

## **Religious Faith in Education: Enemy or Asset?**

Professor John Sullivan  
Frances Mary Lescher Building  
Faculty of Arts & Humanities  
Liverpool Hope University  
Hope Park  
Liverpool L16 9JD  
UK  
Email: [sullivj@hope.ac.uk](mailto:sullivj@hope.ac.uk)

## **Religious Faith in Education: Enemy or Asset?**

### Abstract

In this paper I hope to cast some light on the relationship between religious faith and education by a preliminary mapping of the field. There are three parts to the paper. First, I lay out the assumptions from which the rest of the paper builds. Second, I seek to identify possible links between religion and education. As a sub-set of this, I explore a range of ways that theology might relate to education. Third, as a step towards a more healthy relationship between education and religious faith, I offer reasons why the church needs the academy and the academy needs the church. In the light of a convergence of the concerns that I show are shared by religious believers and educators, it is suggested that religious faith in the context of education should be considered an asset rather than an enemy.

Religion has not disappeared from public life, as was once predicted. Indeed religious voices in the public square are in many ways more audible now than they have been for some time. A major area of dispute between religious believers and those wanting a more secular social environment is education. Does opening the door to religious influence in education undermine education in some way, thereby rendering religious faith hostile to real education? Is the surrounding culture so inimical to the promotion of religious faith that faith groups need to preserve faith-based education? Is it helpful or harmful to the promotion of liberal democracy to restrict the role of religious groups in education? Answers to these questions depend at least partly on how we envisage the relation between religious faith and education.

Relations between religious groups and the state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were often neuralgic as they tussled over education - its nature and purpose, its content and its control. The liberal democratic state, in the UK as elsewhere, sought first to complement and gradually to reduce the influence of the churches, in order to establish its own provision. In the early years of the twenty-first century we have witnessed a renewed salience of tensions over religious issues in education. Religion remains an area around which educational controversy revolves. Concerns for parental rights to bring up their children according to their own philosophy of life jostle with the needs of a pluralistic liberal democratic society to promote key values such as tolerance, equality, liberty and respect for different beliefs and ways of life. A desire to ensure that children are not trapped by educational decisions made by their parents and the expectation that critical and independent thinking will be fostered in school might appear to be in tension with the provision of a secure and stable foundational worldview and set of values, which can later, with growing maturity, be reflected upon and if desired, revised or rejected. One has to believe and value something in order to begin to make judgements about other beliefs and values; critical assessment of what comes our way does not occur in a neutral personal vacuum where we start with no affiliations or commitments. Pluralism seems to require respect for different ways of life (both religious and non-religious ways of life), while the flourishing of democracy seems to require that society (through education) promotes the values (and types of reasoning) that facilitate the operations of democracy. Yet, as philosopher of education Walter Feinberg (Feinberg, 2006, p.18) so acutely puts it: 'once a child is placed in one religious tradition rather than a different one, or for that matter in a nonreligious tradition, perspectives are set, horizons shaped, understanding

circumscribed, boundaries constructed, roles marked off, and a collective identity stamped.’ No wonder that the educational space seems such a sensitive one. Religious faith, in the context of education, can, according to one’s perspective, seem either an enemy to be kept at bay or an asset to be warmly welcomed.

In response to the perception held by some people, that religious faith is toxic, rather than potentially beneficial for education, my intention here is to suggest that the relationship between religious faith and education *can* be positive. In the first part I lay out the assumptions from which the rest of the paper builds. Second, I open up several different ways in which religion and education, and, in particular, theology and education, might relate to one another. Third, in aid of promoting a mutually constructive relationship between education and religious faith, I offer a wide range of reasons why the church needs the academy and then suggest that the academy, in turn, would be enriched if it was willing to learn from and collaborate with the church. I suggest that some of the concerns of the academy are shared by religious believers - and *vice versa* - and that religious faith in the context of education should be considered an asset rather than an enemy. The principal setting envisaged is higher education but many of the issues discussed have applicability across other sectors of education.

