

KU LEUVEN

Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI)

The Melbourne Scale. Recontextualisation
of the Catholic faith tradition

Prof. Dr. Didier Pollefeyt – Drs. Jan Bouwens
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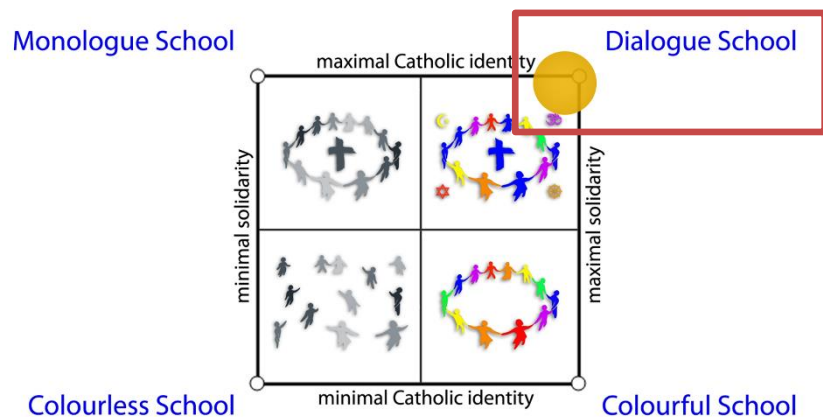
The 'Recontextualising Catholic Dialogue School'

In yesterday's lecture, we argued for the *Recontextualising Catholic Dialogue School* as the model for the future of Catholic education in an ever changing world.

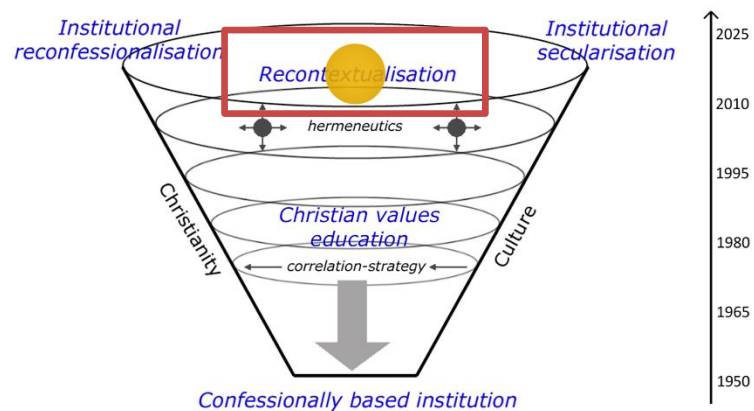
Important theological concept: 'recontextualisation'. What is that ??

"We sit on the old mat in order to weave the new." / "innovative fidelity"

Victoria Scale: Catholic Dialogue School



Melbourne Scale: Recontextualisation

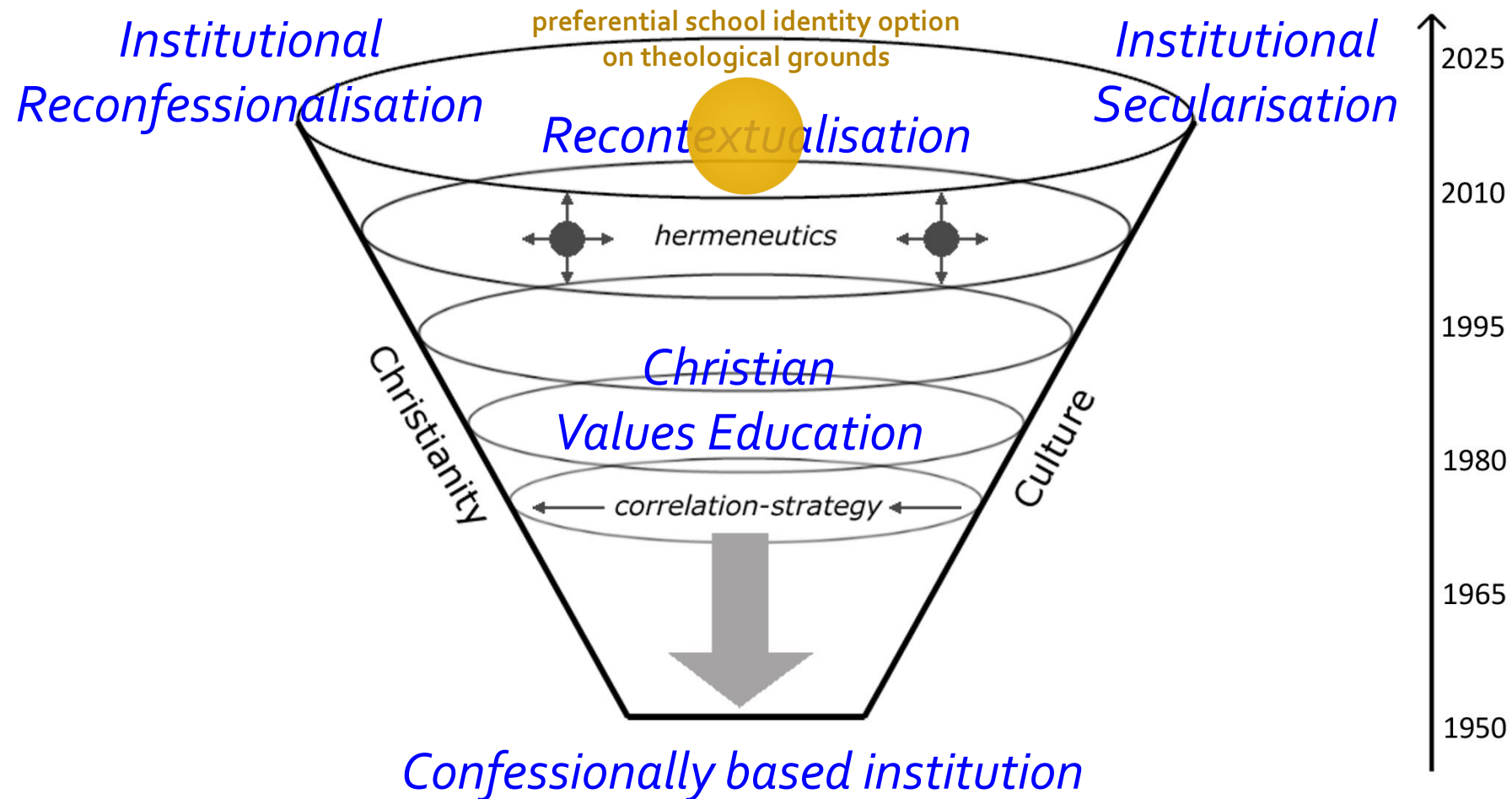


→ How to relate to diversity at school?

→ How to relate to the Catholic faith tradition at school?

