

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

A *History of Christianity* has been written primarily for Religious Education in Catholic secondary schools, ranging from Year 7 to Year 10 – some of the later units could also be studied in Year 11. However, the material will be just as suitable for the study of Christianity in other church-related schools and in Government school Religion Studies courses. There is also scope for their use in regular History programs. The material has been organised into five books, rather than in one large book, to provide the flexibility that is often needed when teaching this history.

Teachers need to be aware that the introductory discussion in this Guide presumes the teaching of Church History in the context of Religious Education. Nevertheless, what is said should still be useful to teachers who are using the student texts in history classes. The suggested strategies are appropriate in the different contexts.

WHY STUDY CHURCH HISTORY?

If you were to tell some high school students that they were going to study Church History, the response from many would probably be something like: "What a double whammy! History is bad enough, but Church History!!" About as close as some want to get to Church History would be 'veging out' watching a Hollywood religious cum Biblical epic like *Ben Hur*, or more

preferably, Monty Python's *Life of Brian*.

In a way these young people's reservations have some validity.

Too often in the past, Catholic Church History has been written in a sanctimonious and ponderous way. Events that were full of tension and conflict were represented blandly and always with the proviso that "of course it will all be right in the end, because God is on our side!"

Furthermore, the portrayal of the personalities involved made them out to be either all good, or just not making the grade according to strict Church norms. The contradictions and out and out nasty characteristics of 'saints' or popes were conveniently glossed over. Few if any alternative interpretations of events were explored.

Such presentations of Church History were self-defeating and quite unnecessary. There is much greater scope for people to feel empathy with and respect for individuals who have achieved greatness through personal struggles to overcome their own inadequacies than for people who seemed to be too good to be true – people who were only painted as 'sinful' until they 'saw the light', and from then on, any internal struggle or backsliding was carefully disguised in syrupy language so that mere mortals were not quite sure what it really meant.

As for particular interpretations of events such as the Reformation, besides being dishonest, they masked the truly great efforts of individuals to restore Gospel values to an extensively corrupt

Church administration – not to mention the entrenched antipathy for other Christian denominations that these interpretations engendered, or the disillusionment experienced by people when they read more widely.

VALUES IN STUDYING CHURCH HISTORY

In the last twenty years or so, there have been refreshing changes in the way Church History has been written. An interest in the study of Church History is being revived. In the best of circumstances, when there are good resources available and enthusiastic teachers to use them, the study of Church History can be of significant benefit to students, not just because it makes an important contribution to their general education, but because it can help them reflect on the present with some sense of perspective.

Young people live with a disposable culture. They can so readily bring only a limited vision to bear on their lives. If they can reflect on the past, the problems others have faced, how these problems were solved, how wrongs were redressed and how oppressive attitudes were changed, they should be better equipped to confront similar situations that face them.

Hopefully, the series *A History of Christianity* will be able to play a part in this process.

What is written here follows up and elaborates on our earlier writing about the teaching of Church History in Religious Education. Chapters 17 and 18 of *Missionaries to a Teenage Culture: Religious Education in a Time of Rapid Change* (1988) look in detail at the teaching of Church History and at the case for an historical core to the Secondary Religion Curriculum. In addition, it gives unit outlines and resource lists on a variety of topics. Parts of chapters 6 and 7 on methods and core content, and sections in the following curriculum chapters in *Teaching Religion in Catholic Schools: Theory and Practice* (1985) are concerned with practical aspects of teaching Church History.

THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

It has been our experience that extensive teachers' manuals, especially in Religious Education, have not always been welcomed or needed by teachers. Therefore the teacher's notes have been kept to a minimum. Although we believe that teachers with only scant background in Church History may be able to handle the material in the Church History series adequately, it is far preferable to have a good background knowledge of History when teaching it.

There are a number of good Church History books available that can be used for teacher reference; extracts from these have been included in the series. Some, like Paul Johnson's book, *History of Christianity*, though very enjoyable, presume a great deal of prior knowledge, and novices to the Church History game might be at a bit of a loss. We recommend the following for some initial background in the area:

T. Bokenkotter, 1977, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, Image Books, Doubleday, Garden City, New York.

J.D. Holmes and B.W. Bickers, 1983, *A Short History of the Catholic Church*, Burns and Oates, Tunbridge Wells.

OVERVIEW OF THE SERIES AND TEACHING FOCUS

The Church History series, *A History of Christianity*, does not present the story of Christianity chronologically. The various units in the five books explore the role of selected people and events in the history of Christianity that were crucial, or that brought about profound change. Some units also look at trends and/or institutions that evolved over many centuries, for example, monasteries, missionary activity, the papacy.

