

2014

### Review of Chapman et al. "International Handbook of Learning, Teaching and Leading in Faith-Based Schools"

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**Judith D. Chapman, Sue McNamara, Michael Reiss,  
and Yusef Waghid (eds.)**

***International Handbook of Learning, Teaching and Leading  
in Faith-Based Schools***

*New York: Springer, 2014 hb 722pp \$349.00*

*ISBN: 978-9401789714*

Every dimension of this handbook speaks to its breadth and depth. At 670 pages, it is truly encyclopedic. And it is truly international, with its editors representing England (Reiss, from London Institute), South Africa (Waghid, from Stellenbosch University), and Australia (McNamara and Chapman, from Australian Catholic University). Further witnessing to its international character, its chapters address faith-based education in a wide range of nations, including Australia, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The book includes multiple chapters each on Christian, Jewish, and Muslim schools (and deals briefly at points with some other religious traditions). In each case authors take care to distinguish the varieties of viewpoints within the religious traditions. Regarding Christian schools, for example, one will find chapters related to Roman Catholic schools, Reformed Protestant schools, evangelical and fundamentalist Protestant schools, and Seventh Day Adventist schools. Such variegation helps fulfill the editors' desire to demonstrate that faith-based education is anything but monolithic.

The editors are clear about their wish to conduct a rigorous analysis of historical developments in faith-based education, to cast it as a work in progress, and to explore what the future may hold. Without a doubt, they have accomplished this goal. Consistently asking after faith-based education, the volume includes chapters on philosophy, values education, policy, environmental education, gender and violence, leadership, sex education, pluralism, creation and evolution, human rights, teacher development, curriculum, and instruction. It includes case study reports, national profiles, and reports on demographic trends. Some chapters are heavier on data, others on argument. All are solid.

The book's chapters are organized into three discrete sections. Part 1, edited by Reiss, focuses on the educational, historical, social, and cultural

contexts of faith-based schools. Writers of these chapters deal capably with the charge that faith-based schools indoctrinate their students and lead to social divisions, a charge in tension with the appropriate claims of parents that they have the right to educate their children in the ways they see fit. The authors of these chapters represent a diverse range of viewpoints about faith-based schooling; not all contributors even believe there should be such schools. But they do agree on three principles. First, the history of education offers important perspectives to aid our understanding of faith-based schooling today. Second, anyone wanting to understand faith-based schooling had best try to understand the social and cultural contexts of the schools under examination. Third, faith-based schools have as one of their objectives that students would become people who respect others and who have the good of all in mind, not only the good of their own tribe (a theme continued in parts 2 and 3 of the *Handbook*). This third principle will not surprise those familiar with faith-based schools (at their best), although some critics of faith-based education will deny that faith-based schools operate with this objective in view.

Part 2, edited by Waghid, focuses on three theoretical ideas or themes. First, faith-based schools want to help students become autonomous individuals. Second, faith-based schools aim at humane action, by which the authors of the chapters in this section mean inclusion, multiculturalism, cooperation, democratization, cosmopolitanism, and justice. Third, faith-based schools aim to help students become flourishing individuals who keep the good of the commonwealth in view.

Part 3 of the *International Handbook*, edited by McNamara and Chambers, is titled "Current Practices and Future Possibilities." Authors in this section focus more on policy and practice than did the authors represented in the first two parts of the book. They pay particular attention to curriculum and instruction. While the whole volume maintains a positive and even hopeful tone (testimony to the careful work of the editors), this section especially not only offers a bright future for faith-based schools but also envisions an important role for such schools in building civil society.

Each of the sections in this *Handbook* begins with a robust introduction written by the section's respective editor (parts 1 and 2) or editors (part 3). As one might expect, not all the chapters in this volume achieve the same quality. That said, the chapters are more even than most edited books of any length, let alone a volume of this length. Also, the editors



deserve commendation for having achieved their purpose of offering a comprehensive examination of faith-based schools from jurisdictions around the world. At the price, most individuals will want to find other ways to get access to the riches contained in this collection. But without a doubt, researchers and libraries should purchase *International Handbook of Learning, Teaching and Leading in Faith-Based Schools*.

Ken Badley

*JECB* 18:2 (2014): 234–36

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**Mark Chater and Clive Erricker**

***Does Religious Education Have a Future?***

***Pedagogical and Policy Prospects***

*London: Routledge, 2013 pb 176pp \$48.95*

*ISBN 978-0-414-68170-4*

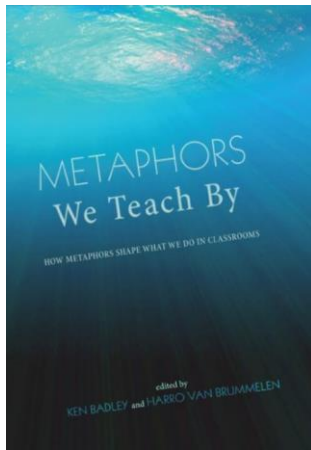
In this intriguing book the authors claim that despite international interest and admiration, all is not well with Religious Education (RE) in England and Wales. The evaluative and diagnostic chapters in the first two sections are written separately, with the alternative author offering a brief response. Coauthoring the final section, Chater and Erricker offer their vision for a reconstituted RE based on their extensive experience with RE in various capacities.

The book opens with Erricker's chapter on representations of religion and belief, in which he places religion in the category of ideologies. Like all ideologies, some religions, and streams within them, are reactionary, others are moderate and/or liberal, and most are in both camps at the same time. It is not religions *per se* that threaten democracy, Erricker contends, but variants of all ideologies, including free-market capitalism, that seek "off-shore" status in an effort to avoid regulation by democratic states or institutions. Examples of religions seeking "off-shore" status provided by Erricker include Iranian Shia Islam and Vatican Roman Catholicism. Representations of religion in the classroom must reflect the complexity of religion, both its positive and its negative manifestations in societies around the world and in globalized situations.

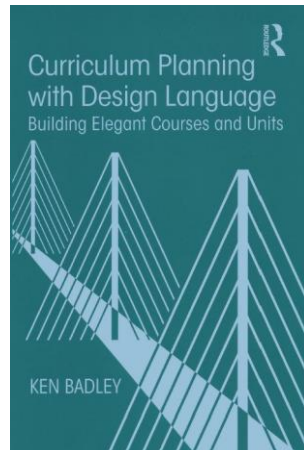
When the authors diagnose the problems they see in RE, they highlight issues of pedagogy. For Chater, pedagogy "is a complex set of cultural

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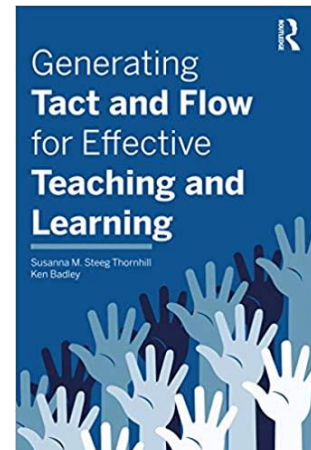
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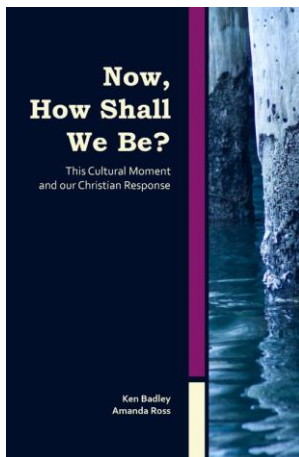
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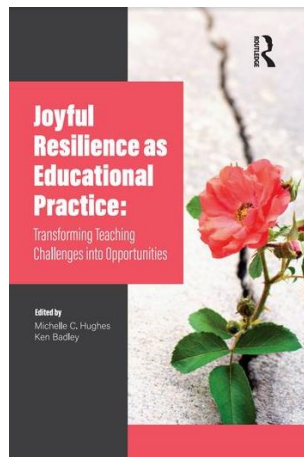
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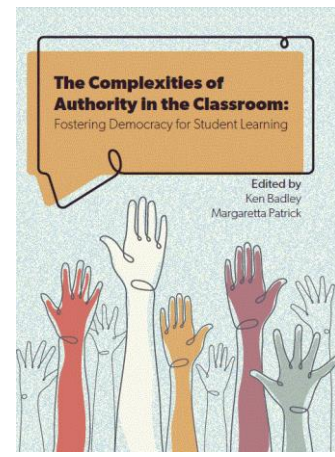
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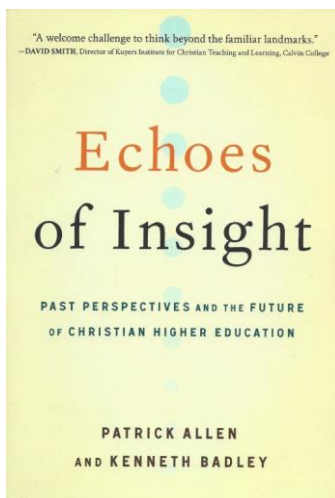


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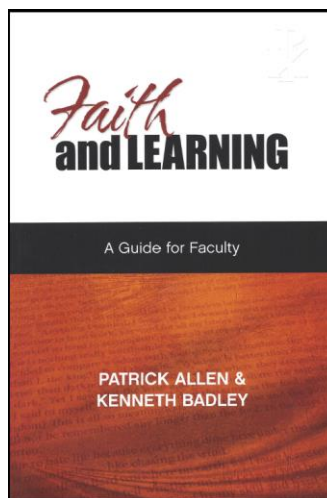


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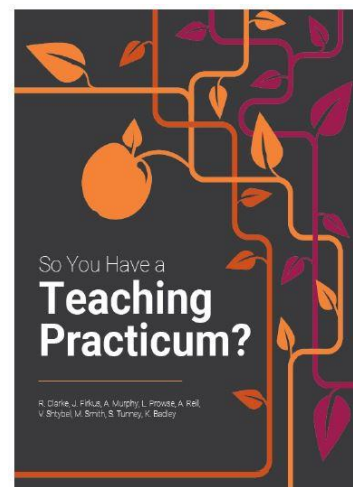


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