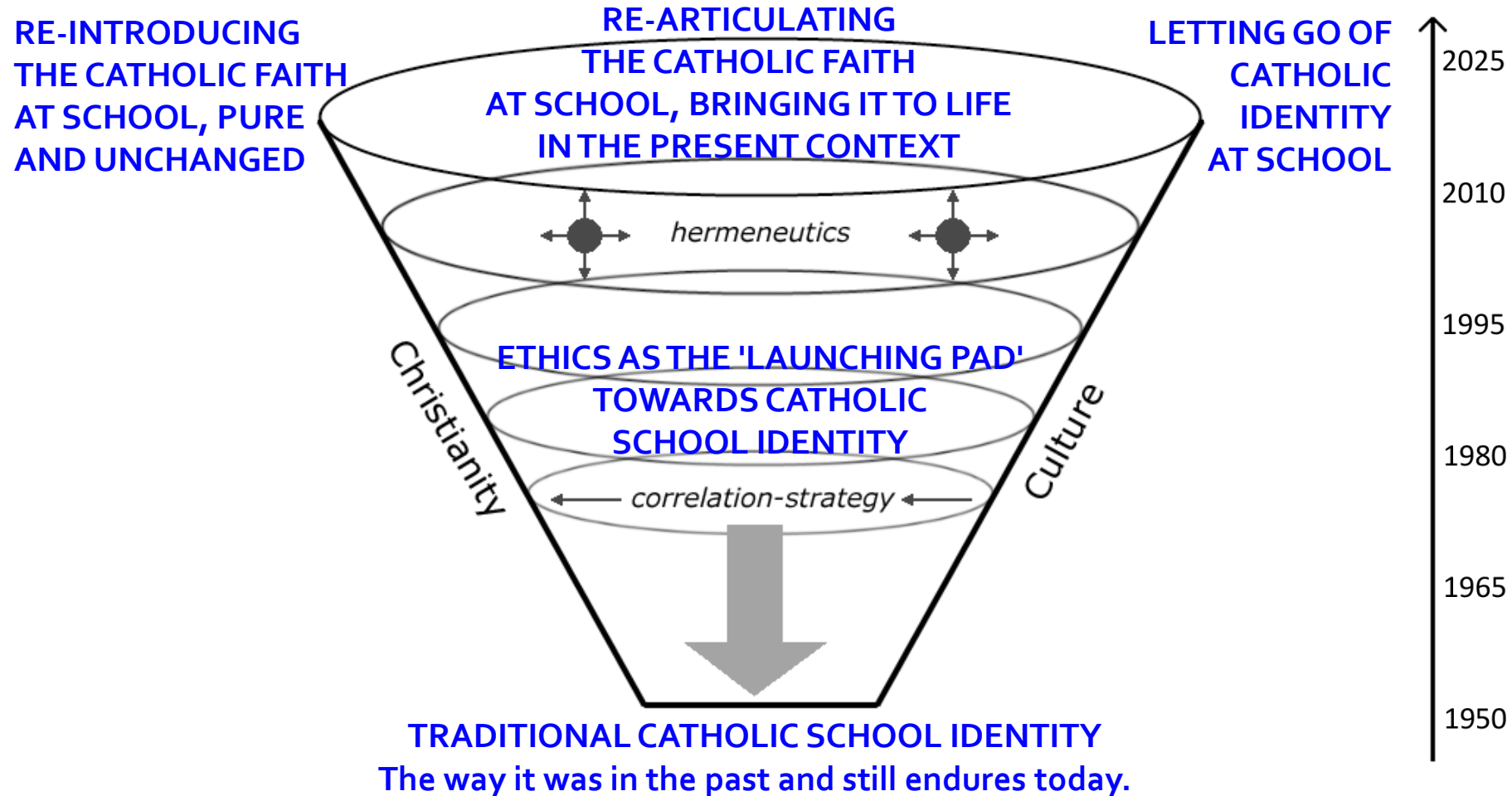
Melbourne Scale

Diagram



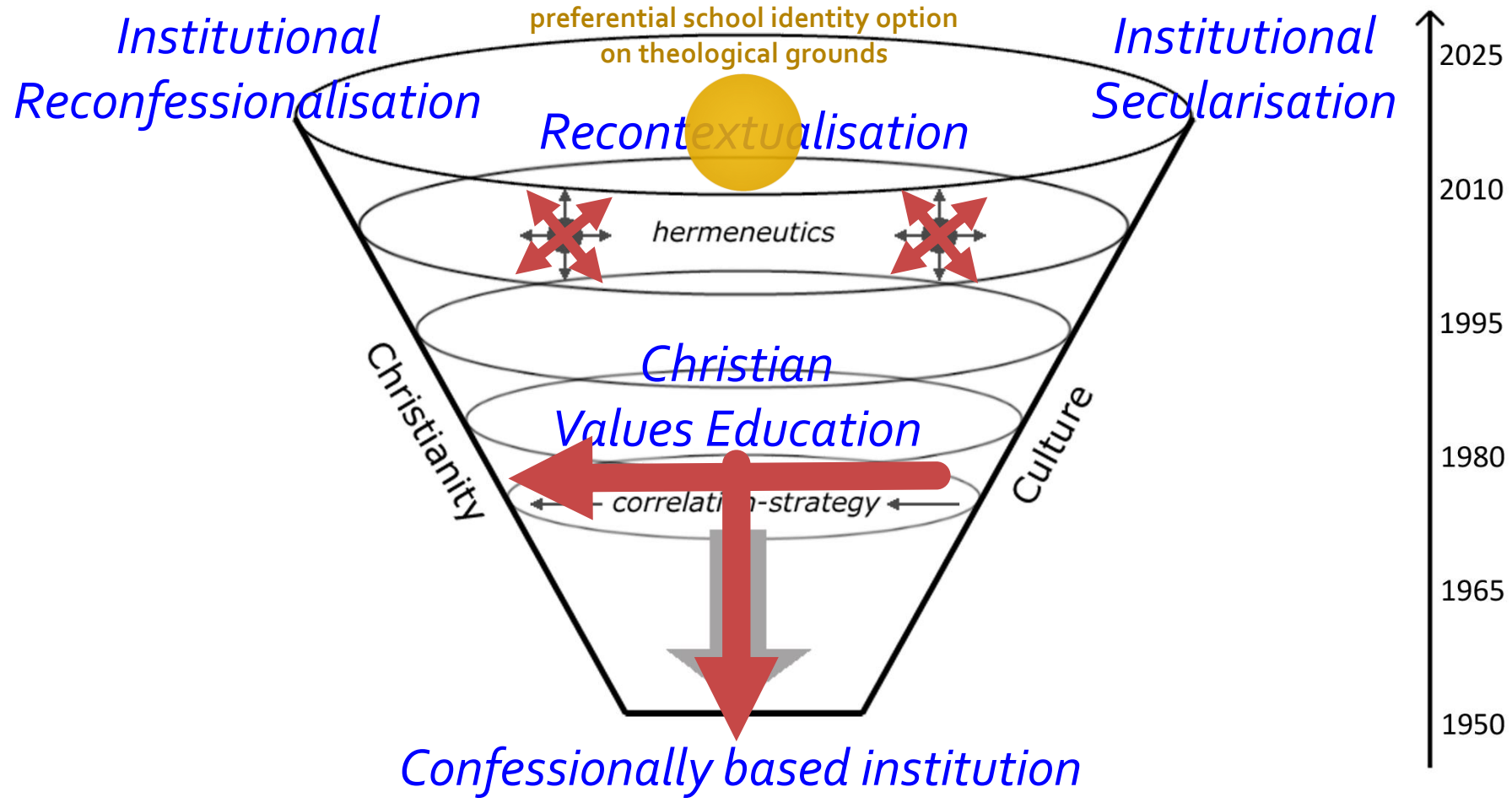
Melbourne Scale

Diagram in layman's terms



Melbourne Scale

Diagram – meaning of the three arrows



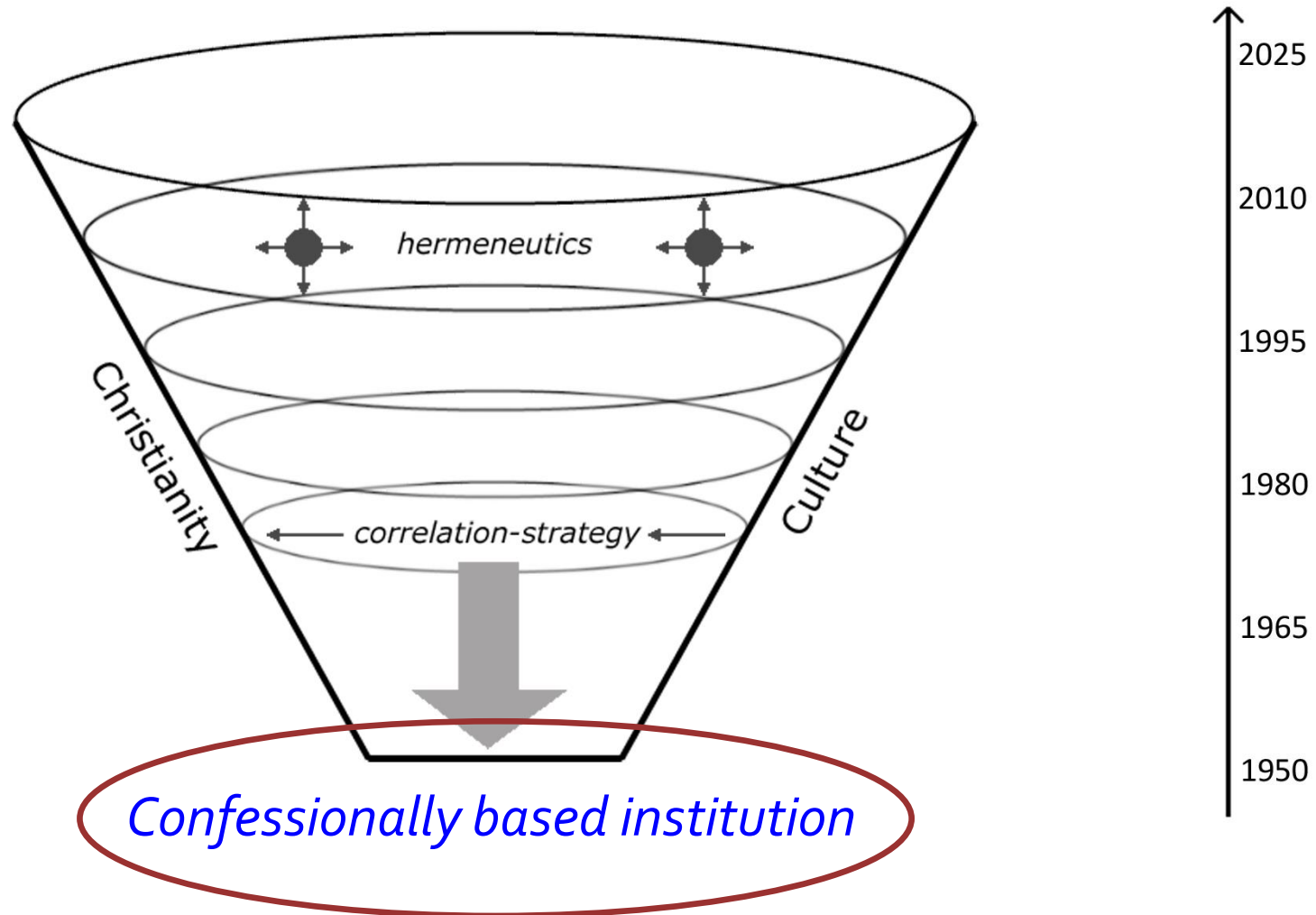


Melbourne Scale

School types illustrated: Pictures

Melbourne Scale

Diagram





A dusty crucifix hangs on the wall next to a chalkboard.
It's been there for a long time.



In many cases, the *Confessionality* of a congregational Catholic school is determined by a spiritual heritage or 'charism' that is 'still' remembered and passed on to new generations.

Star of the Sea School, Henley Beach, Adelaide. Photo's by Jan Bouwens, 5 August 2019.

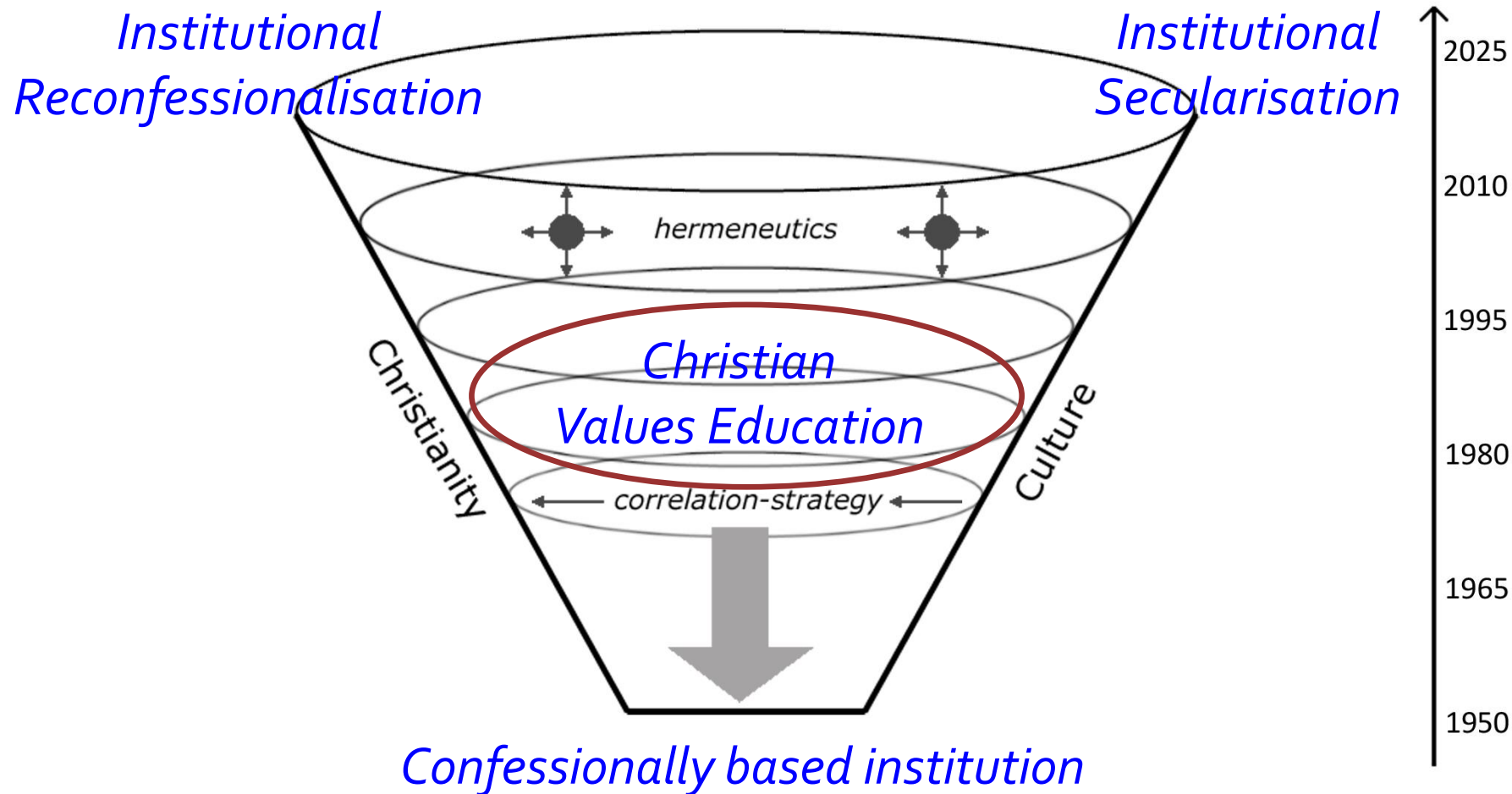


A crucifix hangs in the midst of the letters of the alphabet.

Primary school in Melbourne.
Photo by Jan Bouwens, 2009.

Melbourne Scale

Diagram





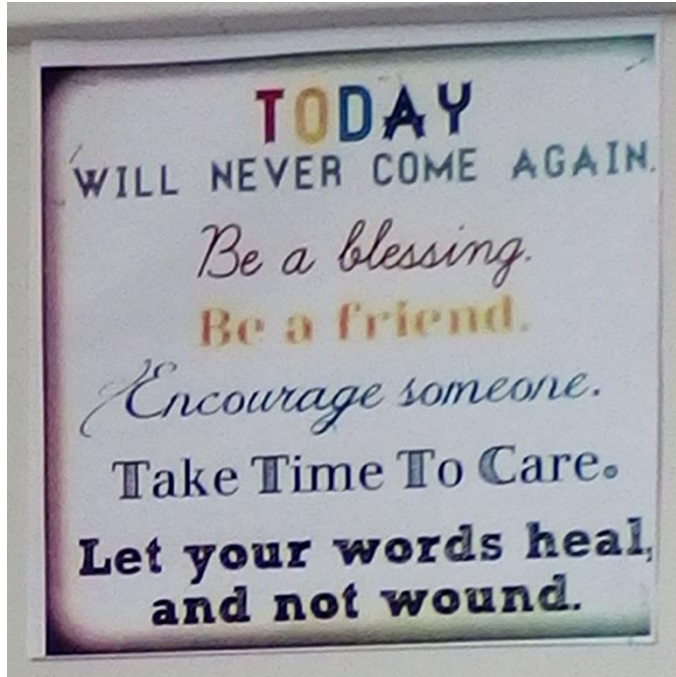
'Christian values': the values of Responsibility, Compassion, Friendliness, Cooperation, Fairness, Respect, Doing Your Best, Helpfulness and Kindness are posted on a school's bulletin board.

Photo by Jan Bouwens, 2009.



Displays of 'Christian values' are omnipresent in Australian Catholic schools.