AIMS FOR STUDYING CHURCH HISTORY

One of the purposes of the series is to give students *an understanding of the wide sweep of Christian history* without swamping them with details and dates.

A principal aim in studying these books is to *help students become interpreters of what they are studying* rather than just acquire a great deal of knowledge. As a consequence, it is hoped that they will acquire some basic skills that will help them to *interpret and better understand events today* – skills that may develop through comparing past events with things that are happening now; attitudes to life then and now; attitudes to authority, women, the Church, afterlife etc.

But, more than anything, teachers should try to make the Church History accessible to students. By 'making accessible' we mean the study of history that can involve students in the story and ideas, but also that can involve them in seeking links with present day situations that they know about or perhaps have even experienced. It cannot be the study of history divorced from life. In the broadest sense it means presenting the material in a way that may enable students to make the history their own. Realistically, this will not happen with all students, nor will it happen all the time. Sometimes the meeting of all those elements will be only fleeting. But if the study is to be of real value, it should happen at least some of the time.

As far as possible the text has been written to allow and encourage such interchanges between the past events and present experience, so that the past can be a lens for interpreting the present and for theorising about the future. It is not always easy jumping from one time zone to another. Often teachers will find new and more authentic ways of allowing students scope to explore beyond the text. All such occasions are valued opportunities for significant learning.

What we are suggesting here is that *the text has to be brought to life by the teacher*. The narrow idea of dragging students mechanically and inexorably through all the paragraphs of text is totally foreign to our understanding of how a text is to be used in the teaching of history (and for that matter, in any other content area). Clearly, *the teacher has a pivotal role in the learning experience*. The idea of just giving students the

text to read is anathema! That is the travesty that gives a bad name to the idea of using text books in Religious Education and has led to the use of the negative label 'text book teaching'.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

We have included in this Teacher's guide many detailed suggestions for teacher initiative with the use of the texts. We intend that they will not only prove to be useful teaching strategies, but that they will suggest directions for teacher activity that they can develop much further. For those who may be new to the teaching of history of any sort or new to Religious Education, we hope that the strategies will provide an introduction that will help them teach the subject matter effectively and help develop valuable teaching skills.

Many student texts have the teaching strategies included. Our texts have review and discussion questions, but we have not included detailed teaching strategies. After consultation we decided that it would be artificial and stultifying if all these suggestions were included in the student text. Rather, it is a more open-ended process if teachers can be the facilitators in the exploration of the history, adding from their own particular strengths to enhance and bring the study to life. Hence, the suggested strategies are in the teacher's guide.

What follows are some suggestions from the authors and many others, especially students, as to the possible ways the material in the text can be enhanced.

The way in which many of the units are written makes links with the present day in an attempt to enhance students' understanding of the importance and relevance of a sense of history. For example, in the unit on Confraternities, students can see that the concerns of the people who founded these confraternities are still operative in institutions such as St Vincent De Paul and the Red Cross. These and similar institutions have evolved from Medieval confraternities. Similarly, the section on the Peace of God and the Truce of

God, shows that these 'doctrines' were among the first attempts to explore ways of bringing peace to the world.

In some units there are long extracts from primary source material. These have been included to give students a feeling for what people observed and felt about issues at the time, and also to ask students to evaluate the perspectives of eye-witness accounts and to judge how these can be used as historical/sociological data. For example, two versions of Pope Urban's speech at Clermont, urging Christians to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims, have been included in the unit *Soldiers of Allah, Soldiers of Christ*. One is a factual, inspirational speech; the other is padded out with references to atrocities committed by Muslims who tried to prevent Christians going to the Holy Land. The distinctive purposes of the two versions are clear and students should be encouraged to explore the use of language and 'reporting for effect' which still goes on today.

Furthermore, just as people in the Middle Ages had to make decisions about important issues and had to seek out information and advice to help them make these decisions, students too are in a similar situation. The reporting of speeches such as Pope Urban's was meant to convince people they had to go on the Crusades to take back the Holy Land from the Muslims. How are we influenced today about issues that concern us? What sort of 'voices' do we listen to? How are we persuaded? How do we become well informed? In this way teachers should refer to current events to help students see how people go about making up their minds about issues.

One of the main problems that confronts all teachers of history is helping students to put into

historical perspective when events occurred, for example, what was happening in the Eastern Roman Empire while the West was being ravaged by barbarians; when the Middle Ages start and when they finish, and where they fit in the overall scheme of history. This understanding of historical events and historical continuity is difficult to teach. It is only when one has read a lot of history that these connections can be easily made.