### 1. Seven assumptions

Before exploring immediately the possible relationships between religion and education, let me begin by being transparent about seven preliminary assumptions that I do not have space to argue for here. I trust that most of these will be uncontentious.

The first of these is that education (in any culture and context) is about the capacities of human nature: energy, emotions, intelligence, memory, will, conscience, wonder, imagination and hope – and how these are developed, oriented, ordered and integrated.

Second, I take it that the practice of education will inevitably be influenced by one’s view of oneself, the world or reality, truth, society, children, the kinds of knowledge one thinks worth passing on, how people learn, the needs of this time and place, of the worthwhile life, and of threats to such a life.

Third, our worldview plays a central role in both education and in religious faith. Our worldview influences what we take in, accept and notice, how we perceive messages being sent to us by various individuals and groups, what we care about, where and how we fit incoming lessons or messages into what we already hold, know and are committed to and what we do with it afterwards.

Fourth, from a faith perspective, there is the danger of cultural captivity. This can occur when there is too ready an assimilation to contemporary cultural norms and too little regard for the distinctive light cast by faith. For example, the salience of belief in progress, human autonomy, scientific reason, technology and social planning, together

with the relegation of faith to the private realm, can quite obscure insights offered by religious faith and revelation. Only too easily can believers find themselves seduced by some of the gods of our time, for example, academic success, sport, technology, league table positions, tolerance, feeling good, self-creation, shopping, constant connectivity and celebrity status. Education can protect people from forms of cultural captivity, including of course, religiously formed cultural captivity. It can serve, among other roles, to expose ideologies, where interests and power are covertly protected and promoted under the cloak of apparent rationality. Of course, education can also reinforce such ideologies. Religious faith can easily slip into forms of ideological captivity that distort or contradict its message. When this happens, religion can become blind to its own pathologies and irrational tendencies; it can be self-serving, abusive and concerned with institutional survival above all other considerations. Here education, not only in the faith itself, but also an education that is strongly buttressed in its independence and offering in secular institutions contrasting perspectives, can play a valuable part in exposing, challenging and calling to account religious ideologies.

Fifth, schools, colleges and universities are intermediate organizations. They provide a space between the nation-state on the one hand and individuals and families on the other hand. They can serve as a countervailing force between different types of pressures that might undermine human flourishing. Particular groups might be inward-looking and have narrow horizons; they have the potential to resist wider loyalties and shy away from a sense of commitment to the equality, dignity and liberty of all. Universal imperatives from the state (and from multinational companies) can erode local identities and practices, undermining in the process the building blocks of a wider sense of belonging. I simply assume here that educational institutions, as intermediary bodies in the way I have described, should be places with a degree of independence from both particular and universalising pressures, even if accountable to both; without some degree of independence, they cannot function properly *as* educational spaces.

Sixth, I assume there is a multiplicity of legitimate ways that one might understand the relationship between religious faith and education. I am not here advocating one particular model.

Seventh, I assume that there is bound to be some tension between educational imperatives and imperatives that focus more on promoting religious fidelity, though I do not believe that this tension is doomed to be destructive, even if this has happened in some cases in the past. The conversion, commitment, participation, belonging, surrender and dedication required by religious faith do not have to be embraced at the cost of neglecting the capacity for questioning, critique, detachment, testing, individual authenticity and appropriation expected of the educated person. Anthony Blair (who teaches leadership studies at Eastern University, Philadelphia, not our former Prime Minister) says that the ‘twenty-first century is characterized by the intersection of two driving forces – a theocratic impulse, ... and ... an anti-religion posture that exceeds the theoretical neutrality of mere secularity’ (Blair, 2010, p.23). But, in my view, the choice we face is neither theocracy nor secularism. Strong religious convictions do not make toleration, inclusiveness and fair treatment for all impossible. As life-guiding, religious faith

provides a source of values and hopes, a basic orientation to community, a story and a tradition within which one can learn how to develop one's gifts and character, and within which one is supported in rehearsing how to share one's life projects with and for others, inside and outside the faith community. It is not part of my case that one cannot learn how to do these things outside of religious faith. Nor am I claiming that religious people do these things or develop these qualities, better than others. Perhaps this seventh assumption of mine, that there is an alternative to both theocracy and secularism and that we do not have to choose between them (because religious convictions can be combined with many of the qualities required for the flourishing of liberal plural democracies), is more contentious.

