catholic primary schools in Australia, led him to make the following suggestions for nurturing children's spirituality in the classroom: i. Include the use of tactile and sensory or "hands on" activities in religious education which can engage children physically; ii. Begin with students' personally created frameworks of meaning. In other words begin by asking them what they think; the chance to wonder and imagine about events and happenings; and iii. Create space to nurture spirituality which might entail teachers removing themselves from the activity or space to allow students freedom of expression and authentic wondering, (pp.125-126)

A comprehensive and integrated approach which reflects and adds to several aspects noted in previous research (Bradford, 1999; Coles, 1990; Hay & Nye, 1998) is offered by Hart (2003) who describes his spiritual curriculum as one that is meant to: provide touchstones for parents and friends in the midst of a teachable moment with a child or even with ourselves. Instead of providing answers, these ideas tend to ask questions...that help to activate and open our life to the sacred, (p.174)

Hart's (2003) research into children's spiritual development led him to design a series of steps or what he calls the "Ten Sources of Power and Perspective" (pp. 171-209) which rather than being about following rules or commandments, offers instead, "ways of empowering that deeply felt impulse that is the innate spirituality of children" (p. 173).
Nurturing young children's religious development

The following approaches seek specifically to nurture young children's religious development and are specific to Christian faith sharing communities. It is important to bear in mind that such approaches are catechetical in nature as they seek to specifically develop children's Christian faith. These approaches presume that the child is a believer and therefore have limited relevance in settings that reflect more diverse child populations. Having noted this though, some might lend themselves to being adapted for wider contexts.

An influential person in the area of children's religious development was Maria Montessori (as cited in Berryman, 1992) who argued that children are not blank slates but rather are born with unique potential to be revealed. Her approach paid much attention to the actual environment which she saw as having significant influence on children. She advocated the use of sensory materials with which children play as a means of engaging them with others and with God.

Cavalletti (1992) a student of Montessori developed the program *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, which incorporates the use of three-dimensional materials (such as wooden figures) to tell the gospel parables to young children. Children then can play with the figures retelling the parables to themselves. In this way children are not only becoming familiar with the stories but also developing their inner religious language, an essential aspect argued by Bradford (1999) and Tacey (2000) to be an important feature that enable children to express their spirituality.

Berryman (1992), influenced by Montessori and Cavalletti, suggests the way of learning religion is through language. He developed the *Godly Play* program the goal of which is to teach children religious language,
parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action all of which would make them more aware of God's presence in their lives. A key feature of Berryman's *Godly Play* is the time given to wondering with children as they are invited and encouraged to wonder about many aspects of the scripture story at the end of its sharing. Berryman (1991, as cited in Ryan, 2007b) emphasised the importance for children coming to know and believe in God as loving and benevolent and in doing this they would be better able to face the existential issues such as death, freedom, aloneness and meaninglessness (p. 34).

Yust (2003) proposes that faith development must be in line with human development and offers Bruggemann's framework which emphasises the imagination as one way forward with toddlers' spiritual development. Again, along similar lines as Bradford (1999) and Tacey (2000), Yust claims that spiritual formation requires language acquisition of religious information but even more so, the stirring of the imagination. For him, the imagination helps toddlers conceive of the world and of life as being potentially different from the way it is.

Eaude (2005) discusses aspects or elements of spirituality that teachers can include in their classroom programs which include time and space for reflection, wonder and awe, and prayer. According to Bellous and Csinos (2009) four important aspects which religious educators might create within their educational setting to enable children to express their spirituality include an explicit education of four styles of expression: words, emotions, symbols and actions. They argue that these four styles characterise the expression of spirituality and further that they convey how people try to make the world a better place.
Each of these approaches pays attention to young children's religiosity as they seek to provide children with a language to articulate and express this religiosity. Many aspects within these approaches call upon and develop those spiritual characteristics or attributes previously explored including imagination, wonder and awe, creativity, and relationship.