This series attempts to put events into a wider perspective and give students some sense of historical continuity. However, *teachers will need to spend time at the beginning of each unit siting it both geographically and historically*, that is, where it happened and when. The books and the units have been written so that they can be studied as a whole; or if this is not possible within a particular school's Religion program, that they can be studied individually as integral units. *With this in mind, some information is repeated in a number of chapters, as are some of the maps.*

The questions that sometimes accompany illustrations and photographs should be used to break up the reading of the units, and also for initiating some further discussion if and when appropriate. It is recommended that all the review questions be done in written form. The activities and projects are optional according to the time allocated to Church History in the Religion program.

It is important that *the text of each unit be read out loud in class*.

The index at the end of each book details the main personalities, events and concepts that are included in that book.

The Appendix of this guide gives a summary of teaching methods and notes on lesson planning for Church History.

Book 1

BEGINNINGS

OVERVIEW

The most important point to make in these introductory units is the very humble beginnings and the gradual spread of Christianity, firstly in the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, then in the Western half.

The first four units of work provide a great deal of information. However, as noted above, this is where the teacher has to show students that the most important thing is not the acquisition of information in terms of being able to recall it, but learning how to use this information to interpret the historical events.

In some of the review and other questions, for example, in the unit of work on *St Paul*, where students are asked to give reasons why the people in the illustration are so small by comparison to St Paul, the teacher should tell students that in this, as in other such questions throughout the series, there are no single 'right' answers. What is required is a plausible answer after consideration of the information supplied.

It should be explained to students that the Roman Empire was divided into two separate parts and that each had a different cultural style, stemming from the more pragmatic Romans in the West and the learned, philosophical and more argumentative Greeks in the East.

Maps have been provided at the beginning of most of the early units to make the location of the

Holy Land easier to find. A large map of the world would be useful to give students a clear idea of the location of Palestine vis-a-vis the rest of the known world. Some history departments may have maps that show the boundaries of the Ancient Roman Empire, and the names of cities in the Empire. These would also be a useful resource.

Some of the concepts in the first unit in Book 1 are quite difficult and the teacher may need to stop, explain and discuss what is being read. There are also some long New Testament passages and these should be used as a basis for study and further research. Students often find reading the New Testament boring. Putting events into some sort of context may give students greater insight into the events which brought about the founding of the new Christian religion; consequently, they may be better able to read the New Testament with greater understanding.

Where possible, the teacher should encourage students to reflect on the difficulties of starting an organisation from scratch. Students can only have some empathy with the hardships and experiences that faced the Apostles if they can relate and compare these with similar situations they may have experienced or with experiences they know about. The teacher could ask students to think of a parallel situation with that of St Paul going to Jerusalem to argue for changes in the

laws regulating the Church community.

Teachers should spend some time at the beginning of each unit making sure students understand the information included on the maps.

As much as possible, teachers should incorporate various activities as a part of the Church History study. Years 7 and 8 students should be encouraged to explore this time of history through activities such as dramatic readings (for example, the debates of the Council of Jerusalem), map drawing, cartoons of selected events, re-enactment of special events (for example, early church ceremonies). There are videos available on St Paul and St Peter. A recent television mini-series called *Anno Domini* (more accurate than the usual Hollywood biblical-religious epics) could be shown selectively to some effect. Especially for younger students, it is important to make the history as experiential, immediate and accessible as possible.

SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

UNIT 1

ST PAUL AND THE GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1. Make sure students know exactly where Palestine is in relation to the rest of the world.

2. List words like Nazarene, Pharisee, Essene, Zealot on the board to identify groups within Judaism and build up a profile of the social and political environment in which Jesus lived and preached.

3. Discuss why Saul was against the early Christians. What sort of a person might Saul be if he felt so strongly about heretics? Try to compile a biography of Paul by listing a number of words or phrases that the students might suggest about Paul as a person. These should be listed on the board.

Teachers could then add at the end that Paul was an enigmatic man, a real 'fire-eater' when he

spoke and generally a very tough customer. Does this picture of him emerge from what they have known or read about him?

4. Present a dramatic reading of Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus.

5. On a large map chart Paul's journeys. On the board list some words or phrases to describe what it might have been like to travel such long distances in Roman times.

6. Do a dramatic reading of the debates at the Council of Jerusalem, that is, with a narrator and others reading in parts. The text supplied can be used as a script.

7. Read the letter to the Ephesians (in the text) and explain what it means in terms of Paul's teaching/theology.

UNIT 2

INFLUENCES ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY

1. The point to make in this unit is how different cultures influenced early Christianity.

2. Recall for students the geographical location of Palestine, making sure they know that the Roman Empire was divided into Western and Eastern parts. (Sounds like repetition, but it's important.)

3. The questions and statements in boxes in the text can be used as stimulus exercises to help students relate historical events to their present knowledge and experience. For example, in the statement, "Give some examples of the changes in society in the last 10 years that you think have been very important." Responses such as, the changes in Eastern Europe and Russia, more women going out to work, improved technology etc. are all acceptable. Most thirteen or fourteen-year-olds will have a limited understanding of current events, so don't expect too much – the

main purpose of the stimulus questions here is to arouse student interest and hopefully get them involved.

4. In relation to the stimulus question on the persecution of Jews throughout history, some students may not be aware that this has been the case. If students have very limited backgrounds, this lack of knowledge can be supplemented by the teacher or can be used as an extension project for the class. Anti-semitism is alive and well in many countries in the world, including our own. It would be advantageous when the opportunity arises, to address the issue.

In some States in the United States and Australia, there are racial vilification laws which mean that a person can be prosecuted for making racial slurs. The statement such laws make to society is that racism or the like is unacceptable and should not exist, but as some people cannot abide by such ideals, laws must be put in place to prevent harm being inflicted on people.

5. In terms of the ideals of Judaism and Christianity, this is an important concept to bring home to students: that all religions make rules/regulations/laws to guide people to lead happy, productive, good lives; and society and governments form laws to ensure that people who do not abide by ideals can be sought out and controlled as much as possible by other means. Christian ideals of peace and justice, among other things, have been directly inherited from the Jewish faith.

UNIT 3

THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE 30-400 C.E.

1. This may seem to be harping on the point, but make sure students recall the geographical location of Palestine and the divisions of the Roman Empire.

2. The teacher could run a quick quiz on the 'philosophies' as they were identified in the

previous chapter.

3. Students could be asked what roles philosophers play in society today.

4. If there are any children from rural areas in the class, or vice versa, the class could identify any characteristics attributed to country/city people, and ask if they think nowadays there is a different attitude to, say, church-going in the country or the city. Do they think city people are more ready for new ideas than country people?

UNIT 4

THE CHURCH OF ROME: WHY ROME BECAME THE MOST IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN CITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE 60-600 C.E.

1. Make sure students have a clear understanding of the time scale; that is, how long did these events occur after the death of Jesus?

2. Students need to be aware that, especially in the first decades of Christianity, people were still trying to work out how to run things. There was not the organisation that students now identify with the Catholic or other mainstream religious denominations.

3. The question of church authority/organisation can be a tricky one with older students. It can lead to a good old Church bashing session – many students have problems with the organisational, institutional Church. This section should be taken only as far as providing a basis for understanding the reasons why Church authority developed.

4. A good video to show with this unit of work is *On this Rock: A Look Inside the Vatican*, distributed by Key Book Services, PO Box 654, Mona Vale NSW 2103. It shows the Vatican today and its role in the world. This gives an interesting

contrast with the study of the Church of Rome in the early centuries.

UNIT 5

HOW THE EARLY CHRISTIANS PRAYED AND WORSHIPPED 60-600 C.E.

This unit of work lends itself to a number of valuable, experiential exercises.

1. The long primary source extracts can be used for dramatic reading or staged as short plays.

2. Some of the early Christian symbols for Baptism and Eucharist can be drawn or made into a collage – more information on these symbols

can be found in *Sacred Texts, Sacred Space, Sacred Objects, Sacred Symbols*, by M. Crawford and G. Rossiter, Spectrum Publications, Melbourne, 1991, and other similar texts. The students' art work should be put on display in the classrooms or in a display area.

3. It would be fitting to organise a liturgy, paraliturgy or some prayer service to conclude the unit of work. Perhaps some special offering in terms of money, or prayers for special concerns or for special groups could be prepared as a highlight of the service, much in the same way as early Christians brought offerings of food and money for the needy in their community.

Book 2

CHALLENGES

OVERVIEW

The main focus in Book 2 is the challenges to the early Christian Church and community. These units explore the different ways the early Church community and its leaders dealt with administrative, doctrinal and social challenges to its mission to spread the Gospel. Where possible, some direct link with today's world has been made in the various review questions at the end of each unit of work or in the captions accompanying some of the photos and illustrations.

The unit *Teachers, Preachers and Hermits* is demanding and needs to be complemented with some videos on modern day preachers and exceptional people. Students have heard about Mother Teresa so often that perhaps it may be a good idea to start off with someone else.

The Columban video library has some excellent half hour to one hour programs on exceptional people which could be used to great advantage. These lend themselves to comparison with the early Church preachers and leaders because the concerns and ideals of both are very similar despite the passage of time. Columban videos can be booked for hire or can be bought for about \$25 to \$50; most are about \$25. For bookings ring, write or fax to Melbourne: *Columban Mission, 69 Woodland Street, North Essendon, VIC, 3041*, Telephone (03) 379 3544, Fax (03) 379 6040; Sydney: *Sydney Catholic*

Mission Office, 255A Liverpool Road (P.O. Box 216), Ashfield, NSW, 2131, Telephone (02) 716 7144, Fax (02) 716 7261. The Columban Missions supply a comprehensive catalogue of videos with a short commentary on each of the areas covered. The Mission has offices in most countries. Holdings at audiovisual resource centres run by the Christian Churches, Catholic Education Offices etc. should also be consulted.

The unit of work, *Monasteries*, is an important one that draws together a time spanning some 1200 years. This fact (the 1200 years) must be made clear to students at the beginning of the study. The reason such a time span has been chosen is to enable students to develop a sense of the crucial role that monasteries played in the establishment of the Church, the preservation and development of Christian literature, spirituality, government, dogma, in fact in all aspects of Western and Christian culture. Throughout the ages monasteries were always centres of renewal in times of corruption and decay.

Where possible, students should visit a monastery, convent or cathedral precinct to familiarise themselves with the role that such institutions play in today's society. Even small local parish churches will still have the remnants of some of the services offered to people in Christian communities throughout the last 2000 years.

SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

UNIT 1

SOME EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY 300-450 C.E.: TEACHERS, PREACHERS AND HERMITS

1. The role of the early Christian teachers and preachers is important to know per se – but there are other reasons that these should be made known to students.

2. It would be important to point out that the concerns of early Christian preachers and teachers were similar to the concerns people have today and that people who were identified as saints were not all 'goodies-goodies'. In fact, some were not even likeable.

3. It is important to break the stereotypic ideal of a 'saint' as someone who was good and kind and sweet and loving. In fact, some of these early saints were wily, hardbitten, tough customers. So, obviously the question to ask is why did the Church make them saints? It's a good question – and one the students should explore. Part of the answer is that despite their own contradictory personalities and their own peculiarities, they stuck to what they believed in, cared for the welfare of others and would not desert the ship in the face of adversity. No doubt there were also some fairly political judgments on the part of the Church in its decision to make certain people saints.

Some excerpts from *The Devil's Advocate*, by Morris West, could be used to great effect. There is a film version, but it may not be available on video. The Church's process to determine whether a person is a saint or not, is fascinating. There are at the present time a number of people who are being considered for sainthood. This could be an extension exercise for the class – to find out who these people are and how the Church is going about deciding who should be made a

saint. (Maximilian Kolbe is one example of someone who has been made a saint in recent years.)

4. The excerpt on St Simon Stylites has been included here not merely for its eccentric appeal but also because it reflects a way of searching for holiness, meaning and purpose, that was extreme. Obviously, there are still people nowadays who follow such a road. Extreme sects are part of all religions.

5. The unit mentions that there were also Desert Mothers, but their story and contribution is hardly known. This opens up the whole debate about the role of women in Christianity. It can be a very good area for exploration or it could get bogged down and meander endlessly. Teachers will need to use their discretion on this one and look up other references, particularly in Book 5.

UNIT 2

CHALLENGES TO THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH: PERSECUTIONS AND HERESIES

1. It is important that students know the time span of the era that they are studying. For example, the study of exceptional people in early Christianity looks at a time span of 150 years. Whereas the unit of work on monasteries spans 1200 years. The reason that these are studied together in this book is to show how individuals responded to and influenced the course of Christian history; that is, how challenges to the Church and Church community were met by outstanding men and women.

2. The section which deals with persecutions of Christians etc. is straightforward enough. Most students like a bit of blood and gore, so it is not too problematic.

3. The second part of the unit on heresies is far more difficult. A good way to make the study

accessible is to ask students to think about how they would feel if something they believed in strongly was under attack from others and if they felt that their attackers were going to damage their beliefs and what they stood for. It is appropriate to give everyday examples to help students to understand a more complex issue. The following is not a particularly good example, but teachers and students may come up with others: How would a rugby league/union football community feel if they were told by, say, a soccer community that they should radically change the code of their game; and if officials from the soccer community were actively trying to recruit their members to bring about these changes.

What teachers need to do is help students see how important the issue of heresies was to many people at the time. Also, the violence that these issues aroused can be likened to the way people nowadays can clash over ideological differences, for example, the student protests in China, the people's revolutions in Eastern Europe, the Kurdish uprising in Iraq. There have always been people in the world prepared to die for what they believe to be right, and this is the core of what is being studied in the chapter on heresies and persecutions.