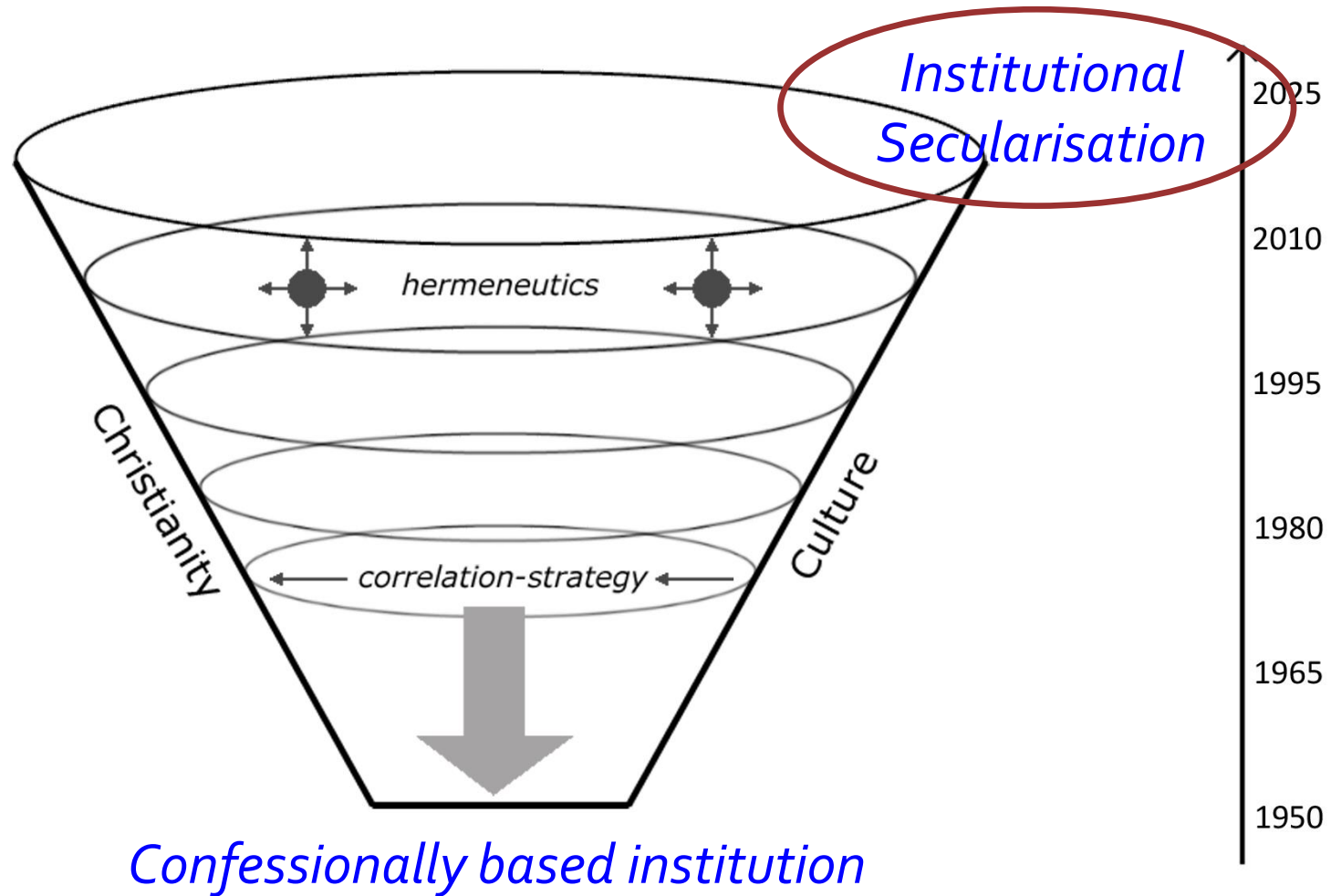
- Star of the Sea School, Henley Beach
 - St Mary of the Cross School, Point Cook
 - Good Shepherd School, Springfield Lakes
 - St Peter's School, Rockhampton
- Photo's by Jan Bouwens, August 2019.

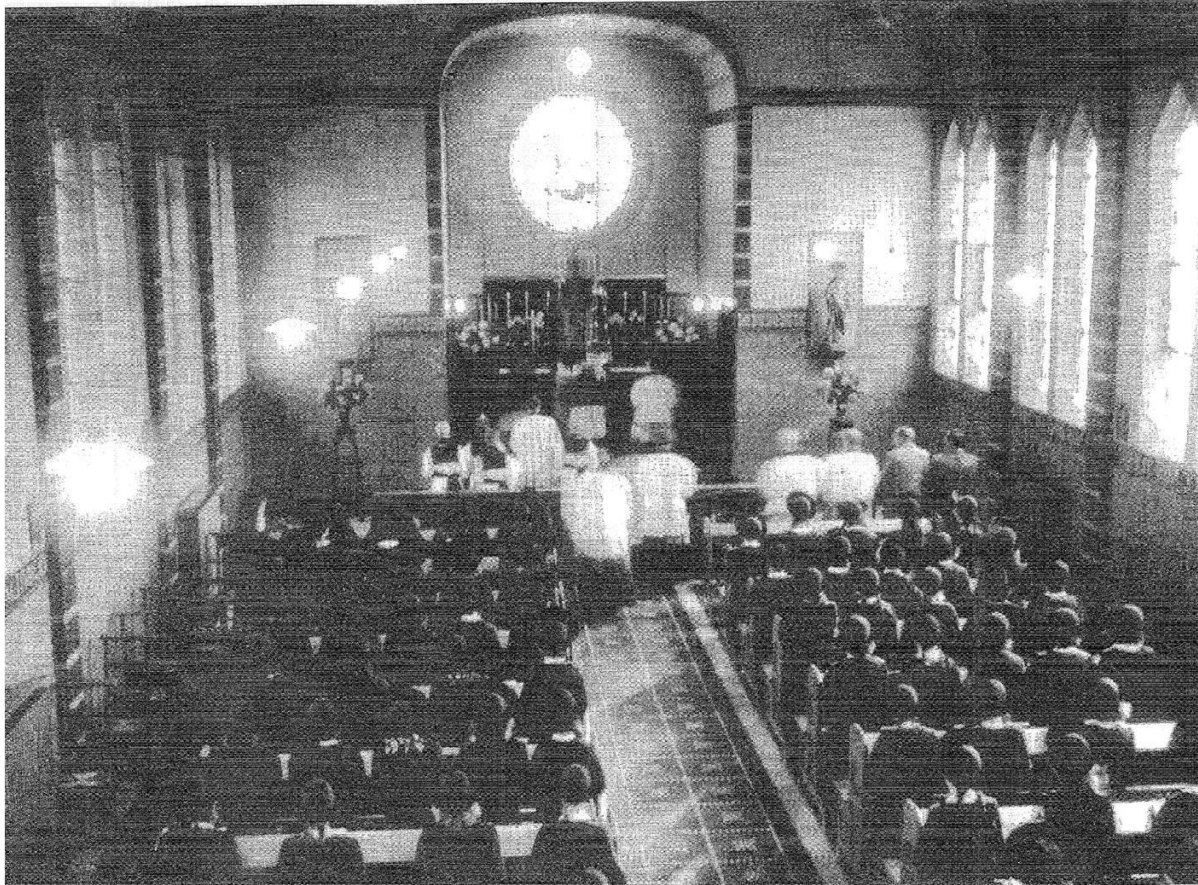


A message above a classroom whiteboard projects various maxims.

Melbourne Scale

Diagram





School chapel in the 1950s



The same room year 2010

In sixty years: from confessional school chapel to school cafeteria.



Victoria



Flanders

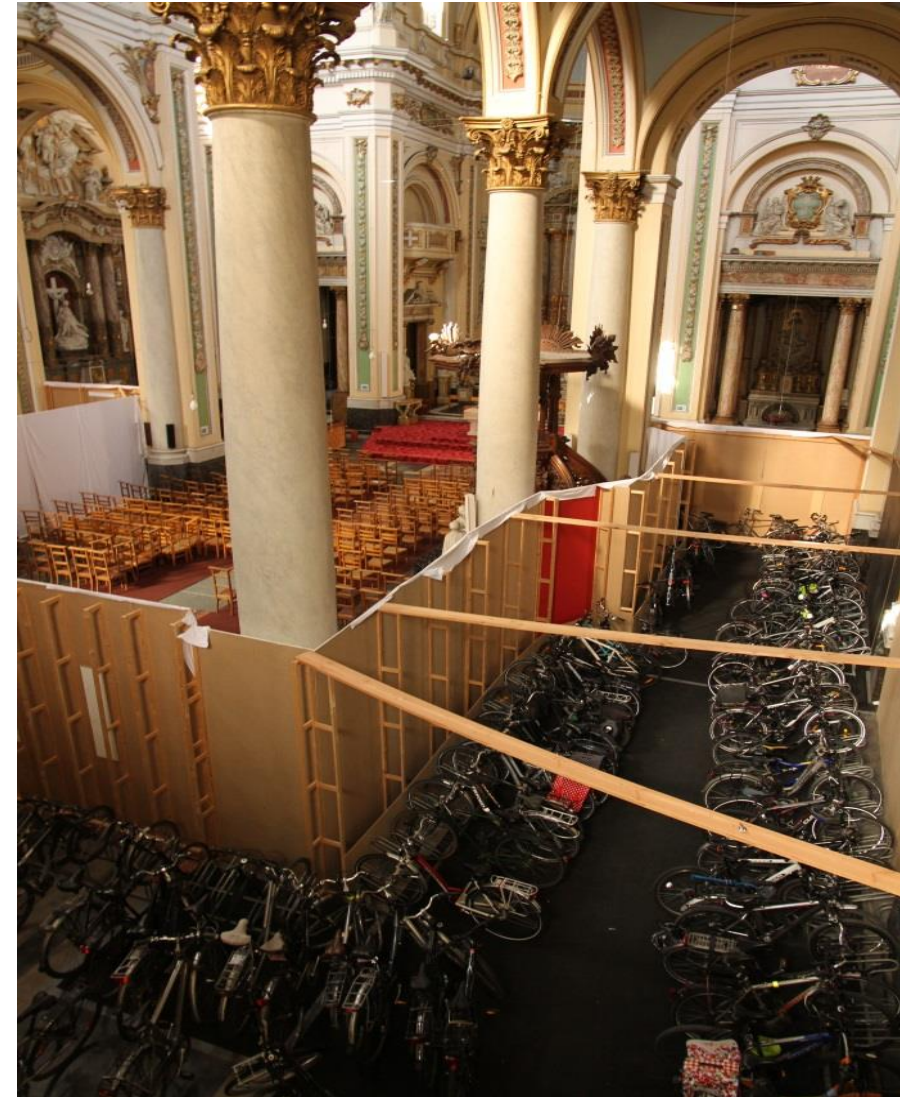
Forgotten and neglected saints' statues stand in the corner or put away in the storage room.

Photos by Jan Bouwens.



The leftover mark of the cross: only a trace of what was once there.

Photos by Jan Bouwens.



Secularisation 'invades' the sacred space: from school chapel to multi-purpose room.

Photos by Bart Verbesselt (L) & Christophe Brabant (R).

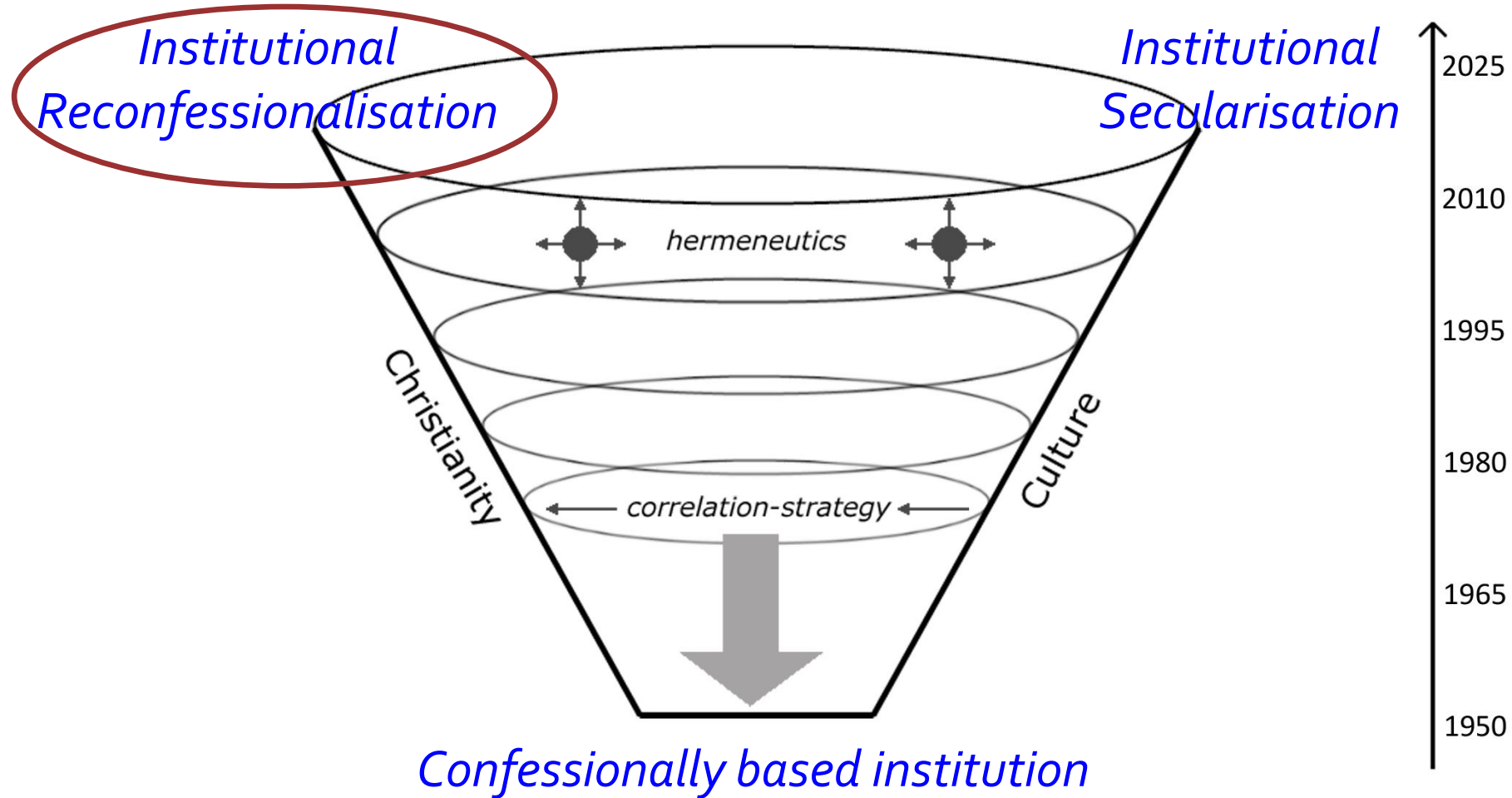


A crucifix is left affixed to the wall while a projector screen has been installed in front of it.

Photo by Bart Verbesselt in a Catholic college in Flanders.

Melbourne Scale

Diagram





A collage of classic indicators of Reconfessionalisation.



Crucifix with the Our Father and Hail Mary on either side.

Photo by Jan Bouwens.



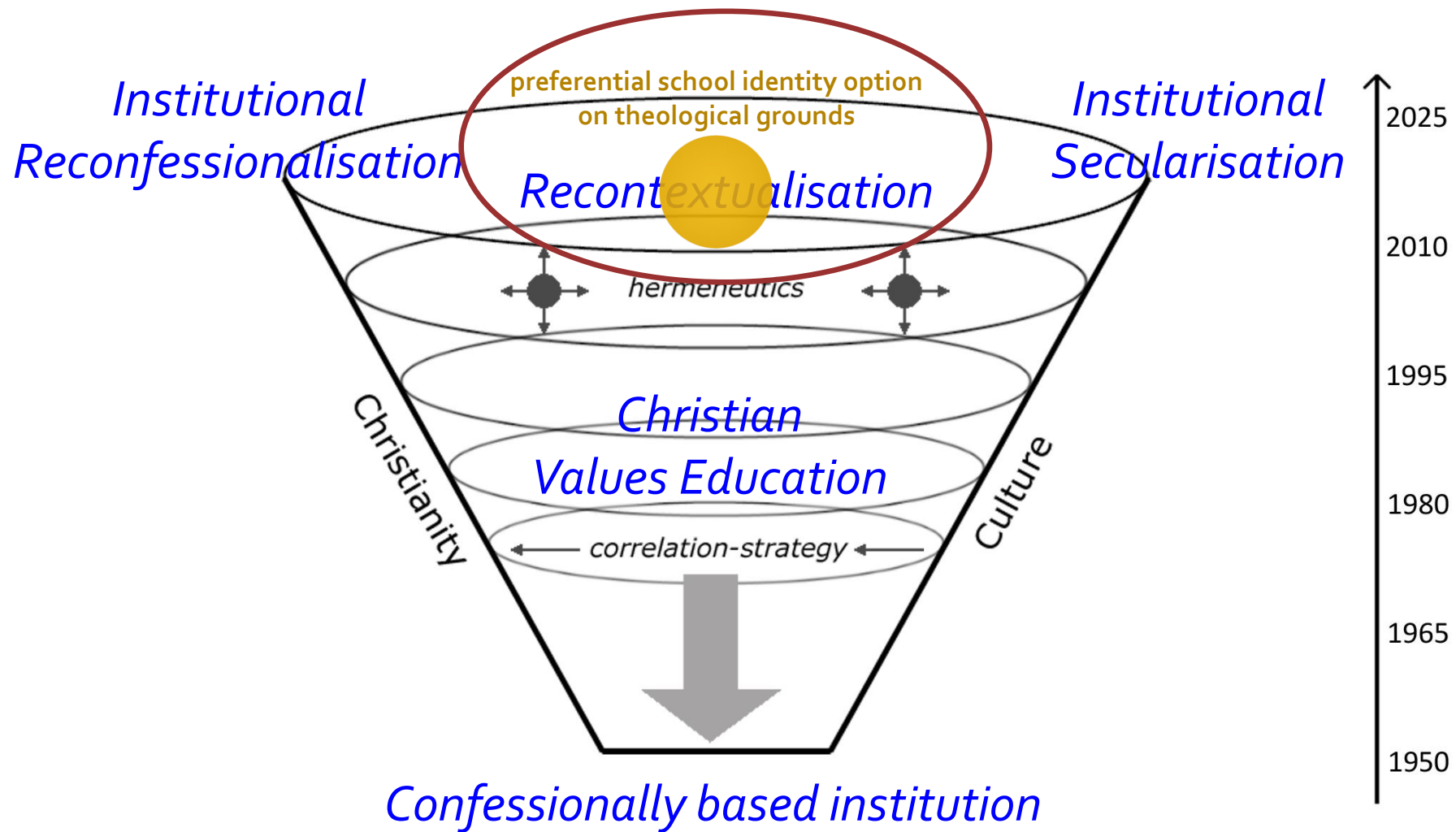
"Christian carpets to brighten and enlighten."

For sale on the internet: the 10 commandments on a play carpet for schools and child care centres.

<http://www.faithbasedcarpets.com/>

Melbourne Scale

Diagram





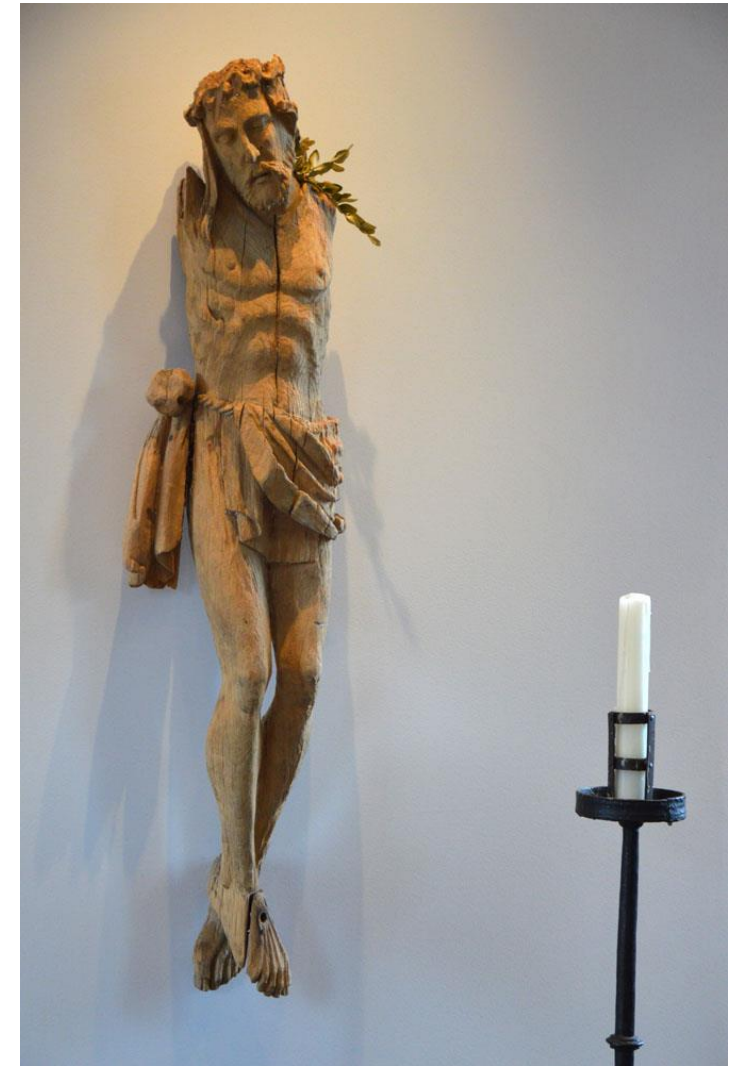
'Mary Magdalene'

Picture at the ground floor of the library of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven.



'Homeless Jesus'

Timothy Schmalz, 2012.



Renovated chapel in the Catholic Education Office of Brugge, Flanders.
"I have no arms but yours."

Photo by Jan Bouwens, 2013



A Rohingya Refugee Mother and Child... They had just managed to enter Thankhali, a borderland between Bangladesh and Myanmar. September 6, 2017. Icon: *Our Lady of Perpetual Help*, which represents the Christian mystery of redemption.



A Syrian father cries while holding the corpse of his son, killed by the Syrian army near Dar El Shifa Hospital in Aleppo, Syria (October 2012). Sculpture: Michelangelo, Pieta (1499).



FORD MADOX BROWN (1821-1893), *Christ Washing Peter's Feet at the Last Supper*, oil on canvas. Currently displayed at the Tate Gallery in London, England.



Pope Benedict XVI washes the feet of 12 bishops and priests at the traditional Mass of the Last Supper in Rome's Basilica of St. John's in Lateran in 2011, commemorating Christ's gesture of humility to his apostles on the night before he died.

Abaca Press / Alamy Stock Photo & Getty images (27-05-2017).



Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio washes the feet of patients of a shelter for drug users during a Holy Thursday Mass in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2008.

<http://www.catholic.org/news/>
(24-03-2016). Foto: WordPress



Melbourne Scale

School types illustrated: Cartoons

Confessional school / Confessionality

Melbourne Scale

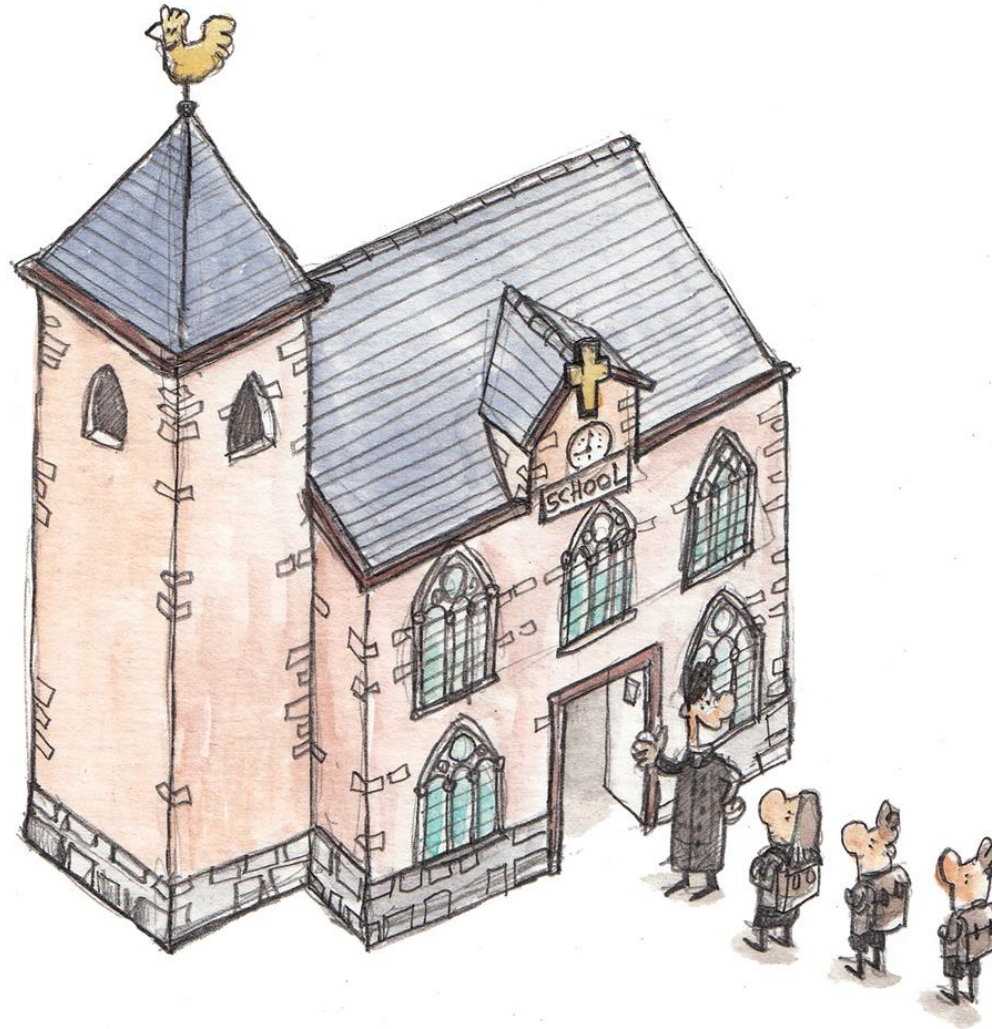


Image courtesy of Joris Snaet, 2013.

Note: The rooster at the top of the tower is a weathervane, typical for old church buildings in Flanders.

Christian Values Education

Melbourne Scale



Image courtesy of Joris Snaet, 2013.

Secularisation

Melbourne Scale



Image courtesy of Joris Snaet, 2013.

Reconfessionalisation

Melbourne Scale



Image courtesy of Joris Snaet, 2013.

Recontextualisation

Melbourne Scale

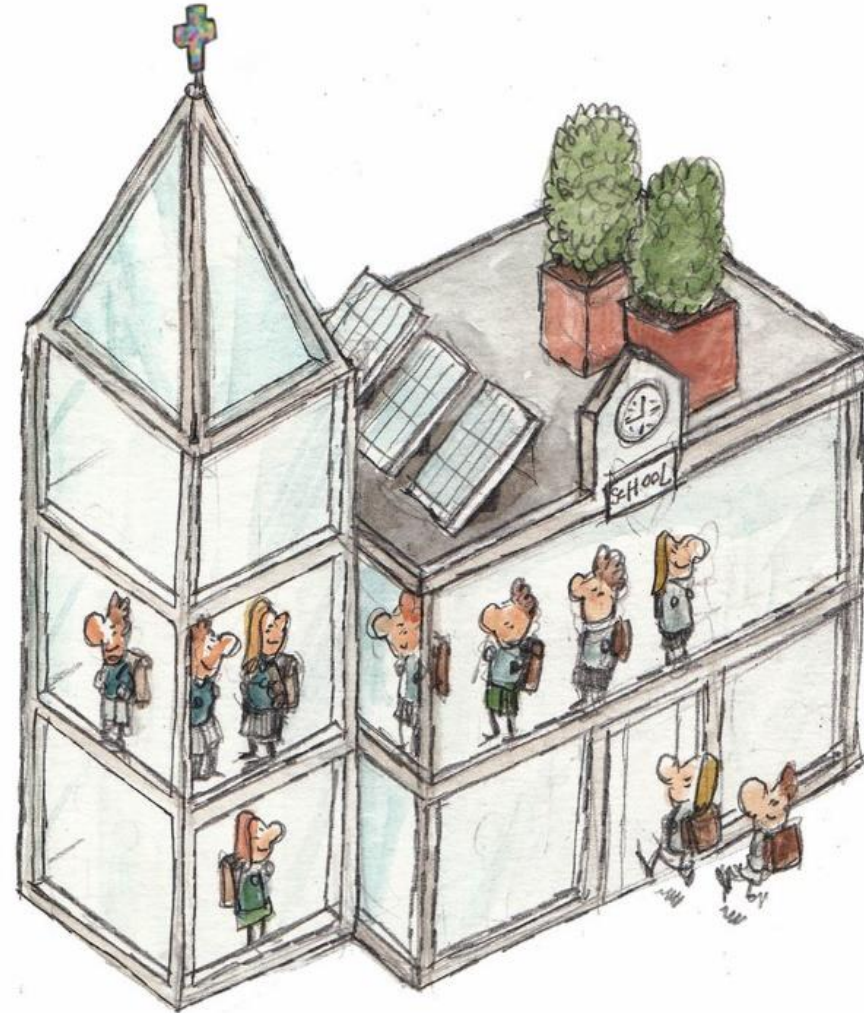
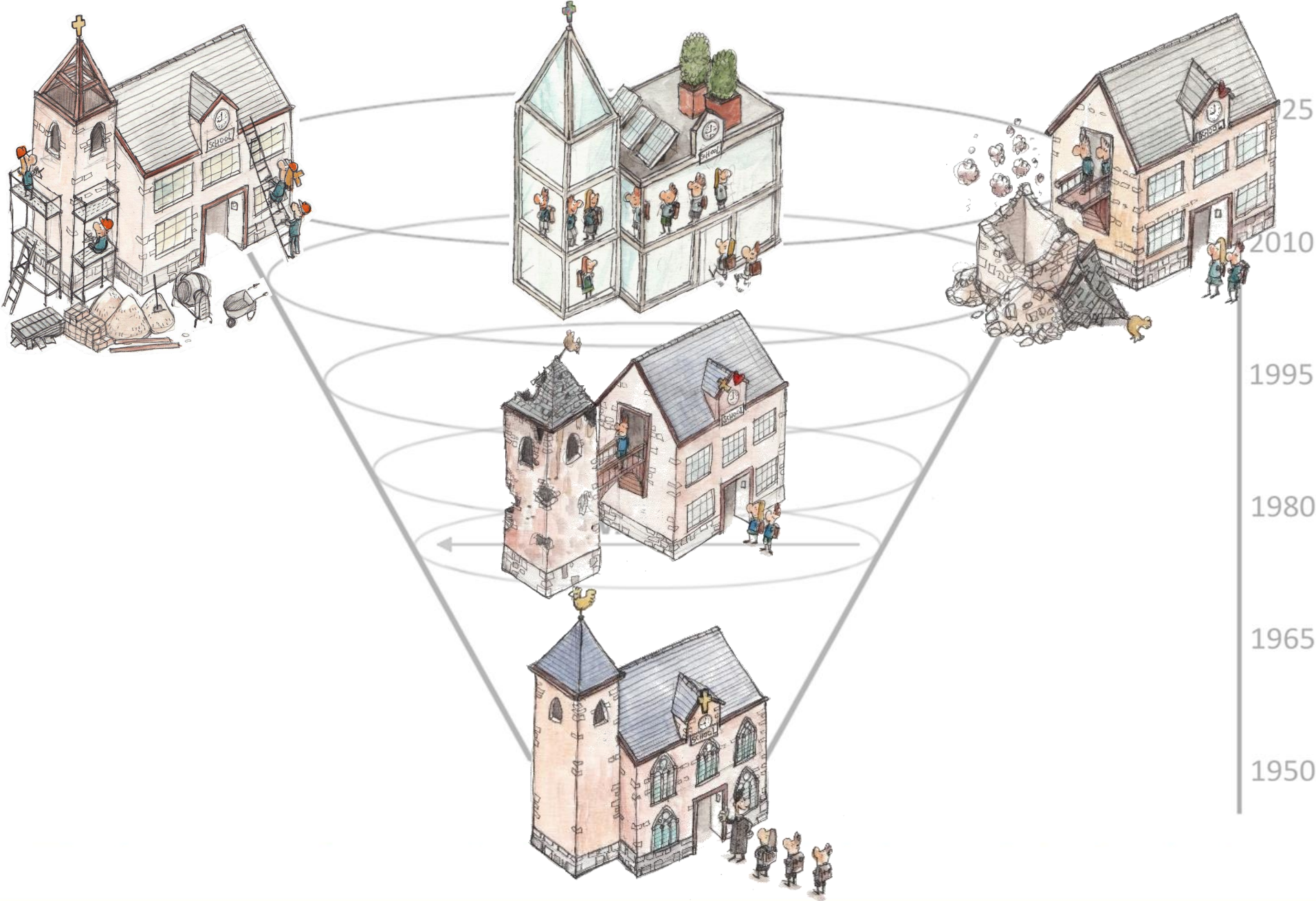


Image courtesy of Joris Snaet, 2013.

Cartoons that visualise the five Catholic school identity options in theological perspective.





On Christian Values Education or 'mono-correlation'

Christian Values Education as reductionism and anthropocentrism

Christian Values Education (CVE)

What exactly is it? How does it work?



Definition of Christian Values Education

CVE is an inclusive, inductive, evangelising didactic RE strategy that mutually connects human life and Catholic faith in order to induce a specific and pre-determined belief in Jesus Christ as the true meaning and fulfillment of all human life.

- 'Mono-correlaton': simply connecting experience to faith, attempting to 'bridge the gap'.
- 'Implantation' of the Catholic story in the students' lives (hopefully without 'symptoms of rejection').
- Baptising *good* feelings as *Catholic* feelings.
- A fixed learning outcome, the same for all students.
- A recurring, predictable motion.
- A quasi-mechanical process, easy to perform.
- *Reconfessionalisation* in disguise!

Christian Values Education (CVE)

What exactly is it? How does it work?

Didactically, CVE is always a three-step process whatever form it takes:

Step 1. Human experience

Step 2. Linked to the Gospel message

Step 3. Linked back to human experience.

Step 1. Introduction of a theme that has significance for the students' lives

Step 2a. Formulation in terms of a 'greatest common denominator' that all can agree to

Step 2b. which is then explained from Christian perspective

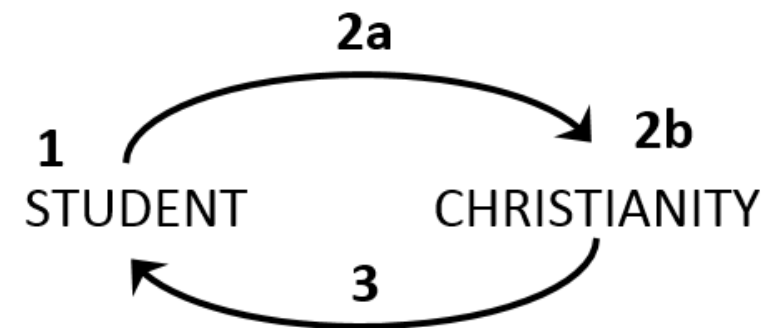
Step 3. and applied to the students' lives.

Step 1. Exploration of daily experience, whereby we discover diversity

Step 2a. The diversity is reduced to uniqueness, to a singular compromise formulation

Step 2b. The uniqueness is expressed in Christian terms

Step 3. Christian universality is expressed in our daily lives.





Decorated stones on a classroom prayer table project various values: courage, trust, cherish, friends, dreams, wisdom, love, strength, peace, hope.

A primary Catholic school in Ballarat, Victoria.
Photo by Jan Bouwens, 2009.

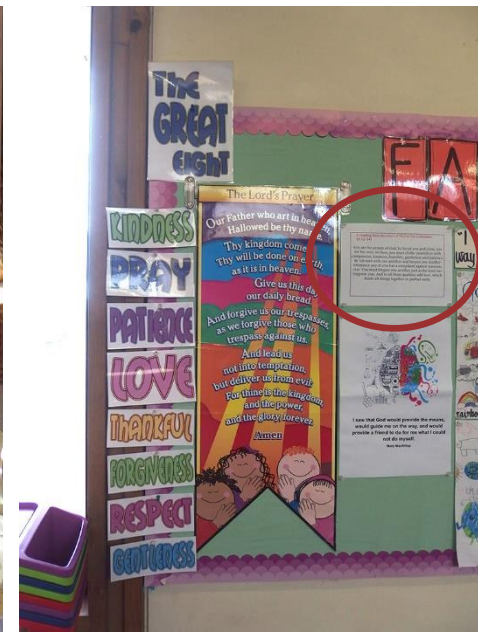


Christian Values Education (CVE)

Summary of the 4 counter-arguments

When a school's Catholic *Confessionality* fades away and becomes less and less recognisable, then an unreflective continuation of *Christian Values Education* in an ever more pluralising and detraditionalising cultural context, tends to become:

- 1. Ineffective:** the correlation movement is stalling and runs aground half way.
(Pragmatic counter-argument)



The 'Great Eight': gospel values taken from Paul's letter to the Colossians, 3:12-15. Unfortunately, in one of the classrooms, the scripture reference had fallen down on the floor. Is the *correlation* failing?

A Catholic primary school in Melbourne. Photo's by Jan Bouwens, 2 August 2019.

Christian Values Education (CVE)

Summary of the 4 counter-arguments

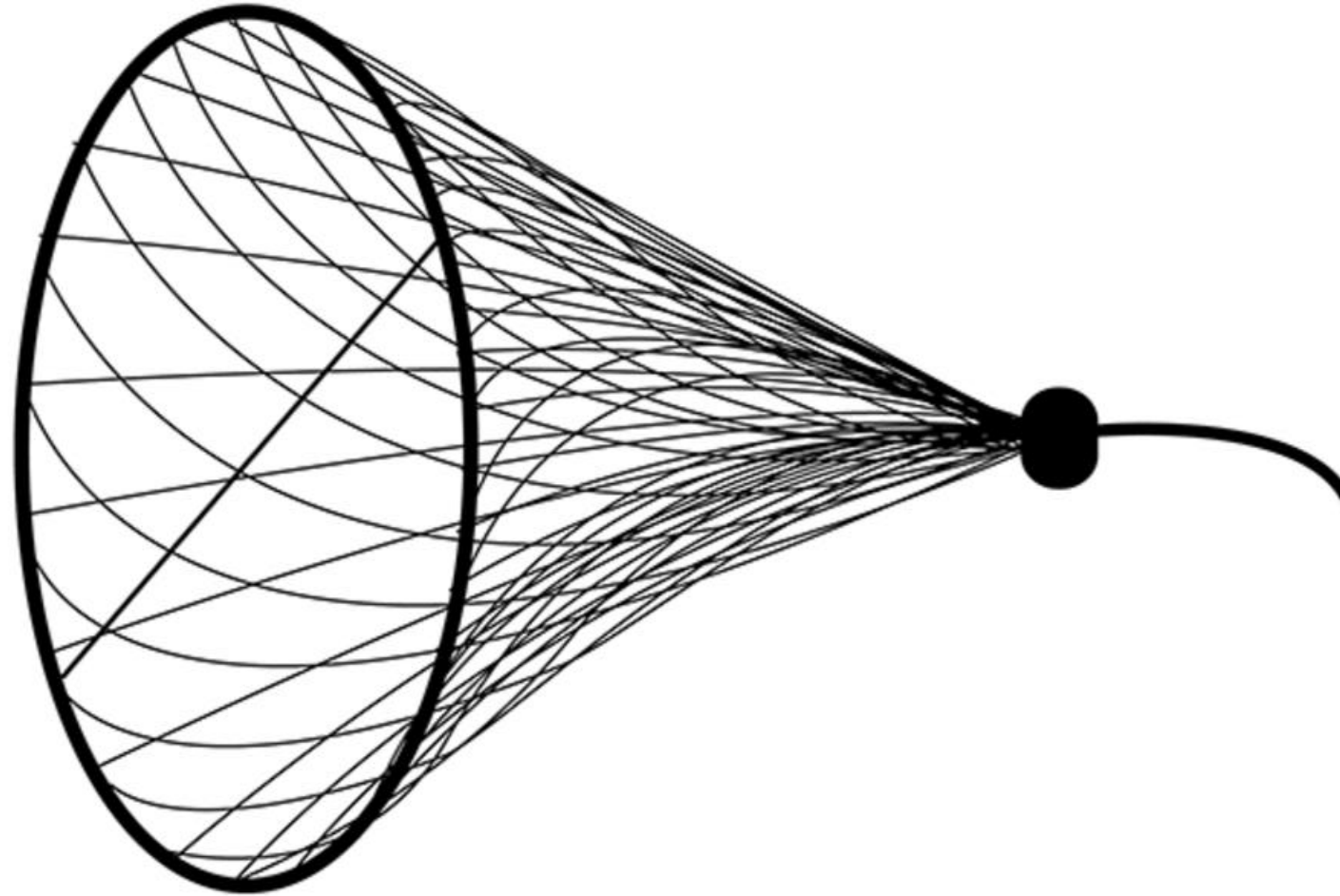
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(Pragmatic counter-argument)

2. Predictable: repetitive, boring and even manipulative (the 'shutter phenomenon', 'correlation fatigue').

(Pedagogical counter-argument)



'Hoop net didactics' Fish swim into the wide end of the hoop net without suspicion. They are caught when the net gets more narrow. At the end, there is a knot... Students are 'smart fish', though: after a while, they see the net approaching and swim around it.

<http://fish.gov.au/Fishing-Methods/Traps-and-pots> (25-07-2017).

Christian Values Education (CVE)

Summary of the 4 counter-arguments



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(Pedagogical counter-argument)

3. Counterproductive, actually producing further secularisation (intention \neq effect).

(Strategic counter-argument)



Statue of Blessed Mary stands above motivational messages aimed at the students about excellence, persistence and teamwork.

Photo by Jan Bouwens, 2013.

Christian Values Education (CVE)

Summary of the 4 counter-arguments



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(Strategic counter-argument)

4. Reductive, it reduces the Catholic faith to its moral aspects and thereby 'hollowing out' its religious core (*horizontalisation* of Christianity).

(Theological counter-argument)



"Someone finally created a secular Bible.
After omitting everything offensive to
anyone, it all fits in a three page pamphlet!"



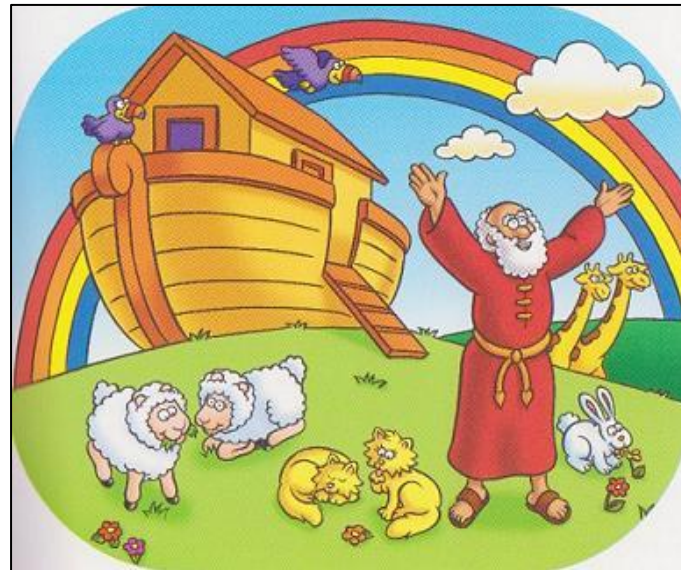
Rainbow as symbol of God's covenant?

Failed correlation

Failed correlation

Rainbow as symbol of God's covenant?

- The 'links' that are being suggested by mono-correlation are not as innocent as they may seem at first sight.
- Our present-day society exposes adults as well as children to a **'curtain fire' of correlative seductions**, many of which are not Christian in nature.
- Example: a rainbow as symbol of Gods Covenant?



Alle Kleuren (All Colours)

K3



*"Nobody on the streets
looks at you, talks to you.
Why do people hurt each other?
Wouldn't it be better
if we were tolerant of each other,
tolerant of each other?"*

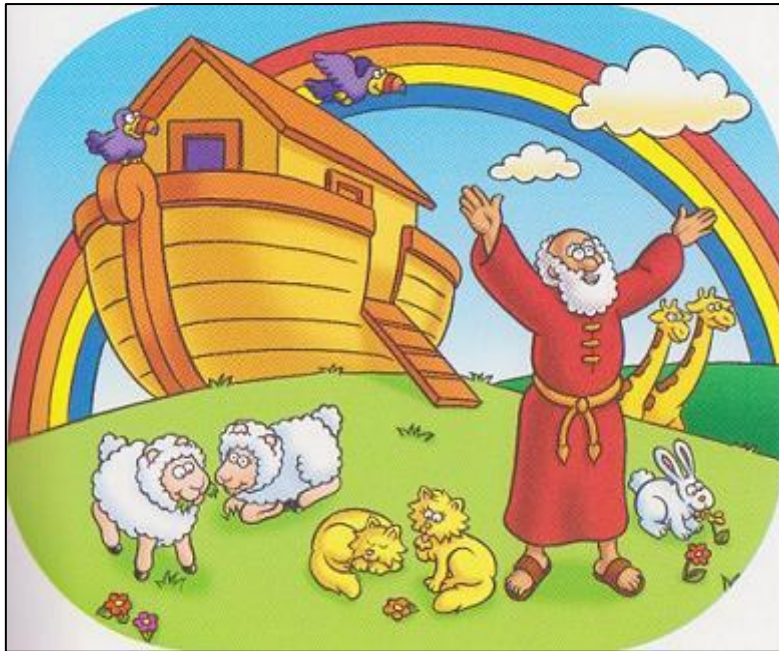
*"From Africa to America,
From the Himalaya to the desert.
From Africa to America,
Yes, we are so much more beautiful
if we stand together."*

*"Hand in hand! Eye to eye!
All the colours of the rainbow!"*



Failed correlation

Rainbow as symbol of God's covenant?



- The 'links' that are being suggested by mono-correlation are not as innocent as they may seem at first sight.
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Failed correlation

Rainbow as symbol of God's covenant?



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- Example: a rainbow as symbol of Gods Covenant?



From *Christian Values Education* to *Recontextualisation*

Shifting towards the alternative: *Recontextualisation*

Two possible responses: either *Reconfessionalisation* or *Recontextualisation*

Reconfessionalisation

Hard re-initiation of students in the Catholic tradition.

Monologue School

1. Culturally: implausible.
2. Pedagogically: inefficient.
3. Theologically: opposed to incarnation theology

Recontextualisation

Multi-correlation of the Catholic faith tradition in today's pluralising cultural context.

Recontextualising Dialogue School

→ The only viable alternative that is both *culturally plausible* and *theologically legitimate*.

Note that a *Recontextualising* didactical process does contain moments of *Reconfessionalisation* as well, especially in learning contexts that are lacking familiarity with the faith tradition.

How can *reconfessionalisation* be accomplished?

Conversation with Lieven Boeve



A few years ago, an Australian bishop visiting Leuven asked prof. Lieven Boeve the following question: "Using your terminology, professor, *what should I do to reconfessionalise the schools in my diocese?*"

Boeve responded: "That is easy: reduce your Catholic education system to approximately a quarter of its current size. Keep on board only those leaders, staff, families and students who are truly faithful and practicing Catholics. Let the others go. — *However, is that really what you should do?*"



Prof. Dr. Lieven Boeve of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, KU Leuven and Director-General of *Catholic Education Flanders*.

Recontextualisation of the Catholic faith tradition

What is it?



Recontextualisation is **explicitly, actively and purposefully (re-)introducing Catholic particularity** in the school culture, while at the same time carefully **listening to the context**. What would it mean for contemporary people to be *Catholic*?

Unlike *Reconfessionalisation*, it needs to be **dynamic, adaptive, creative** and **innovative**.

Bridging the gap between faith and life. Developing the on-going faith tradition in the light of ever-changing historical contexts, striking a **balance between preservation and renewal, continuity and discontinuity**.

The central place of the tradition at school is maintained, without abbreviating it or making apologies for it, exactly by bringing it into dialogue with the contemporary context, and **re-discovering the particularity of the Catholic faith in the world today**.

Recontextualisation desires to enter into the ongoing adventure of the Catholic faith tradition.

Recontextualisation of the Catholic faith tradition

Five criteria to recognise genuine recontextualisation



- Criterion 1.** Formal movement: text placed in a new context receive new plausibility and meaning
- Criterion 2.** There is a Catholic religious component
- Criterion 3.** There is a contextual component, referring to present-day culture
- Criterion 4.** There is an interaction resulting in a fusion of Catholic and contextual components
- Criterion 5.** It evokes existential transformation that invites revelation



Omran, Angels are here!

Judith Mehr, oil on canvas, 2016.
<https://christinecenter.worldpress.com>
(01-05-2017).



Omran's photo immediately after he was rescued



Andrei Rublev's famous icon *Trinity*

Omran, Angels are here!

Judith Mehr, oil on canvas, 2016.
<https://christinecenter.worldpress.com>
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Omran, Angels are here!

Judith Mehr, oil on canvas, 2016.
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(01-05-2017).



The Lampedusa Cross. Made from pieces of a refugee boat that capsized on 11 October 2013 off the island of Lampedusa, en route from Libya to Europe. More than 360 people drowned. The Lampedusa residents helped to save the lives of 155 others.

Artist: Francesco Tuccio. Pictures by Maria Weatherill, Catholic Education Office Sandhurst, Australia. Text source: <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/news-press/latest-news/see-the-lampedusa-cross-at-st-pauls-on-sunday-19-june>



Dianne Minnaar, *Let the little children come to me* (Matthew 19:14), paint on wood, 2020-2021.
St. William's Church, Grovelly (Brisbane).

Dianne Minnaar
<https://www.sanctussacredimages.com>
Produced by the Catholic Parishes of Grovelly-
Samford and Mitchelton, Brisbane, 2020
(Fr. Nigel Sequeira). Used with permission.



A little statue in the form of an empty, white baptism gown made of broken crystal commemorates the victims of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. Erected in the cathedrals of Bruges and Antwerp at the initiative of the organisation 'Human Rights in the Church', inaugurated by Mgr. Jozef De Kesel and Mgr. Johan Bonny on Holy Saturday 2012 and 2013.

Photos by Bart Dewaele & De Standaard

Renewing the Catholic faith tradition

Evangelii Gaudium (2013)



“ We must be bold enough **to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the Word,** and different forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings, including those unconventional modes of beauty which may mean little to the evangelizers, yet prove particularly attractive for others.

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL
EVANGELII GAUDIUM



<http://www.vatican.va/evangelii-gaudium/en/files/assets/basic-html/page132.html>



Melbourne Scale profile

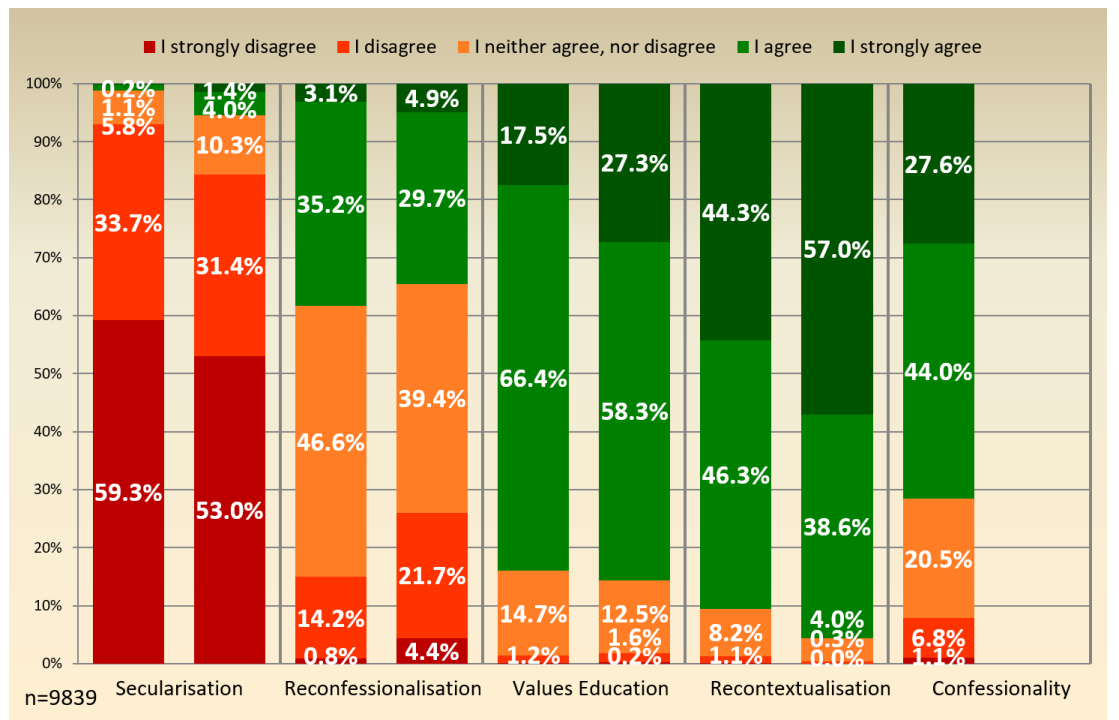
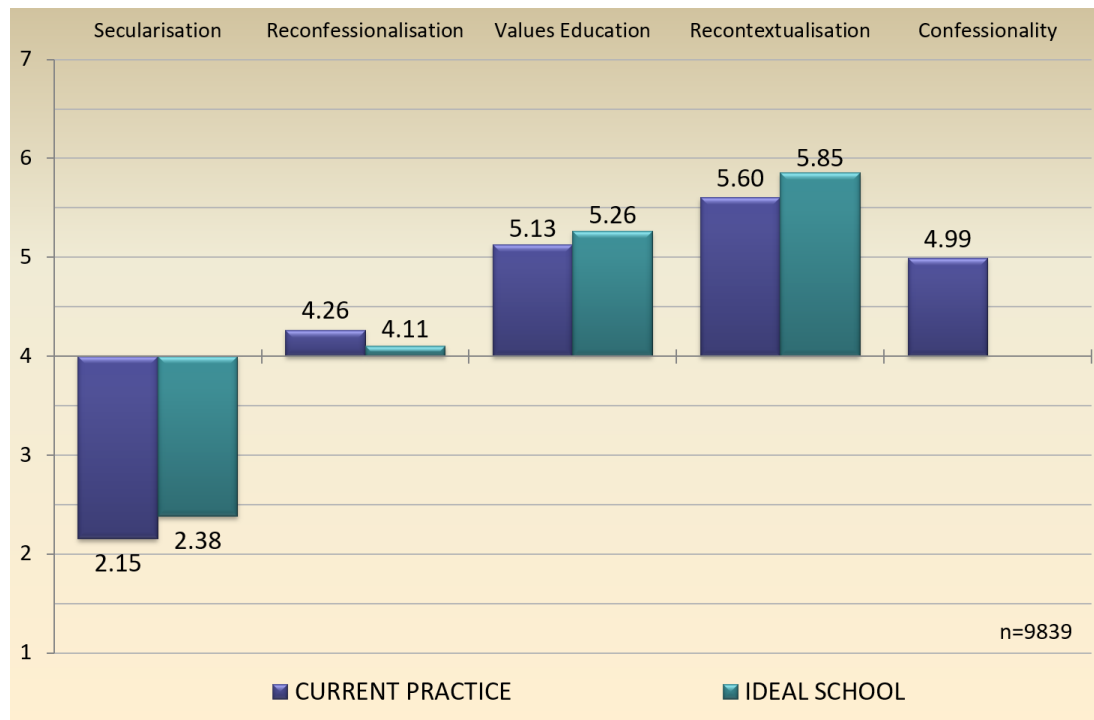
Composite profile of adults and students in Catholic schools

Melbourne Scale results

Mean scores and percentages, Melbourne Archdiocese, 2019-2022



School staff PRIM + SEC

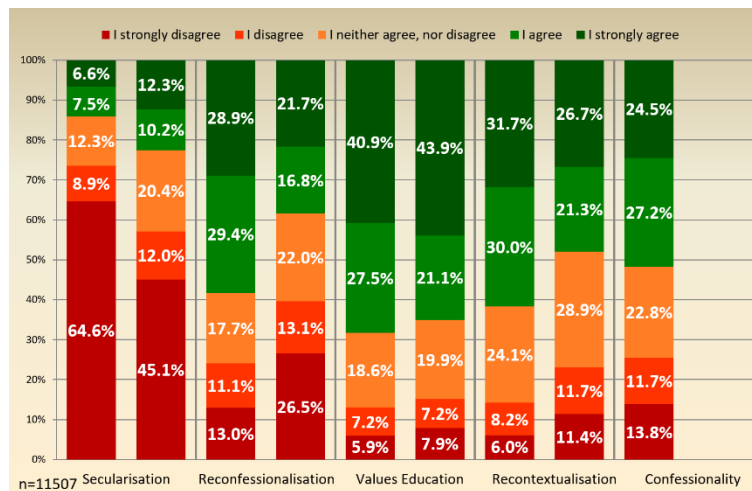
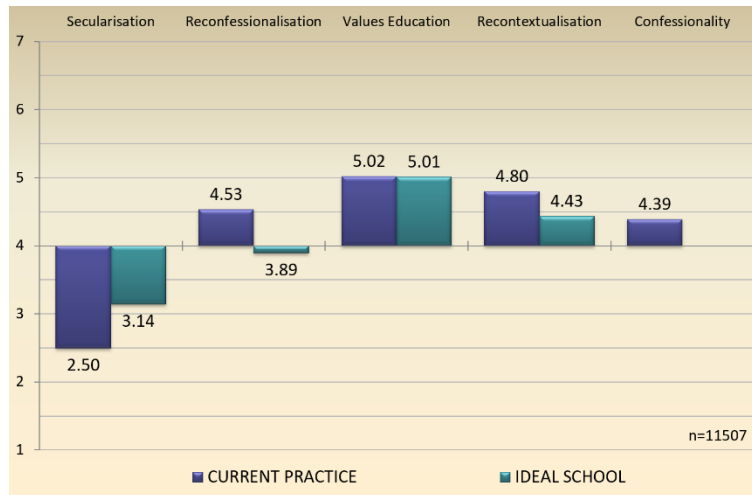


Melbourne Scale results

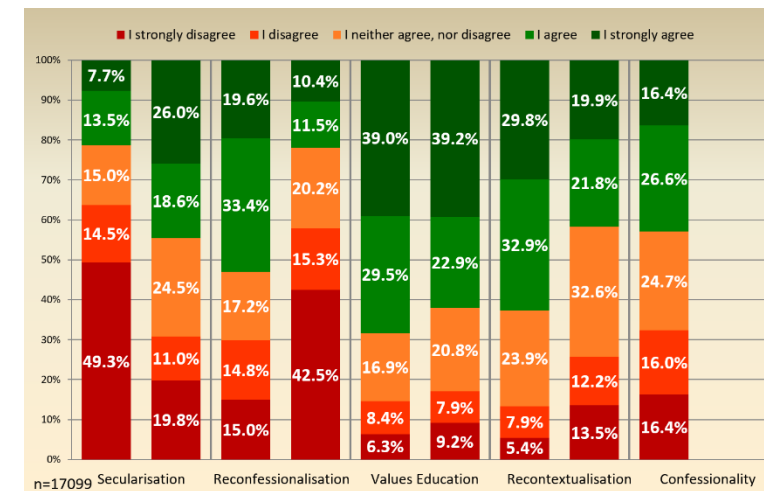
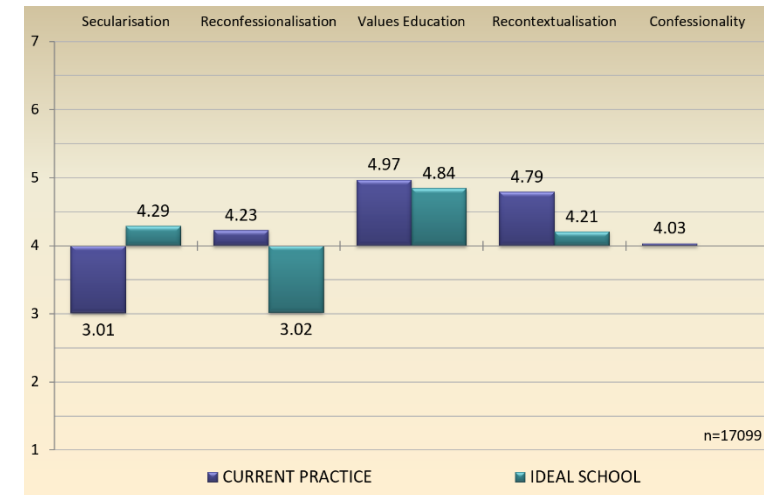
Mean scores and percentages, Melbourne Archdiocese, 2019-2022



