Towards an instrument for measuring religious tolerance among educators and their students worldwide

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Preface

This monograph forms part of the output of a research project about the issue of religious tolerance among educators, particularly teachers and their students or pupils. A series of articles on religious tolerance has already been published or is currently in press, each covering only a specific facet of the problem. It was envisaged right from the outset that not only conceptual and theoretical investigations would be launched into the matter of religious tolerance in education but that empirical work should also be done, in the form of a comparative study of how the 203 member states of the United Nations have been dealing with religious differences and with religion (education), and in the form of a questionnaire that could probe the degree of religious tolerance displayed by educators (teachers) and student teachers, and the children in their care. This explains the origin of this monograph. It covers a number of conceptual and theoretical aspects regarding religious tolerance that normally would not be discussed in disparate journal articles, despite their importance for establishing the conceptual and theoretical substratum for a questionnaire. In this monograph, each of the items of the proposed questionnaire flows from a specific conceptually and theoretically developed viewpoint, enabling researchers to acquire a detailed picture of the extent to which educators and their students are tolerant of the religious views of others of a different religious persuasion.

The findings after the eventual application of the questionnaire will be of the greatest import for practising teachers and their pupils as well as for student teachers, in mono-religious, multi-religious, purported non-religious, post-religious, secular and / or post-secular\(^1\) settings (Taylor, 2007; Miedema, 2012). The findings will inform the former that there is a wider world outside of their particularist setting for which they have to prepare their students, and it will assist them to devise the necessary strategies for helping their students to cope with the challenges of multi-religionism. It will also enable them and their pupils to pre-empt the possible dangers of religious exclusivism, inclusivism and hence intolerance. Those in multi-religious and the other settings mentioned above, in turn, might learn from the results of the survey that they live in a complex world for which they have to prepare their students; they will in the process also learn (how) to avoid the possible dangers of unprincipled tolerance and laissez faire relativism.

I hereby express my gratitude to Dr Bram de Muynck, Lecturer at the Driestar Educatief, for the publication of this monograph, and especially to the panel of experts that he convened for the purpose of critically reviewing the manuscript. I also thank my colleagues Ferdinand Potgieter and Charl Wolhuter who critically reviewed the text of this monograph. I take responsibility for any mistakes and shortcomings remaining after this painstaking process and would welcome any advice for the improvement not only of this monograph but also of the questionnaire that it has given birth to.

Hannes van der Walt

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\(^1\)“Post-secular” in this context refers to the period in which we now live, a period in which a variety of meaning choices, including choices of a religious or spiritual nature, is possible.
Measuring religious tolerance in education

Towards an instrument for measuring religious tolerance among educators and their students worldwide

The need for an instrument to measure religious tolerance

While his remark may sound cynical, Gray (2003: 12) is probably right in saying that humanity as such does not exist; there are only human beings driven by conflicting needs and illusions, and subject to every kind of infirmity of will and judgement. Because of this, human beings are unable to live together peacefully, and are often engaged in strife, whether on a personal, community or (inter-)national level. For some or other reason, people are either always in competition with one another or in conflict. Conflict can be caused by different interests, aspirations, gender, race, religion and faith. Alford (2009: 57) regards the latter, in the form of religious fundamentalism, as the cause of many of the world’s ills, including religious intolerance.

A study of the role played by religious ideas in the great clashes between civilisations is instructive (Wright, 2010: 5). Even Christianity which generally regards itself as a balanced religion (with exceptions, of course) has not always been good. According to Van der Walt (2007: 159), the many heresies among Christians, injustice and even violence in the name of Christendom all through the past 2000 years clearly illustrate the fact that no faith is perfect and above criticism. Much of Christianity’s history since the 17th century concurred with the rise of modernism, of which the Holocaust is emblematic.

Despite unparalleled advances in almost every field of human endeavour, especially technology, our streets abound with the hungry and homeless, violence and war continue to plague us (Olthuis, 2012: 2/7). Especially religious conflict is rife, as can be observed in the Middle East, North and West Africa, and of which the attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 can be regarded as emblematic. No matter how promising the idea of non-oppositional differences with other people, the ever-present economy of violence makes it extremely difficult if not impossible to put into practice, says Olthuis.

To further demonstrate the nature of the minefield in which we find ourselves with regard to religious violence and conflict, De Vos (2011) mentions that many passages in religious texts might appear inexplicable, demonstrably false, deeply hurtful, offensive and harmful to any reasonable person not blinded by his or her own cultural and religious commitments. According to him, many

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Readers wishing to begin with a technical discussion of the meaning of “tolerance” could first read Sections 7 and 8 of this monograph, particularly the second technical point where the word is semantically examined. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “tolerance” can mean any of the following: 1. the capacity to endure pain or hardship: endurance, fortitude, stamina; 2. sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one’s own (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tolerance). (In)tolerance is an attitude with regard to, or response to a characteristic of an individuals or of a group; religious (in)tolerance, in particular is seen as an attitude that (a) flows from religious motives and/or (b) is directed at persons or groups from other religions.
passages in the Bible and the Quran may be interpreted as containing hate speech against women, gay men and lesbians, while other passages may be interpreted as inciting violence, either directly or indirectly, against women, gay men and lesbians. Other examples of religious intolerance are the reactions of many people to the Rastafarian claim that partaking in the holy herb of cannabis will bring them closer to God, to the widespread practice among Muslims and Jews to cut off a part of a baby boy’s penis shortly after birth, and to the practice among Hindu school girls who attempt to wear nose studs in state schools in South Africa (De Vos, 2011b).