4. A part of the section on heresies deals with the teachings about the nature of God. Teaching students about the Trinity has never been easy. Obviously, neither is the doctrine. The conflict aroused by the Arian heresy puts the teaching about the nature of God and the Trinity into a historical context. This historical study can be supplemented by a lesson on the doctrine of the Trinity that outlines the main Christian teachings (Refer to R. McBrien's *Catholicism* [teacher reference], or the *Collins Dove Dictionary for Young Catholics* by L. Woods [student reference])

5. Students should be encouraged to explore this time of history through activities such as dramatic readings, cartoons of selected events,

re-enactment of special events. The extracts included in the text can be used as a script; for example, the description of the martyrs of Lyons, the interrogation of Christians by Roman authorities.

UNIT 3 MONASTERIES

1. It should be made clear that the study covers a period of twelve centuries. The changes and developments did not occur quickly. Cycles of decay and renewal were evident in the histories of monasteries. An original idea was often followed with great enthusiasm. However, as the idea became institutionalised, some inertia developed.

2. Even though there may have been corruption at times in the monasteries, there were always individuals in the monasteries who were trying to live a genuine religious life. To some extent, corruption may have been more due to social and political forces than to a change in the ideals of the monks themselves. There always seemed to be individuals who were trying to renew and reform monastic life to get back to the ideals shown in early Christianity.

3. The students should consider that for people who did not see life on earth as important in itself but rather as a preparation for life in heaven, the deprivations in monastic life were not seen as real privations. There is a need to have perspective on what the privations meant by contrast with the many natural privations people would have had in ordinary life during those times.

4. People in monastic orders who saw this life as a preparation for heaven would regard the monastic life as one of fulfilment rather than of denial. Therefore it made sense to avoid worldly pleasures thus ensuring a place in heaven.

5. Reference can be made to junior secondary history texts that have good illustrations to supplement this study.

6. In Europe it is easy for students to envisage the role played by monasteries in the lives of people. In places like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States etc, the close association between monasteries and the outside world is more difficult to convey. Where possible, students should try to visit a monastery, or a religious community, or should invite a guest speaker from one of these orders to talk to them about the role of monasteries in the religious life

of the general community.

7. Some members of Greek or Russian Orthodox communities may be willing to talk to students about the monastic tradition of Eastern Christianity, e.g. the monasteries of Mount Athos in Greece. Some national tourist offices have films about monasteries and Medieval centres. The language staff in the school may show films that would also be appropriate.

Book 3

DECAY AND RENEWAL

OVERVIEW

The units in Book 3 in one way or another deal with the problems faced by the Christian communities from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries. In very broad terms these could be described as problems of corruption and dislocation within the Church, and as a balance, the forces that worked for the renewal of the Church and the Christian community.

SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

UNIT 1

THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS – 400 TO 1000 C.E.

1. This unit looks at the ways in which different barbarian tribes affected the social, political, economic and religious structures of the Christian Church and Roman society, especially in the Western part of the Roman Empire. This should be linked with the unit on missionaries as many of the themes are interrelated.

2. Make clear the time span of the Barbarian invasions. Also point out that some were relatively peaceful while others were devastatingly violent.

3. Some clarification is needed of why the government of Rome failed to cope with the influx of barbarians. Underscore this when going through the text.

4. The encounter between Pope Leo the Great and Attila the Hun is one of those grand scenes in history. It would be a good diversion to read a short account of it. What follows is one account; there are references to this incident in many Church History books.

In the middle of the fifth century, Attila, with his vast army of Huns was causing destruction and death in many places in Europe. The Huns were nomadic, living in makeshift shelters and moving to where food was available then moving on again when they had exhausted the supplies.

Their method of operation was brutal: they looted and burned towns, took slaves or slaughtered as they wished. The Huns were expert archers and skilled at mounted warfare.

Accompanying Attila and his hordes (which included the usual lot of camp followers, women, children, slaves), were some Germanic barbarian groups who had joined the Huns in the hope of scavenging some loot.

The Huns had originally come from the grasslands of Asia, as far east as China. Their first attempt at pillaging and burning was in Constantinople, but the Eastern emperor bribed Attila with a huge amount of gold and the Huns turned their attention elsewhere.

In Gaul, just south of what is now Paris, an army of Visigoths, Franks, Burgundians and Romans fought a ferocious battle with the Huns and stopped then advancing westwards.

Attila then moved his hordes into northern Italy. Warned of his advance, the wealthy inhabitants of Aquileia, left their homes and took refuge on the islands of a lagoon in the Gulf of Venice. (That's how the city came to be founded.)

The Western emperor in Rome did not have enough troops to face Attila so he asked Pope Leo to try to negotiate for peace. In 452 Leo set out to meet Attila armed, as it is recorded, with only his 'wisdom and his statesmanship.'

There are no records of what Leo said to Attila, but the fact is that the Huns stopped their advance and withdrew. A short time later, Attila was found dead, some say he was killed by his wife.

There is a small plaque on the bend of a narrow road in northern Italy that commemorates the meeting place of Attila and Pope Leo.

5. Stop at the section 'How did the Western Christian Church react to the barbarian invasions' and draw a rough time line of events up to that time so as to orient students in the story so far.

6. The section on the Viking invasion can be complemented by looking at other history texts specifically on the Vikings. There should be copies of these in most school libraries.

7. Make sure students are still keeping in mind the *time when these events are taking place*.

8. This unit of work does not go into very much detail about feudalism. If students are interested, other history texts on feudalism can be used to flesh out these details.

9. List on the board students' ideas about the

kind of life they think a king, knight and peasant lived in feudal times.

UNIT 2

MISSIONARIES – THE FIRST TWELVE CENTURIES

1. For many adult Christians today the missionary endeavours of various Christian denominations have come under a cloud. Students may not be aware of this. A short item to that effect has been included in the text. It would be important for the teacher to observe that there are a number of churches which have reviewed their earlier methods of missionary activity and no longer take such a paternalistic attitude to indigenous groups. There are many more issues that could be discussed in this topic, but it would require a level of knowledge and sophistication beyond most high school students.

2. Ask students to list some things that missionaries might have thought important to take with them on the journey.

3. On a map trace the route taken by one or more of the missionaries mentioned in the text. Remind the students that the landscape would have been markedly different at the time. List some of the dangers the missionaries may have faced on each of the journeys. Check the map to indicate special features such as forests, mountains, rivers.

4. The Columban video library has some exceptional videos on missionaries to various countries in the world, but in particular to Latin America, Peru and the Philippines. See the reference to the Columban Mission Offices in the Overview to Book 2.

5. In every country in the world there are some examples of men and women who have become missionaries; for example, in Australia, men like Flynn of the Outback. A short biography of these

could be presented to the class, stating their background, ideals, aims and achievements.

UNIT 3

THE CHURCH OF THE EAST AND THE CHURCH OF THE WEST

1. One of the main points to stress at the outset of this study is the differences between the Western and Eastern experiences/traditions of Christianity. Though tensions between these two parts of the world had existed for hundreds of years during pre-Christian and Christian times, these were exacerbated as a result of the barbarian invasions (mainly in the West), the sacking of Constantinople by the Crusaders, and the different approaches to doctrine and practice between the West and the East.

2. Students could visit an Orthodox Church or one from an Eastern rite. If that is not possible, they could invite a fellow student who belongs to a different rite to present a short speech, or they could invite a Maronite, Russian Orthodox or Greek Orthodox priest etc. to come and give a talk to the class about their tradition.

3. Check audiovisual libraries for videos or slide sets on icons. These will often include information about the place of icons in Eastern spirituality. (Note the Catholic Audio Visual Communications (CAVC) production *Icons*.)

UNIT 4

SOLDIERS OF ALLAH, SOLDIERS OF CHRIST

1. The story of the Crusades is fairly common general knowledge. The opening extract from a knight's chronicle, has been used to set the scene of the Crusades and to bring home the reality of the ideals for which the Crusades were supposedly fought.

2. Studying the Crusades is still relevant today, and students should be encouraged to reflect on the issues at present being discussed in relation to the Middle East. Where possible, students should be asked to consider whether history can teach any valuable lessons.

3. As a part of this unit, students can debate the question of the rights and wrongs of going to war.

4. Both sides in the conflict claimed to have God on their side. How can this be true?

5. The main objective of the Crusades was never achieved. Ask students to suggest how they would have negotiated access to the Holy Land. Some non-violent conflict resolution skills could be used here.

6. What are present day arrangements for visitors to the Holy land?

Book 4

MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY – PART ONE

OVERVIEW

The Middle Ages is a central and crucial study in any Church History. This first book gives some reasons why Medieval history should be studied by students. It also looks at various aspects of Medieval life that may give students insight into how Medieval people understood their purpose and meaning of life on earth and how they could use this insight to look at the different ways we now perceive meaning and purpose in our lives.

Other units explore different aspects of Medieval life and the role of the Church and religion in the lives of people.

SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

UNIT 1

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN THE MIDDLE AGES

UNIT 2

LIFE IN A MEDIEVAL VILLAGE COMMUNITY

1. The material in these two units is self-explanatory. These units have a number of review questions and activities included in the text.

2. Gargoyles were placed on Church buildings to ward off evil.

UNIT 3

PILGRIMAGES AND SHRINES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

1. The BBC television series, *The Christians*, presented and written by Bamber Gascoigne, has a program on pilgrimages which is recommended – even though Gascoigne's commentary is somewhat scholarly and therefore difficult for some high school students, it is nevertheless good viewing.