**Implications for the design and development of a religious education framework**

Each of the three key themes of children's spirituality and their spiritual and religious development surveyed in Sections 1, 2 and 3 of this review, have implications for the design and development of a religious education framework for the Catholic child care centre and early years setting. These implications are outlined in the following sections.

**Implications of the nature of spirituality and its relationship to religiosity or religion for a religious education framework**

The literature regarding spirituality and its relationship with religiosity or religion has suggested two significant findings. First, that it is not possible to articulate either a clear singular definition for spirituality or the nature of spirituality's relationship with religion or religiosity as many describe both aspects in a variety of ways. Two immediate implications for the design of a religious education framework can be drawn from the literature regarding the description of spirituality and its relationship with religiosity:

First, it is important for the purpose of designing a relevant and appropriate religious education framework that seeks to develop young children's spirituality within a religious context in the early years, that a shared understanding or description is articulated for the *particular* or
specific context of that religious education framework. In other words, what understanding of spirituality does the framework use as its starting point and how does such a framework understand the relationship between spirituality and religiosity?

Second, it is not only important that the framework be responsive to, and relevant for, the development of young children's spirituality as articulated for that particular context, but also that the framework captures and reflects that context's philosophy, ethos and mission. In other words, for a religious education framework to be authentic it must be aligned with and reflect the organisation's aspired, articulated and lived mission or value system.

Implications of young children's spiritual and religious development for a religious education framework

Significant implications raised in the literature concerning young children's spiritual and religious development directly concern the Christian context of the early years settings. These implications insist that a religious education framework pays attention to how young children's spirituality is recognised and acknowledged. Explicit time and space need to be created in ways that facilitate, enable and activate children's freedom of expression. To what do we attend: the cognitive only, or do we include the affective and sensory awareness dimensions? Also the relationship between children's spiritual development and their religious development needs to be articulated clearly so that all children's diverse and pluralist backgrounds are acknowledged and respected in accordance with Church authority [Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988] as well as with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989).
Implications of nurturing children's spiritual and religious development for a religious education framework

The literature focuses on two aspects of nurturing children's spirituality:

The first is set within a secularist, almost neutral, view of young children's spirituality that seeks to nurture/develop those spiritual elements such as identity, belonging, relationship, wholeness, wonder and awe.

The second is to work within a religious framework to nurture/develop all of the above aspects of young children's spirituality within a Christian religious tradition/context which at the same time seeks to pay attention to, and respects, the other.

The development of a religious education framework within a particular religious tradition would need to consider the above two aspects carefully as the subsequent choice taken raises implications for the nature and purpose of such a framework. In other words, the aims or outcomes, as well as the elaborations and suggested pedagogies that seek to develop those aims and outcomes, need to align with the setting's focus.

Conclusion

Children's spirituality and their spiritual and religious development have been shown in the literature to be of central relevance and importance to who they are and who they will become. Their identity, sense of belonging and sense of meaning, as well as purpose in life are all linked to, and affected by, their spirituality and the ways through which that spirituality might be nurtured. Therefore, a religious education framework that pays attention to, and implicitly and explicitly seeks to nurture, all aspects and characteristics of children's spiritual and religious
development within the Catholic child care and/or early childhood centre occupies a significant place across all aspects of, and within, that centre.

It has been shown in this review that a fundamental function of such a framework would be to consider and incorporate the three themes highlighted in the literature. First, it would be necessary to articulate a clear and concise understanding of the notions of spirituality and religiosity and their relationship with each other relevant to the specific context, and that such an articulation would inform all aspects of the framework. Second, the framework would need to consider the characteristics attributed to children's spirituality, highlighting those that are of specific relevance to its context. And finally, the framework needs to incorporate an approach that encompasses appropriate pedagogical and environmental elements to develop those noted characteristics in ways that nurture and contribute to young children's spiritual and religious development.

All children are born with an innate spirituality and as they grow and develop it is vital that they are educated in the ways and means to not only express that spirituality, but also provided with the ways and means that will nurture and activate their spiritual and religious development thus enabling them to become whole persons.
References:


