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Authority, Religion and
Education Today

In a religious context the word 'authority' is used in various ways. In this, the first of the papers read at the recent VI symposium ("Communicating the Christian Faith Today", 22 May, 1976 Mr Newby analyses its various meanings. He enquires in particular as to the place of authority in religious education, in which connection he discusses, in some detail, the views of Professor Ninian Smart.

Whilst the literature on the question of authority in religion is undoubtedly vast, I wonder if much has been said in the contemporary situation regarding the significance of 'authority' in religious education and communication. There is no doubt that the term has various uses in the context of religious faith and I intend to separate out some of these with a view to considering their importance in religion. I then intend to consider some of the ways in which the appeal to authority in religion has been defended, and conclude that such defences do not carry enough weight to warrant their use as a philosophical basis for christian education. This leads me to consider the phenomenological concept of religious education that has been largely influenced by the work of Professor Ninian Smart. His work reflects a radical change in christian attitudes to world faiths, for his main contention, that true dialogue between them is the only reasonable way ahead, would seem to be, at first sight, anti-christian and opposed also to commitment to any known form of religious expression. In other words, the 'dialogue' view¹, coupled with 'methodological agnosticism'² represents strong opposition to most popular concepts of the authority of Christ, or, indeed, the authority of the Koran or Buddha.

It is then, my task to consider the place of authority in religion, the rationale behind iconoclastic approaches to truth in religion which are epitomised by Smart's work, and the implications of my conclusions for teaching religion in school.

Throughout this paper I distinguish between developed religion and primary religion. Developed religions have a theological language and logic which is analysed in terms of various dimensions with which Smart has made us familiar.³ Primary religion refers to a basic awareness of the transcendent that lies behind developed religion and may not, in the individual, express itself through the latter. I think, for example, of Tillich's 'experience in depth', Otto's 'numinous' experience, or Maritain's 'intuition of being', all of which are instances of ultimate responses to life which may be distinguished from a variety of other ultimate responses, such as hedonism, egoism, humanism, or a sense of absurdity. Primary religious responses share a sense of 'significance-transcending-the-spatio-temporal'. The two most important of these appear to be the numinous and mystical experiences. Primary religion is, when considered in relation to developed religion, something of an abstraction in that it necessarily lies behind ritual and belief. It is the experience that is 'left' when interpretative elements have been abstracted. (Thus primary religion may be too analogous with Locke's 'unknowable somewhat' for comfort — an issue that does not directly concern us here.)

The concept of authority in religion

(1) 'Authority' is a term which can be used in the sense of 'the right to command or give an ultimate decision; the power or right to enforce obedience'.⁴ Such a usage includes both *de facto* and *de jure* authority within a social hierarchy. Closely connected with it is 'authorization' as delegated authority. Whilst this use is of sociological and historical importance in religion, it is not our primary concern.

(2) Secondly, there is 'influence'. Such authority may be within the sphere of personal relationships, academic activities or practical affairs. This usage likewise is of little interest to us since it is not specifically associated with religion. It is uncontroversial since it is rarely contrasted with 'having convincing reasons'. Such authority is earned usually by reference to these.

(3) Thirdly, and more relevant to our subject, is the idea of authority as a source of knowledge. Thus recent discussion has centred on the contrast between knowledge gained by reference to an authority and knowledge gained autonomously. Thus, those of us who are incapable of proving that " $1 + 1 = 2$ ", must accept the point on authority, that is, by the testimony of others.

(4) Fourthly, there are some activities that are defined by reference to authoritative sources, and therefore the appeal to authority is uncontroversial. Thus in legal studies most issues are settled in this way, and likewise in historical studies.

(5) However, a fifth use must be separated from this last one. Appeal to, for example, the Bible as an authority, is like it in that it is an instance of knowledge-claims that can, in principle, only be made by reference to a source held to be authoritative. For example, traditional Protestantism is defined by its appeal to the authority of the Bible, but in such a case the knowledge-claim is controversial. This is because religious truth-claims 'jump over the fence' in that they have implications for a number of activities in which the believer engages. They colour his whole outlook on life. Such appeals to authority are more the rule than the exception in developed religions, but we are observing a general tendency, certainly in educated believers, to reject these in return for a more defensible concept of authority. (I must, however, add at this point that certain philosophers of education appear to be unable to distinguish between religion and dogmatic appeals to a sacred written source⁵ and as a result call simply for teaching *about* religion.)

(6) Finally, there is a further use of 'authority' not covered by the other examples; one which lies at the heart of religious understanding and experience today. It can best be illustrated by reference to its appearance in the New Testament. Thus, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount we read that Jesus "spoke as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mt.7:29). The emphasis here is primarily on the conviction that the words of Jesus carried to the hearers. This was not only on account of their simplicity when contrasted with the complex system of laws taught by the scribes, but also on account of their existential appeal. They revealed a spiritual quality of living hitherto hardly imagined. It was an ethic not of outward observance to rules which must be learned and strenuously enforced by rigorous self-discipline, but an ethic springing spontaneously from one's love for God and vision of true happiness. The supreme emphasis in Jesus' teaching was a divine relationship of mutual self-giving necessarily manifesting itself in respect for, and service to, those made in God's image. This concept of authority is not simply a matter of words used, but also of an indescribable quality of the speaker. Whilst not explicit in the example given I think the passage quoted serves to distinguish this kind of authority from the second usage referred to above. This is a uniquely religious concept of authority, for the finality and sacredness of the speaker's words combine with an awareness of transcendence in the speaker. Such talk about the authority of Christ, or of any figure held to be divine or transcendent, is at the heart of religious experience. The Jesus of Galilee is the Christ of the Church.

An appeal to authority of this kind is less simply related to 'rationality' than is dogmatic insistence on the infallibility of a book or office, since it is in the final analysis type of intuited awareness or 'insight'. This intuition is not however 'blind' in the sense that one may intuit that there are twenty three matches in a box. It arises in the context of a religious tradition both historical and theological which prepares one for the awareness. It also arises in a cultural situation to which the teaching is particularly apposite. That is, it may not be entirely

an internal religious matter, for the authoritative power may be felt especially in connection with social, ethical and political teaching. Thus the teaching may be testable rationally and, to some extent, empirically.

The place of authority in developed religion

In developed religion there is always a metaphysical framework. In Eastern mystical religions the metaphysics may be concentrated on the subject of self-existence, the visible world, and transcendent states. To a varying extent there will be a metaphysics of the truly real whether as God or Soul. Even the pantheistic world-view *is* a world-view if it means anything at all. What then of religions that explicitly reject metaphysical speculations? Barthian Protestantism might be an example. If the veto on metaphysics entails also the non-existence of metaphysical implications, then the retreat into subjectivism is total, but even Kierkegaard could not talk of Christ without leaving a metaphysical trail. This feature of developed religion serves to distinguish it from primary religion, in that the latter involves no formulated truth-claims of an objective nature about the transcendent being, simply an awareness of "the spatio-temporal and more", to use Ramsey's term.

The presence of metaphysical truth-claims in developed religions renders the appeal to authority 'volatile', for not only do these truth-claims conflict with each other, they conflict with non-religious claims. Without such truth-claims, religions would lose their significance for the believers. The religious need is analysable partly as a need to orientate in the cosmos.

But is there not a degree of flexibility about the metaphysics each religious faith entails? Cannot the great traditions embrace each other as a result of dialogue and fresh interpretations? The difficulty is that Brahman, even the Brahman of the Gita, and the God of Christian Theism are conceptually different. Even if they were not, claims to ultimate validity on the part of the Judaeo-Christian revelation would surely be irreconcilable with the inscrutability of Brahman. The only possibility of reconciliation lies in a radical re-appraisal of the authoritativeness of the sacred books or historical experiences on which faith rest, in which case claims to exclusive revelation must be rejected. In that case, could any sense be made of revelation, and therefore of authority, at all? But perhaps the validity of elements in developed religions could be assessed by reference to criteria of a more objective and universal kind. This is the line along which Professor Smart's thought has travelled.