## 2. Links between religion, theology and education

Any attempt to suggest that religious faith and education can have a positive relationship might face a number of objections. Education is about liberating the person from his or her present and particular cultural location and human inheritance. It is about equipping them to make their own decisions about worldview, lifestyle and affiliation. It is about developing critical thinking skills. It should provide each person with a capacity to question and to distrust, inexorably, all authorities, religious, social, political, cultural, (including, of course, their own). It should make people open-minded, always ready to treat truth as provisional at best and ready to jettison such provisional 'truths' in light of new evidence. It must avoid, at all costs, closing down questions, doubts and issues, or implying in any way that some issues are beyond discussion, that they have already been decided in any irreversible way. Rather than embedding people in particular positions and affiliations, education should develop an appreciation of diversity and a capacity to enter with ease into multiple perspectives. It should give people the confidence to be creative in their selection from the cultures around them, and it should privilege individual ownership, authenticity, originality, innovation over communal belonging and its associated disciplines (and the benefits claimed for such communal belonging). It should maximise tolerance of and respect for alternative lifestyles in service of greater freedom for all. While promoting individuality, self-expression and a strong sense of self-worth, it should, at the same time, induce a proper caution and humility about our grasp of any truth, if such a truth is tenable within the relativity of cultures and the flux of time.<sup>1</sup>

If education is conceived of in this way, then attempts to convert, evangelise, catechise or form others in faith can appear as a threat. Such attempts may come across as seeking a premature commitment. They may seem too confident in the truth being advocated. Religious believers may appear too judgemental about those who do not accept this truth. The faithful may seem to want to embed people in particularity, in particular practices and communities, in such a way as to trap them, to disable them from a more appropriate universality. Formation in faith may ask for a surrender of self that is demeaning of human dignity. It may attribute far too much importance to authority (biblical, ecclesial), thereby undermining individual freedom and inviting oppression. It may so prioritise fidelity to tradition that it fails to address contemporary needs and renders itself

irrelevant. It may pay insufficient attention to the diversity of views (and situations) and to objections to its teaching, leading to narrow vision, tribalism, sheep-like acceptance, complacency, self-righteous attitudes, condemnation of those who differ and exclusive practices that do not promote human flourishing.

While all this *can*, sadly, be true in some, perhaps in many, cases, it certainly does not have to be so. It is possible to try to communicate religious faith without slipping into coercion, threats, harassment, psychological bullying, manipulation and invading freedom; one can propose a faith perspective in ways that are respectful, transparent, honest and gentle, just as one can do so without these qualities. Neither education nor religions have lived up to the best they can be. It *can* be the case that education and the communication of religious faith come across as radically different activities, deeply opposed, in spirit and in practice, to one another. Yet, they can also be mutually reinforcing rather than incompatible, and mutually beneficial rather than hostile to one another. Despite the fear that to allow faith into educational arenas might ‘open the door to all sorts of educational viruses that congregate under the heading of indoctrination’ (Nick Spencer, in Cooling, 2010, p.8) this does not have to happen; nor does religious belief inevitably act as ‘irrelevant, toxic clutter’ (Cooling, p.14). Instead, it can serve both as a resource provoking insight into the depths of the human condition and as offering an alternative to many contemporary assumptions that should not too automatically be taken for granted, especially if we wish to stimulate critical thinking.