Students PRIM

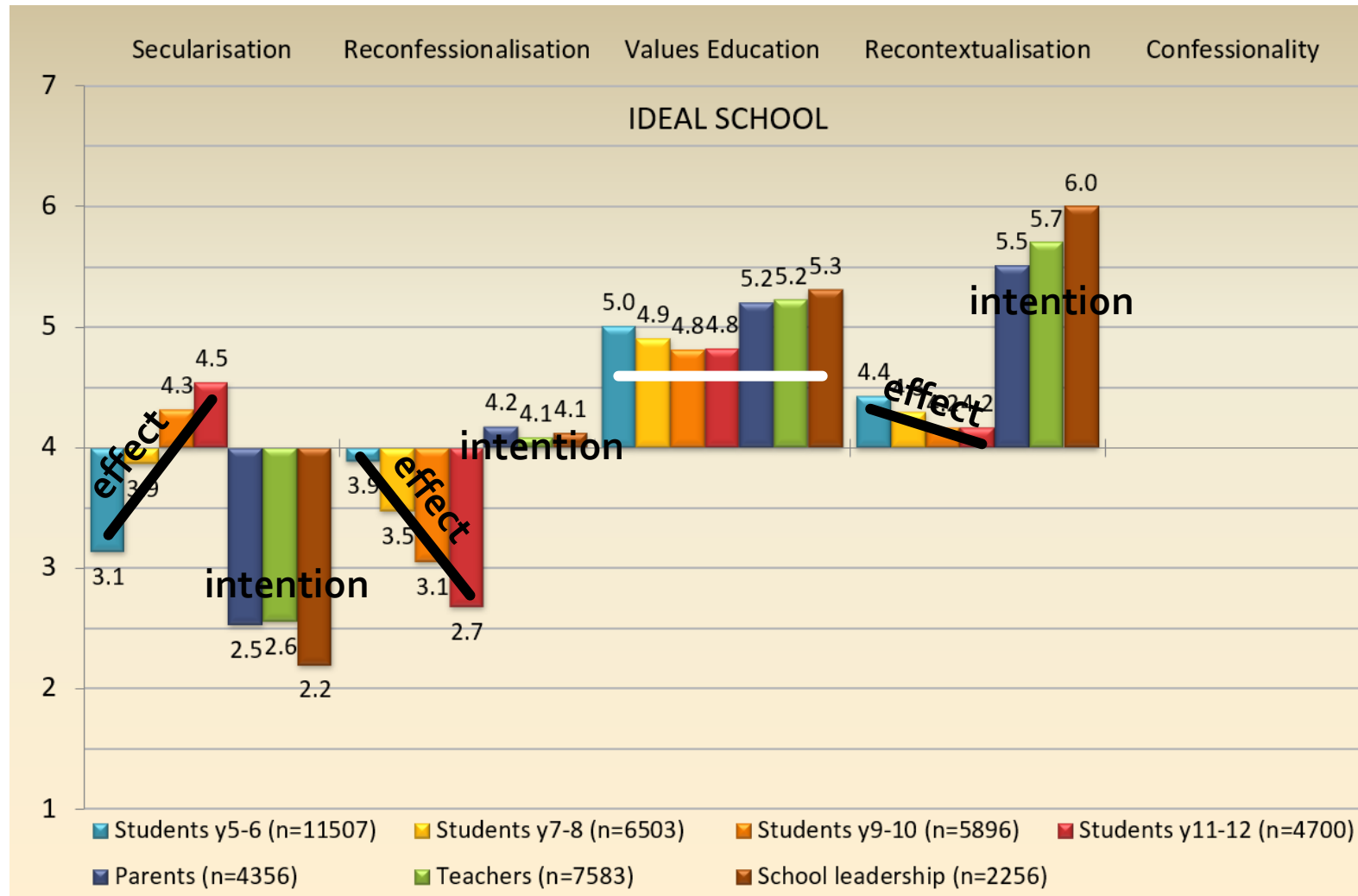


Students SEC



Melbourne Scale results

Differentiated mean scores, Melbourne Archdiocese, 2019-2022



Catholic school identity at the start of the 21st Century

Formulation of the challenge



INTENTION: closing the gap by means of strong mono-correlational Christian Values education, based on *Reconfessionalising* concerns (model of INCLUSIVISM).

However, due to increasing pluralisation and secularisation, the correlation gets weaker. The gap grows wider, correlation fatigue comes up, CVE becomes ineffective and even counter-productive.

EFFECT: Growing detachment and even adversity against CVE, the *Reconfessionalising* and the inclusivistic approach. Either students **don't hear** the inclusivistic message, or they **resist**, or they **ignore** it and 'leave Christianity at school'. **Reduction** of (Catholic and other) specificity. **Anthropologisation** and **horizontalisation** give rise to increasing relativism and *Secularisation*.

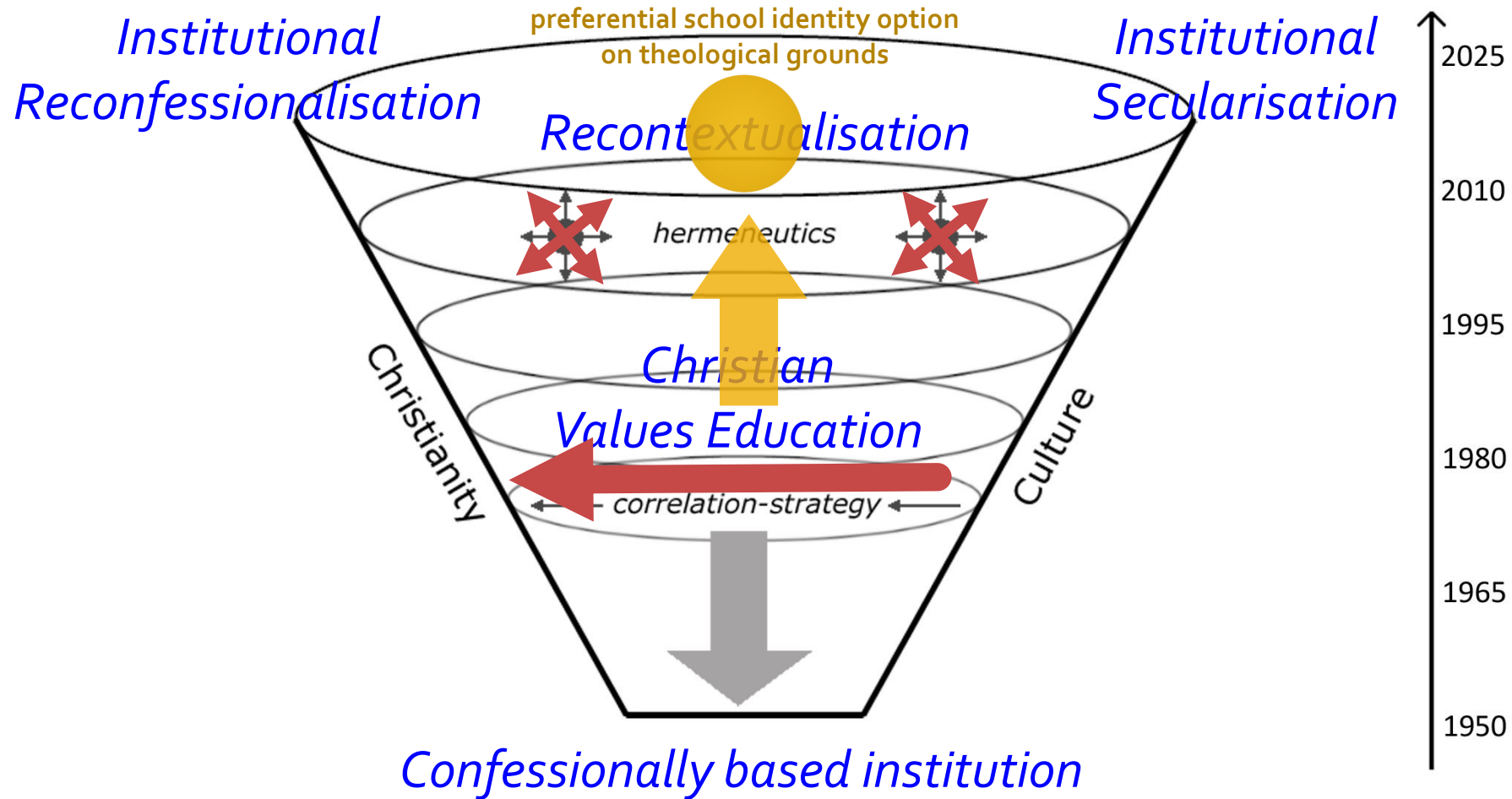


Pursuing the ECSI shift

From (mono-correlational) *Values Education*
to (multicorrelational) *Recontextualisation*

Melbourne Scale

Diagram



Practical-Theological Instruments (PTI's)

From assessing to enhancing



Whole school
Prayer Renewal
Project



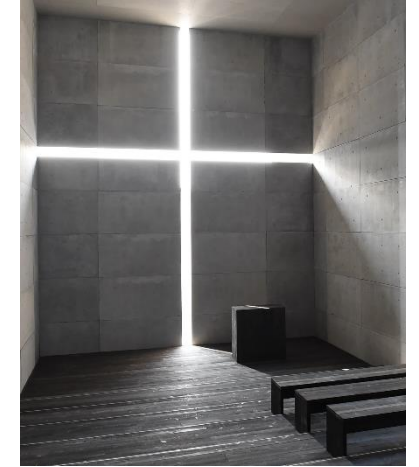
First
Nations



Dialogue



Resurrection



Sacred
spaces

Witnessing the particularity of the Catholic perspective

Use the formula: "Not just ..., but also ..."



'**Not just**' (=universal meaning, *Christian Values Education*)

'**but also**' (=particular meaning, *Recontextualisation*)

- The Christian ethos is not just about friendship and love, but also about love for the enemy.
- Christianity is not just celebrating Christmas, but also (first and foremost) Easter.
- Christianity preaches not just the resurrection of the spirit, but also of the body.
- Christians ought not just be fair and honest, but also unconditionally good.
- Christians ought not just pursue justice when somebody wrongs you, but also not resist an evildoer.
- Christians ought not just practice piety and give alms, but also do this in secret, avoiding the praise of others.
- Reconciliation is not just about changing one's ways, but also about experiencing a change of heart.

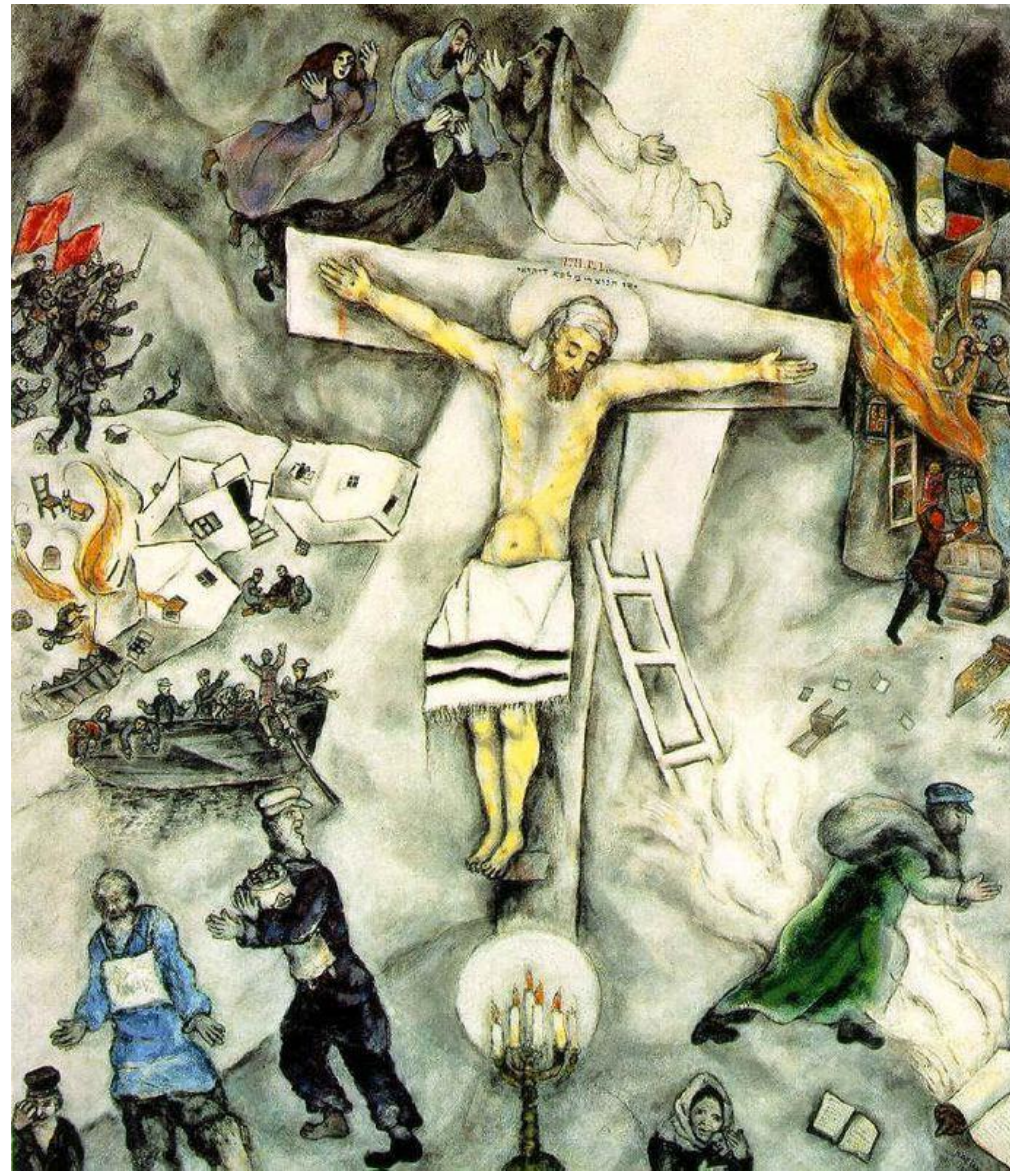


Image:
<https://www.holyredeemervan.org/84>
(18 May 2017)



Marc Chagall — *White Crucifixion*

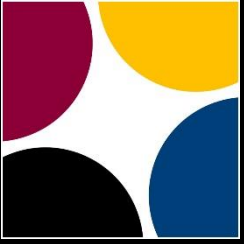
To conclude



His favourite painting.

***White Crucifixion* by Marc Chagall.** Painted in 1938 after Chagall had visited Europe. The painting emphasizes the suffering of Jesus and the Jewish people as a response to the growing antisemitism in Europe and Russia.

Art Institute of Chicago.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Crucifixion (30-05-2017).



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Enhancing Catholic School Identity (ECSI)

The Melbourne Scale. Recontextualisation
of the Catholic faith tradition

Prof. Dr. Didier Pollefeyt – Drs. Jan Bouwens
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