Rationality and christian authority

Education has come to be conceived of as necessarily (by definition) contributing to the increased rationality and autonomy of persons since it consists of "initiation into forms of thought and awareness which offer scope of reasoning and in which there is widely deemed to be good reason to engage"⁶. These forms of thought and awareness have been elucidated by Professor Hirst in his well known papers⁷ in which he lists the distinctive features of forms of knowledge. It would seem that religion is such a form since it has constitutive concepts such as 'god' 'soul' and 'salvation' which distinguish it from other forms of discourse; its logical structures and the functions of its language have patterns of their own; a unique blend of skills is required in developing religious understanding; and tests for truth are unique, that is, they cannot be applied to other forms of knowledge. Neither do those of other forms apply to religion. This is to say that religion is an autonomous subject. However, difficulty arises when *knowledge* in religion is claimed, as has been the case and still is the case in developed religions. For how could these claims to knowledge be justified except to those who have already accepted certain premises about authority which carry no weight with the unbeliever? This question cannot be dismissed as placing impossibly strict demands for justification of religious truth-claims, for such claims are overriding and universal in that they have implications metaphysically, ethically, aesthetically, and in most areas of living. The claim that God has a grand design in nature and human life must be reflected in the actual state of affairs in which Man finds himself; it must help him to make sense, not of God only, but of visible events. If religious claims were to speak only of "the wholly other", human interest would be totally lost. It is because the divine is by them related to the visible, to natural processes, to issues about values, that religious language arises in the first place. If religious claims were 'defused' by keeping them within logical bounds, that is, out of history, philosophy and ethics, controversy about their status would cease; but then who would think them worth discussing at all?

Whilst the issue of authority as between religions is important we do, then, consider the confrontation between religious claims and secularism to be equally crucial for education. The christian faith in particular has to justify its appeal to the authority of Christ so that accusations of irrationality can be opposed. (This is not, of course, the same thing as *establishing* truth by some sort of ontological argument.) A team of sportsmen value a victory gained in a foreign land far more than one gained at home. Attempts to gain such a victory, that is to justify the authority of Christ as by no means unreasonable, have been many:

(a) There is the approach that "all other ground is shifting sand". That is, faith in Christ is the only adequate alternative to rationalistic philosophy, mystic experience, existentialism, Marxism, etc. Thus one is left with no course but to "repent and believe the Gospel". Unfortunately this approach, taken no further than this, is its own undoing, for no more justification for faith in Christ is given than for faith in Marx's teachings. So why not just give way to total despair and a life of resignation to unbelief?

(b) Appeals to authority are often justified by reference to the argument that all our knowledge has a basis in authority. Therefore the search for truly autonomous knowledge is pointless. I am thinking of Karl Popper's claim that "quantitatively and qualitatively by far the most important source of our knowledge ... is tradition"⁸ and his argument that cognitive autonomy is no more than a grasp of the traditional methods of making and testing truth-claims, as well as the *awareness* that they are but traditional. A. M. Quinton, whose paper criticises Popper's view, also draws attention to the claim that "the instruments of criticism in whose possession cognitive autonomy consists are themselves provided by authority. We acquire from other people (i) the observation language which makes what might be called theoretically-usable perception possible, (ii) the logic with which bodies of beliefs are criticised and developed, and (iii) the methodology which specifies the degree of support given to theory by observation".⁹ Quinton shows that testimony as a source of knowledge must be reliable, and does so partly by reference to a transcendental deduction. My point in referring to his paper is that it serves to show how the term 'authority' can be broadened enough to become meaningless so that it overlaps and even becomes synonymous with autonomy. Thus to speak of belief in one's self-existence or in material objects as 'held on authority' becomes nonsense. Even if this were so, such 'authority' would be totally unlike the religious appeal to authority. It would not be a controversial concept, for one thing, since all who wish to seek rationality would have to bow to it.

(c) Thirdly, the authority of Christ is justified on grounds of the intrinsic 'glory' or presence of the divine in his teaching. Thus the authority of Christ is claimed to be immediately known in some way. This is roughly equatable with an existentialist defence of Christianity. The difficulty with this line of defence is that it requires some sort of 'leap of faith' or, if that is too active a metaphor, 'opening the door of the heart', for it is not communicable to the unbeliever since it requires unreasonable weakening of his demand for 'good reasons'. It would not be fair to say that

it is totally subjective since it is an experience shared by a group of people, and can be discussed meaningfully between them, but a man who has illusions about being Napoleon may have a meaningful discussion with a woman who thinks she is Josephine.

Attempts to class religious immediacy with that of sense-data, self and other selves fail because, as H. P. Open says, unlike these, "God is not a presupposition of rational discourse".¹⁰ His respect for intuitive awareness of God is not, however, diminished thereby, and his chapter on intuition serves to show the complexity of this subject. He argues that the christian believer relies on "intuitive insight" mediated by "signs" such as in the Bible. This does not give us the sort of rational basis that christian authority-claims need if they are to gain educational respectability, and by itself renders them no more worthy of respect (and no less worthy) than those of other religions.