One can seek to understand the relationship between education and religious faith in different ways. These will include historical, philosophical, theological, psychological, political, social/cultural and pedagogical dimensions. Let me briefly refer to the first four of these, as examples of possible ways of reflecting on how religious faith and education relate to one another. A historian could explore the record of how in the past religious groups have influenced the provision of education more generally and how they have educated their people in matters of faith in particular and also assess to what extent the legacy of past influence still operates and with what effects. Here one could trace the influence of religious faith on the curriculum of educational institutions, on tools and techniques for learning, and on the formation of teachers. A philosopher might analyze the key concepts that map out the relationship between education and religious faith, for example, in considering such topics as the nature and sources of knowledge, the purposes of education, the role of teachers, instruction, authority, freedom, indoctrination, the rights of children, parents, teachers and the state, and so forth. A theologian might focus on the nature of revelation, the central educational messages of the gospel, or the (educative) mission of the church. Alternatively, he or she might articulate the basic grammar of the Christian faith, a Christian anthropology that influences how we envisage learners (and teachers), develop a sacramental perspective that illuminates the curriculum or suggest elements in a spirituality that should inform educational practice. A psychologist might turn our attention to the springs of motivation, to the unfolding of human development at its various stages, or to the factors that encourage learners to be open to or resistant to learning. Alternatively, she or he might investigate the coping strategies employed by children, young people and adults in their mutual interaction in educational activity.

I do not intend to go down any of these routes. Instead I want to do something much more limited. My aim here is to offer, very sketchily and schematically, merely a preliminary outline of possible connections between religion and education.

Links between religion and education may lie in the content of what is taught, the values that are transmitted, the fundamental purposes that undergird and that orient the educational enterprise, the personnel who play key roles as teachers or via the structures and agencies set up to ensure delivery – most likely, through a combination of several of these. More particularly, in the case of Christianity – still the religion that has most influenced education in the UK, in Europe, in the USA and in Australia - links between the church and education also include content, goals, personnel and institutions, as well as both the methods of teaching and the media being deployed.

Although religious faith goes beyond its theology, theology, in the case of Christianity, is the form that intellectual reflection on the faith takes: reflection on the sources of the faith, its coherence, its self-understanding, its defence against criticisms, its rules of interpretation and its interface with other forms of thought. Inevitably, for Christians, theology and education should be related; otherwise incoherence would be built into how the endeavours of theology and education were envisaged and carried out. Here I summarise three different ways of mapping out the range of possible relationships that pertain between theology and education.

One useful classification of the relationship between theology and education has been provided by Sara Little. Here I draw upon a summary of her analysis, as given by James Riley Estep (Estep, Anthony & Allison, 2008, pp.29-30). Little offers five ways of relating these two activities. First, theology might be treated as a source, providing the content of what is taught in education. Second, theology might be drawn upon as a resource in a situation where education as a social science has implicit goals and learning theories that are determinative of both structure and content, but where theology could play a supportive role by helping meet goals or to provide a broader perspective or to assist in interpreting experience. Third, theology might act as a norm. If this is the case, various subject areas are selected and interpreted in relation to theological formulations. Here theology is the filter through which other subjects are taught. Fourth, education, as a practice, might be interpreted as a way of doing theology (as compared with other theological ‘languages’ such as liturgy or service). According to this view, when one engages in critical reflection on the meaning of experience (conscious of God’s presence), one is theologizing. Here theology is the product of education. Fifth, theology and education can operate in a dialogue. Here they are viewed as separate but related disciplines, each with its own special contribution and functions; each draws on a cluster of related disciplines from which it utilizes appropriate contributions. Mutual interaction and interdependence would be signs of such dialogue. Estep adds a sixth possible type of relationship between theology and education. This would be a negative relationship, where theology is considered irrelevant to education.

In a different classification exercise, Professor John Hull presents five possible links between theology and education (Hull, summarised by Estep, in Estep, Anthony & Allison, 2008, p.31). First, theology might be both necessary and sufficient for an understanding of education; in this case there is no need for the social sciences. Second, theology might provide a necessary but not sufficient understanding of education; in this case, the social sciences are also necessary. Third, theology might provide a sufficient but not a necessary understanding of education; other belief systems might also offer sufficient accounts of education; in this case, theology is not necessary, but provides an optional extra perspective. Fourth, theology might provide a possible and legitimate understanding of education, but one which is neither sufficient nor necessary; in this case, the presence of theology should be minimal. Fifth, and here there is a parallel with Estep's mention of a possibly negative relationship: theology might be thought of as an impossible and illegitimate way of understanding education; in this case, it should have no contribution to offer.