2. There are also films on pilgrimages to Fatima and Lourdes. (*The Song of Bernadette* is not suitable!)

3. Students can interview older members of their family or others about any religious processions they may have participated in when they were younger, or now. Ask them to identify the purpose of the procession, the atmosphere of the procession, and what the activity said about the spirituality of the participants.

4. Can students name any secular equivalent to the religious procession? (e.g. peace rallies, visits to special places of interest, like Gracelands [quasi-religious?]).

UNIT 4

WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL SOCIETY

This unit of work may arouse some tension. Teachers have expressed reservations about undertaking a study on sexism; though all maintain that it is important to raise such an issue, some prefer the material presented to be mild and non-confrontative. While it is important to present material that is impartial, it is equally important to present material that will challenge what are entrenched attitudes about the place of women in society.

For some individuals even this will constitute a male-bashing session. Very little can be done to appease such sensibilities. What is important here is to allow students scope to study and reflect on the material presented in this unit of work. Extension work on sexism would be a valuable accompaniment.

UNIT 5

MYSTERY AND MORALITY PLAYS

UNIT 6

“THE INTERLUDE OF YOUTH”,
A MORALITY PLAY FROM SIXTEENTH
CENTURY ENGLAND

1. The study of mystery and morality plays included in this book has been used to great effect as a complement to studies on conscience and moral decision-making. Students should be encouraged to write their own morality plays and perform them for the class. There are some directives and suggestions in the text as to what topics might be chosen.

2. Simple costumes that symbolise the various characters, e.g. a big cut-out heart or star for the good-guys and horns for the bad-guys can add to the performance of the plays.

Book 5

MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY – PART TWO

OVERVIEW

This book looks at some of the most important events and people who influenced the nature and course of Christianity in the latter part of the Middle Ages. Sensational events such as the Inquisition and the Black Death have been included to give students an understanding of how people have responded to profoundly disturbing events.

The history of the papacy has deliberately been kept short because much of its history details the power struggles of secular and clerical rulers, which, though important to know about, is difficult for students to fully understand. What has been included are some important events and individuals who have shaped the papacy.

SUGGESTED TEACHING STRATEGIES

UNIT 1

THE PAPACY

1. There is an excellent 35 minute video, *On this Rock: A Look Inside the Vatican*, distributed by Key Book Services, PO Box 654, Mona Vale NSW 2103. It covers the Vatican and its place in the world today.

2. The film *Becket* can also be used as it gives a good presentation of the conflict between Church and State, between secular ruler and papacy and archbishop.

UNIT 2

PERSECUTION AND PEACE: THE INQUISITION AND THE TRUCE OF GOD

1. There are people today who continue to be persecuted for their religious and political beliefs. There are stories almost weekly of such events. The actions of the Church in initiating and carrying out inquisition trials cannot be glossed over. These things were simply horrendous.

2. As part of this study, students could look at the role of the Church in peace and justice issues. The Columban videos have a section on peace and development and any one of those films would be appropriate.

3. The film *Romero* would be excellent to show here. Encourage students to find out about people who have spoken out for justice and peace.

4. The role of agencies such as Amnesty International could also be examined. Local Amnesty offices often have a guest speaker program.

UNIT 3

MENDICANT ORDERS AND CONFRATERNITIES

1. The film *Brother Sun and Sister Moon* is recommended – it is the life of St Francis. Some

incidents portrayed are fictional, but it gives an excellent view of Medieval Assisi.

2. It would be appropriate to show a video on care for the environment or on a non-clerical community that is today concerned with the plight of individuals; for example, Amnesty International or the Wilderness Society or conservation groups. All such interest groups stem from the Medieval confraternities. The Columban Missions have audio-visual material (videos) on the environment (*Vanishing Earth Music, To Save a People* and *Death of a Forest* – any of those would be suitable). See the reference in the Overview to Book Two. This study underlines the fact that, as in the Middle Ages, Christian communities have not just concerned themselves with the spiritual welfare of their members, but also with the physical and ecological welfare of all people and the earth.

3. Do students think that the mainline churches today are catering for the needs of people in cities?

UNIT 4

THE BLACK DEATH

1. There is usually no problem getting students interested in the Black Death.

2. Implicit in this unit of work are the issues of racism and the seeking of scapegoats in a time of turmoil (e.g. Jews and minority groups). Are there any parallels today? Who are the people usually 'blamed' for the spread of AIDS?

3. Historians believe that the number of bath-houses in cities diminished mainly because Church authorities said that the nakedness on parade in such places encouraged sinful behaviour and therefore they had to be shut down. The devastation caused by the barbarian invasions would also have taken its toll on such establishments. The barbarians were not known for their cleanliness, so obviously they had no vested interest in their upkeep.