At this stage, I conclude that the authority of Christ and his teaching can at best be demonstrated to be non-rationally held rather than irrationally held. It is in principle possible that the christian revelation is the Way for Man, but without willingness to reappraise biblical teaching about the *exclusiveness* of the revelation in Christ and the *sole sufficiency* of that way for salvation, it will not be possible objectively to relate Christianity to other faiths. The Christian who respects the search for good reasons will certainly believe in the demonstrability of the supremacy of his faith. He may not sacrifice this belief in order for dialogue to proceed, but is certain that, unless it does, the authority of Christ will certainly never carry weight in dialogue with the non-religious sceptic.

Religious education and religious authority

We have thus far seen the centrality of appeals to authority in developed religion and the problem of justifying them to the unbeliever, which we looked at chiefly in connection with the christian faith. We noted that this problem is bound up with that of relating the claims of Christianity to those of other religions, and that an impressive display in that dialogue would help alleviate the difficulties of displaying the relevance of Christianity, and of religion in general, to people in western society.

For dialogue between religions to proceed and the significance of religion for the believer to be understood an objective approach to the study of religion is necessary. Ninian Smart's work in this area is most important, especially as his methods form the basis for much current teaching of religion in schools.¹¹ His research team recommended a phenomenological approach on the grounds that it "transcends the (merely) informative" by using tools of scholarship "in order to enter into an empathic experience of the faith of

individuals and groups."^{12a} The learner views the nature of authority in faiths in an objective way by "imaginative self-transcendence"^{12b} This entails holding one's own beliefs, or lack of them, in suspension by endeavouring to be neutral and to see things from the inside. Smart calls this "bracketing" one's own beliefs. A major achievement of this approach, he claims, is that it avoids the extremes of reductionism on the one hand, and theologising on the other. That is, it neither treats religion as a human study nor does it assume the reality of the Divine objects. A consideration of the phenomena of religion includes their Foci (the divine) as an integral and supreme aspect. By employing such "methodological agnosticism"^{2b} we should, it is hoped, be able to understand and appreciate the significance of the competing authority-claims of religions, and even develop criteria by which to commend one more than another. If, however, these criteria turn out to be highly subjective and tentative the enterprise of restructuring our understanding of the authority of Christ will have suffered. We may find ourselves moving nearer to a more extreme radicalism. (Faith does not dread this possibility, even though it is acutely aware of it.)

The question at issue here is whether Smart *does* present us with adequate criteria. In his reflections on Rudolf Otto's thought in *Philosophers and Religions Truth*^{13a} he faces this daunting task. He writes:

If religious thinking is, so to speak, autonomous or independent, then we may find within it some guides as to how religious truth is to be arrived at. Of course it is clear that we shall not find any absolutely knock-down arguments which would persuade any perceptive and pious person of the truth of one set of beliefs rather than others. For since perceptive and pious persons can be found in different religions and denominations, such arguments would have to have the effect of converting them. But we see from experience that it is comparatively rare for people to change their faith. But this need not destroy the validity of the point we are making. For certainly we can discover tests of the truth of religion which would at least be recognised as relevant by adherents of other faiths. The fact that men argue about religion indicates this. And though we are not in a position to produce knock-down arguments, the arguments and considerations themselves may have a long-term effect, may weigh as time goes on in a social rather than a personal dialogue.^{13b}

The implications of this are that any criteria which Smart is positing are rather loose and tentative, hard to apply to particular traditions, and requiring extended development. What he seems to be saying is that here is an area of study which is at an embryonic stage.^{2c} Smart takes as the data for his study of authoritative

revelations not those religious experiences of the average Christian or Buddhist, but those of focal figures such as Jeremiah, Paul and Buddha. I emphasise this because it displays due respect for those great figures in religious experience from whom contemporary experiences derive their interpretation. Smart's criteria are as follows:-

(a) A tradition must do justice to the two basic elements in religion, the mystical and the numinous. In this connection, Smart argues that the theism of the Gita and of the Judaeo-Christian tradition are to be preferred, for unlike the two wings of Buddhism and the Monism of Shankara (with its intermediate theism), they succeed in retaining the distinction between the self and God, yet do justice to the mystical union between them.

(b) A tradition must do justice to the reality of the world. Otherworldliness is no virtue. I confess that this is even more loose an interpretation than the previous one, but it lies within Smart's point^{2d, 13c} that revelation must disclose the divine in history. Thus, in theism, God is Creator, and certain events in the natural world and human history are revealed to be His disclosures. Thus creativity in history, both human and divine, is upheld, lest religion become life-denying rather than life-affirming.