The relationship between faith (and theology) and learning has thus been interpreted in various ways. My third typology comes from Anthony Blair who offers a slightly different analysis from those of either Sara Little or of John Hull (Blair, 2010, pp.56-7). Blair refers to four models: convergence, triumphalism, values-added (sometimes called 'separate spheres') and integration. 'The "convergence model" in the nineteenth century perceived no distinction or conflict between knowledge received through revelation and that received through other epistemologies' (Blair, 2010, p.56). This model assumed that the knowledge that is gained via revelation and that gained via one or other scientific discipline were mutually confirming' (Blair, p.57, quoting Hamilton and Mathisen, 1997, p.268). In contrast to this expected harmony between faith and learning, some adopted a triumphalist stance. This triumphalism 'took both secular and Christian forms, as proponents on both sides of the divide sought to discredit the truth claims of the other' (Blair, 2010, p.57). Such triumphalism is reflected in two unsatisfactory ways of relating faith to education. In one, religious faith dominates educational processes, and in doing so, damages education and at the same time undermines the quality of faith being promoted. In the other, educational considerations filter out religious concerns, prevent religious ways of 'reading' the world, downgrade religious knowledge as unworthy of study and remove religious practice from educational environments. Those in favour of such an approach might argue that faith must be bracketed out in a school or university context, retained for the private sphere of life, but has no currency in the public domain. In this view, church and state, faith and the public life of society, are kept strictly separate. Here practices of domination – either in favour of religious faith having a role in education – or in hostility to it exercising such a role – lead to the remedy of divorce between them being adopted, as a way to preserve the peace.

The third model as described by Blair has two labels, and is known either as 'values-added' or as a 'separate spheres' model. The 'values-added' label is used when it is assumed that learning is 'a neutral activity that is indistinguishable from one environment to another, and one's faith commitment is played out in "sacred" activities, such as chapel services, missions or service projects, personal relationships, and other non-academic activities, which are regarded as supplements to the core academic mission' (Blair, 2010,



p.58). Here value is added to learning by extra-curriculum activities, but the actual learning itself remains untouched (in any direct sense) by faith considerations. When the term ‘separate spheres’ is used, it is assumed that there cannot be a conflict between secular and sacred knowledge ‘because they occupy different spheres. The two kinds of knowledge do not change each other in fundamental ways, but they can enrich each other’(Blair, 2010, p.57, quoting Hamilton & Mathisen, 1997, p.270). Here there is a radical distinction between different types of knowledge, one that entails a real separation between them, with no interaction taking place ‘across the boundaries’ of one discipline and another. In contrast, with the “integration model” ‘one’s faith is expected to inform both the theory and practice of one’s discipline’(Blair, 2010, p.58). Blair has in mind Arthur Holmes and Nicholas Wolterstorff as examples of integrationist approaches, but there is a large body of literature on integration of faith and learning (e.g., Harris, 2004; Jacobsen, 2004; Litfin, 2004; Downey & Porter, 2009). Here significant influence by religious perspectives is expected to be exerted on how knowledge is approached in the mainstream curriculum. There are various versions of how such integration might be understood, stemming from different theological emphases. Not least among these are differences arising from Protestant and Catholic interpretations of Christian faith, though in reality the picture is more nuanced than this over-simplified binary divide.