(c) A tradition will be less dubious and more convincing as it increases in coherence^{13d} and is able to cope clearly with the problem of evil and the nature of the transcendent. Special difficulties arise regarding faith in a personal God, and Smart sees these as tending to count against theism.

(d) A religious tradition must be able to incorporate and express high moral values. Smart sees theism as "well-adapted" for this due to the numinous component in the sense of guilt and its view of people as a reflection of the divine.^{13e}

(e) A religious tradition must relate history to human guilt, in its message of salvation. Smart argues that christian theism honours both these and the sole ability of God to save, in the person and work of Christ.^{13e}

What have these criteria achieved? Providing one is "playing the religious language-game" in the first place, they are certainly an important beginning. Whilst it would be naive to think of people as consciously choosing between competing revelations, it is certainly realistic to think of ourselves as endeavouring to evaluate Hindu Epics or Buddhology. The price of doing so objectively using the above (and other) criteria is, however, to surrender the insistence that ultimate truth is only to be found in Christianity, and surrendering the *a priori* belief that Christianity is the "best" revelation.

The picture we now have is of Smart's phenomenology as advancing our understanding of the truth *about* religion as opposed to *of* religion, which in turn has led to an informed search for criteria of truth, however "soft" they appear to be, for judging between authoritative traditions.

Residual doubts remain with us: (1) Firstly, studying religion phenomenologically can only be achieved in a simple way in school. Pupils would undoubtedly be incapable of grasping the methodology, since such procedures as "bracketing" and including the "focus" in the data^{2e} lie beyond the discriminatory powers of all but the most mature. (2) Secondly, Smart confesses to the presence of "reflexive" effects of an objective study of religions^{2f} in that it may quite naturally (but not justifiably) lead to agnosticism. I think this is a major criticism. It is not simply that the variety of religious traditions is bewildering, but even the accomplished student of this approach will see little case for a world-faith on the basis of the data and criteria as they stand. A cynicism about attempts to posit features of the transcendent can easily develop so that religion ceases to be respected at all except as a human phenomenon. For example, whilst the sort of loose criteria listed above may be of some value, they are of little value when we come down to specific issues such as the relative merits of Incarnation and Avatar. This is complicated by the need to see such doctrines in their total context, from which they cannot be separated. Thus in one sense we must consider each tradition as a whole system of belief, whilst retaining the urge to make specific comparisons. The upshot is that whilst most will agree that descriptive phenomenology and comparative study are interesting, many will doubt whether the whole business has much to do with personal commitment in religion. In other words the tentative nature of Smart's work militates against personal commitment because the latter is only made out of reverence for the authority of revelation (in some form). (3) This brings us to a third area of doubt: What has Smart to say about personal commitments? He has devoted some space to this in his *Science of Religion and Sociology of Knowledge*. He responds to Troelsch's charge that a neutral approach to the study of religion "has become identified with empathy for all other characters together with a relinquishing of empathy for oneself, with scepticism and playful intellectualism or with oversophistication and a lack of faith"^{2g}. He replies "we must distinguish between the common enterprise of the study of religion and the matter of individual and personal beliefs. For example, there is a joint venture known as Buddhist studies which is undertaken by a number of scholars of differing personal beliefs and cultural backgrounds. Buddhist studies are not defined by reference to these beliefs; how could they be? Rather they are defined in terms of the subject-matter and of the appropriate methods of scholarship and research. It in no way follows, though, that methodological neutralism entails any private neutrality."^{2g}

We thus see that a justifiable religious education must, as an academic activity, be objective and procedurally neutral. Elsewhere, Smart's ideas are put more practically:

It is quite feasible to study and teach objectively matters that are heavily charged with passions and interests. Such objectivity is not achieved by rising above the life of conviction into a realm of cool rational detachment. It is attained rather by the controlled deployment of one's own affective and conative life in the pursuit of sympathetic understanding of the life of other persons. This suggests that it is the persons with well-developed emotional and volitional capacities who can best identify with the deep concerns of other persons. Hence the growth of objectivity does not depend on the denial of personal commitment but on its strengthening, in order to provide the basis for awareness of commitments in others.^{12c}

Smart is asking for a clear recognition of the distinction between the *subject* in the sense of the person and his beliefs and the *objective* material to be studied. But can this distinction be made in reality so far as religious commitment is concerned? It is central to the christian tradition that the believer is redeemed from sin and has Christ indwelling him. Can we really expect the believer to "bracket" this even for methodological purposes? From his viewpoint "bracketing" will only cloud the issue: the revelation in Christ gives us the truth about religion. I am well aware that this characterises only one sort of christian attitude, and it is not simply that of the educated evangelical, for let us not forget the great influence of Karl Barth on theology and his concept of revelation and religion as mutually exclusive. Such a position is a reaction to the loss of dynamic in modern Christianity and to the increasingly heuristic and vague nature of christian theology.

The issue of evaluating the merits of Barthianism as opposed to methodological neutralism is too vast for us to pursue here, and I suspect that there are no criteria convincing to either side by which to judge it. However, it clearly reflects the tensions amongst christians today. If we wish to communicate the christian faith convincingly by appeal to rationality we must revise traditional concepts of the authority of Christ and trust that the truth will reveal itself as a result of objective study. On the other hand, some may consider communication less of a priority, and entrench themselves firmly on the natural man's inability to understand the things of the Spirit. In which case any initiation into the faith will not necessarily involve rationality except in the sparsest fashion, so that spiritual experience will be dominated by unconscious forces in the convert rather than by heightened consciousness. But this is not a knock-down argument for it may be that true encounter with God leaves one helpless, groping for words, wholly uncritical, and "Lost in wonder, love and praise." And it is hard to imagine such an experience in the life of the descriptive

phenomenologist of religion. The christian experience of the love of Christ is inadequately characterised simply as numinous feeling in the presence of the "mysterium tremendum et fascinans". I do not think there is any meeting of minds on this issue since the entrenched Barthian declares certain questions a 'foul'. His ultimate value is a specific expression of divine revelation. The critical method as instanced in Smart's work values integrity of approach and rational justification more than subjectively intense assurances. The latter refuses to divorce faith from reason and disowns a divine judge who demands without clear justification and condemns solely on the basis that one has not believed.

Religious belief in school

In conclusion I cannot avoid what should really be the subject of another paper. For since the status of the revelatory claims of developed religions, and especially Christianity, is in such a state of criticism, I do not think the phenomenological approach to religion as outlined by Schools Council Working Paper 36 is adequate. It has the side-effect of promoting personal agnosticism and hindering personal commitment to a religious tradition. We must wait for a change of cultural wind; this may not be such a long wait, since we glimpse, thanks to the work of Smart and others, a new religious concern in reaction to fashionable reductionism. Also the dialogue between religions gives us new hope for the development of a world-faith. The radical change from traditional concepts of authority to one of tentative expression of felt assurances is not entirely negative and motivates the dialogue.

However the complexity of the approach considered, and the relative uncertainty of its future developments, demands that we settle for a practical, relatively safe, and productive approach to religious belief in school. The urgent need is for teaching about, personal awareness of, and informed choosing between, ultimate responses to life. Whilst developed religion is autonomous as a form of knowledge, primary religion, in the form of numinous and mystical experiences, is but one possible ultimate response to life. Live alternatives are a positive nihilism, fatalism, materialism, determinism in various forms, and humanism. These all have developed cognitive aspects as has primary religion, and can be discussed rationally and critically. Unlike in developed religions, there is no unending controversy about ultimate status, for such responses are recognised as influential and dynamic even if made on subjective grounds. Even indifference to ultimacy must be considered as a negative response to life. Thus, in education, we shall be able to bring into the open ultimate stances that people make in life, and through this enable the student to make his own assessment of primary religion. By coincidence of timing it appears that these conclusions are in agreement with a report published by the Religious Education Council¹⁴ which has a concern for relevance, communication

and objectivity in religious education. The concentration on primary rather than developed religion has the advantage of avoiding logical and conceptual problems as well as the status-problems of developed religion, but it provides an important basis for a developing concern with the latter. Neither does the approach oppose taching *about* developed religion in its dimensions. One may even go so far as to say that, at the higher academic level of sixth-form work, issues on belief and authority in developed religions should form some part of the syllabus. In this secular age we must stimulate the human capacity for the transcendent with digestible food, and it is to be hoped that once an appetite for primary religion has been well-established, a well-prepared world-faith will likewise prove to be consumed with relish. Those who shout "pie-in-the-sky" must first ascertain that their own menu is readable, and its contents digestible.

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