No doubt some of these theological emphases lead to more healthy approaches to education than others. At the same time, the outright rejection of theological perspectives being brought to bear in education can leave uncontested some assumptions that are embedded in our culture and which should at least be subject to scrutiny. For example, common assumptions about knowledge that might be encountered include the following. First, there can be an unwarranted confidence in our capacity to know; this can slip into arrogance. Second, some assume the dispensability of all authority other than our own, mistaking overstanding for understanding, as if we should not expect to stand in the light of, or submit to the requirements of some ‘external’ authority. Third, others expect a high degree of individualism in the learning process, forgetful of our radical interdependence. Fourth, it can be taken as read that the occasion in which we learn the truth has merely an incidental character, as if it did not matter who we are learning with, the company we keep, what else we are learning at the time and how we are conducting our lives. Fifth, these assumptions are frequently linked with the expectation that increased, open-ended and constantly revisable choice is the goal or the fruit of education. This leads to a shying away from the notion that education might prepare us for long-term commitments, for decisions that bind us, and a recognition that, as we open some doors or embark on some paths or become one kind of person, other doors, other paths and other ways of being become closed to us. Stanley Hauerwas vividly expresses this danger when he says: ‘students are inscribed into capitalist practices in which they are taught that choosing between ideas is like choosing between a Sony or a Panasonic’ (Hauerwas, quoted by Rengger, 2004, p.236). Making individual choice and autonomy absolute or fundamental values can have unfortunate side-effects. It can prolong indecision and the right to drift among students, undermining the capacity for commitment. It can, through lack of appreciation for the role played in life by limits, create insecurity and anxiety rather than increase a sense of freedom (Coq, 2007, pp.38-9). It can also end up by destabilizing institutions and threatening democracy itself (Coq,

2007, p.43). In the light of my (admittedly theologically motivated) critique of these assumptions, might the relationship between religious faith and education be considered in a more positive light?

### 3. Church-Academy Collaboration

Religious faith is promoted by the church and education's highest standards are promoted in the academy. The church and the academy might sometimes seem to be enemies, but they need each other. There are potential shortcomings on both sides if either works in isolation from the other. Collaboration benefits both.

Why does the church need the academy? How might a positive relationship with the academy help the church? I suggest nine ways in which the church can benefit from such a positive relationship. First, the academy can help the church find out how to become relevant to the questions of the day and current ways of thinking. Second, it can help the church to develop a greater clarity about her message. Third, it can prompt (even demand) greater honesty and humility, pressing critique and awkward questioning and evaluation of the gaps between claim and reality. Fourth, the academy can teach the church about learning, how the processes of learning work, what influences learning, what enhances it, or what damages and inhibits it. Fifth, the academy can help the church in the task of developing connectedness and depth across different areas of knowledge and the multiple dimensions of life. Sixth, without educational input into the life of faith, Christians can develop in an imbalanced way, so that academic maturity takes place while faith remains relatively static and immature. This is often revealed in the way interview questions are answered by many candidates for teaching and school leadership posts. They can display considerable and sophisticated grasp of many professional issues related to teaching and to leadership, but often then slip into making superficial and simplistic comments when their understanding of the bearing of faith is probed. Seventh, the church needs the academy to assist it in avoiding the offering of poor arguments and weak presentations on behalf of faith. Eighth, the church needs the academy in order to be challenged to appreciate the wisdom of those outside its borders, thereby being willing to learn from them and to reach out more inclusively to those who are different in any way. Finally, the church needs the academy's contribution to ministerial formation and education, as well as in the school and university sector, if it is to provide formation appropriate for professional service in a complex world.

Does the academy need the church? I believe that there are four reasons for claiming that it does. First, the academy needs the church in order to increase the range of its debating partners – and therefore to extend its capacity for communication. Second, the academy needs the church to ensure it addresses fundamental questions about life and death and human flourishing – to ensure it engages with existential seriousness. Third, the academy needs dialogue with the church (and faith communities more generally) to ensure that it encounters comprehensive mega-narratives that offer alternatives to current secularism. Fourth, the academy needs dialogue with the church as one of the ways to avoid

forgetting the past and the potential sources of human wisdom made available via living traditions.

Although the picture I have painted might at first sight seem to show that the church needs the academy more than the academy needs the church, it does also suggest that there is real mutual gain when they collaborate. There are many areas where cooperation may be advantageous and serve human flourishing, provided that each 'partner' takes the other one seriously and recognises in the other expertise it does not possess itself. For instance, plural societies seeking to promote respect for diversity could learn something from the painful and not always productive experience of ecumenical endeavours carried out within the churches at the same time as the churches could learn from the many secular initiatives to promote a more inclusive society. In addition, the concern, both of the churches and of secular educators, to reach out more effectively to the communities they serve and to secure widening participation (in responding to the message of the Gospel and in accessing learning opportunities respectively) might be more effectively pursued by cooperation rather than by mutual denigration. Furthermore, lifelong learning has more chance of becoming a reality if a multiplicity of settings and types of learning, formal and informal, are provided, and if these are related to the key moments and major challenges of life; the church has long experience of being close to people from cradle to grave.

Another area where there might be congruence of aim, even if differences of emphasis and approach, might be in promoting the development of a critical-prophetic capacity in believers and learners. It follows from the Gospel, but also from secular critical pedagogy, that a prophetic, unmasking or prophetic role should be part of the armoury of the educated and the faith-informed. Here hypocrisy, ideology and idols should all be exposed. Yet another factor is that complex real-world problems require multiple perspectives and approaches; if the churches and educators in general are to promote the common good, partnership rather than hostility between them would help.

Then there are two other considerations that might encourage at least occasional collaboration rather than constant mutual opposition between religious believers and educators. First, as intermediate institutions, placed between state control and atomistic individualism, churches (and, of course, the organising bodies of other faith communities) and schools, colleges and universities have similar interests, both in preserving a space for their own sphere of influence, free from too much intrusion from government, and in fostering a sense of belonging and in mobilising commitment. Second, religious believers and educators have it in common that they care about truth. It is unlikely that any one person or social agency can claim with any credibility today to possess the fullness of truth. It is incumbent on all the faithful and on all educators that their search for truth is relentless and unending, patient and resilient, inclusive, open and unrestricted in the range of epistemologies being relied upon – going beyond a simple reliance on authority, rationality, empiricism or intuition. Since both secular educators and religious believers are in the 'truth-seeking business', here there is surely scope for mutual learning and cooperation.

In some of the areas outlined in the last few paragraphs, the need for collaboration might be felt more strongly on one side rather than on the other; in some cases the need might be felt on both sides; in some cases the need for cooperation might be interpreted differently. But cumulatively, I hope I have offered a host of reasons why collaboration, rather than separation, isolation, or hostility, might seem desirable. Although it would be wise for religious believers and for secular educators to continue to exercise caution about the assumptions, goals and approaches of their partners in any collaboration, such reservations should not prevent them from working prudentially together for the common good, each being, at least potentially, an asset rather than an enemy for the other.

### Note

---

<sup>1</sup> This and the following two paragraphs draw from my chapter 'Education and Evangelisation' in *Learning the Language of Faith*, edited by John Sullivan (Chelmsford, Matthew James Publishing, 2010).

### References

- Blair, A (2010) *Church and Academy in Harmony* (Eugene, Oregon, Pickwick Publications).
- Cooling, T (2010) *Doing God in Education* (London, Theos).
- Coq, G (2007) Quels sont les enjeux et les conditions d'un engagement dans l'éducation aujourd'hui? [What are the stakes and rules of engagement in education today?] In *Pour l'éducation et pour l'école. Des catholiques s'engagent*. {For education and for the school. Catholics commit themselves} edited by C. Dagens (Paris, Odile Jacob), 37 - 49.
- Feinberg, W (2006) *For Goodness Sake. Religious Schools and Education for Democratic Citizenry* (New York, Routledge).
- Downey, D. & Porter, S (eds) (2009) *Christian Worldview and the Christian Disciplines* Eugene, Oregon, Pickwick Publications).
- Estep, J.R., Anthony, M.J. & Allison, G.R (2008) *A Theology for Christian Education* (Nashville, TN, B & H Academic).
- Hamilton, M.S. & Mathisen, J.A. (1997) Faith and Learning at Wheaton. In *Models for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Richard T. Hughes & William B. Adrian (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans), 261 - 283.
- Harris, R (2004) *The Integration of Faith and Learning* (Eugene, Oregon, Cascade Books).
- Jacobsen, D & Jacobsen, R (2004) *Scholarship & Christian Faith* (New York, Oxford University Press).
- Litfin, D (2004) *Conceiving the Christian College* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans).
- Rengger, N (2004) The Idea of Politics in the Christian University. In *The Idea of a Christian University* edited by J. Astley, L. Francis, J. Sullivan and A. Walker (Milton Keynes, Paternoster).