The need for tolerance has not only increased because of an epidemic of hate crimes, but also because of daily social interactions that require treating one another with respect and dignity. (Religious) intolerance is most frequently reflected in classroom, hallway and playground insults, angry outbursts, social cliques, put-downs and dismissals of others’ viewpoints during class discussions (cf. Gateways to Better Education, 2005: 1,2; Schweitzer, 2007: 89).

The current strife in Syria, the recent “Arabic Spring” uprisings and the conflict between the Muslim north and the Christian south of Nigeria and Mali count as examples of religious (and ethnic) conflict. Peck (2006: 173) correctly points out that differences can exist between atheists and theistic believers as well as within religious groups. “We see dogmatism, and proceeding from dogmatism, we see wars and inquisitions and persecutions. We see hypocrisy: people professing the brotherhood of man killing their fellows in the name of faith, lining their pockets at the expense of others, and practicing all manner of brutality” (Peck, 2006: 184). In Wright’s (2009: 421) view, “the bulk of westerners and the bulk of Muslims are in a deeply non-zero-sum relationship, [and] by and large aren’t very good at extending moral imagination to one another”. Alford (2009: 57) concurs with him in saying that religious fundamentalism seems to be the cause of many of the world’s ills, the reason for this being that people tend to operate from a narrower frame of reference (world view) than what they are capable of, thereby failing to transcend the influence of their particular religion, culture, particular set of parents and childhood experience upon their understanding (Peck, 2006: 180).

Tensions and attitudes such as those just mentioned are understandable because of the importance of religion to every person. Religious tenets, convictions, attitudes and behaviours of people that contradict one’s own deepest religious convictions are not easily tolerated, and are often seen as a threat. On the one hand, Van der Walt (2007: 160, 162) avers, almost all religions preach love for one’s neighbour; on the other, violence is committed in the name of the very same religions. Large numbers of people on earth suffer from the scourge of intolerance (Wright, 2009: 5). In view of this, Needleman (2008: 99) despairingly concludes: “All we can say is that our religious ideals, our moral

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3 The contents of this paragraph pertain to violent societies such as those of South and West Africa. It is not as applicable to other societies, such as that of the Netherlands, where conflict does not necessarily rise from religious differences but rather from political and ethnical differences. The growing presence of immigrant groups (Moroccans, Antillians, Turks, Surinams and so on) has been the cause of conflict. In some cases, populistic politicians have ascribed the conflict also to religious differences by pointing fingers at, for instance, Islam. This is not done, however, on the basis of a pertinent Christian or other religious motive but rather to score political points. Academics in the Netherlands are therefore hesitant to ascribe this form of intolerance to religious differences.

4 This monograph, as its sub-heading indicates, focuses on the situation in schools and broader pedagogical contexts. The problem of (religious and cultural) intolerance surfaces in all spheres of life, however.
resolves, our ideologies, our campaigns, however honourably conceived, have not prevented – and perhaps have even hastened – the arrival of our world and our lives at the rim of despair and destruction”. We find ourselves in the moral dilemma of, on the one hand, attempting to destroy one another, and on the other hand, to save one another (Grayling, 2010: 7).

All of these conflicts, Wright (2010: 127) insists, demand a hermeneutic of understanding that is inseparable from moral obligation (cf. Levinas and Ricoeur). This has been recognised by humankind. From its very beginning, says Gray (2009: 11), moral philosophy has been a struggle to exorcise conflict among individuals and groups from ethical life. In the (ancient Greek) city, as in the soul, harmony has been the ideal. There has always been a search for harmony of values. The same can be said of politics, Comte-Sponville (2005: 13-14) avers. We need politics so that conflicts of interest can be resolved without violence, and so that the powers of humankind can be united rather than opposed. Comte-Sponville (2005: 15) goes so far as to define politics as the management of conflicts, alliances of balances and power without resort to violence or war, not simply among individuals but also in society as a whole. Politics presupposes conflict, albeit governed by moral rules, compromises, albeit provisional, and eventually agreements on how to resolve disagreements. Also somewhat cynically, Hampshire (2003: 134) contends that political thought is no longer guided by the positive vision of what an ideal society should be like but rather on the negative vision, on what is wrong with society, and tries to remedy that. According to Hampshire (2003: 140-142), conflict resolution lies at the heart of political justice, and that demands conflict resolution mechanisms such as arbitration, a search of balance between conflicting interests and convergent reasoning. All these processes, he admits, are risky; they can go wrong.

The above underscores the importance of investigating the problem of religious tolerance respectively religious intolerance, particularly in education. It is not our purpose in this monograph to enter into a discussion about how to actually resolve religious, cultural and political conflict\(^5\). The above merely provides background and rationale for our efforts in the rest of this paper to embark on the development of an instrument to measure the degree of religious tolerance (or intolerance, as the case may be) among teachers and their students (pupils). Leutwyler, Petrovic and Mantel (2012: 111) correctly point out that teachers are central actors in education; they are expected to provide equal educational opportunities to all children, irrespective of religious or cultural orientation. These authors refer to research on teacher competence that shows that “teachers’ personal dispositions are crucial for performing specific functions and tasks in teaching” and that these dispositions “correspond to deeply held beliefs, values and norms which are strongly anchored in individuals’ subjective theories\(^6\). These subjective theories may interfere with the normative claims inherent to the officially taught concepts how to teach productively in culturally diverse settings”. Because, as will be argued below, some of these privately held theories of teachers may impact on the degree of tolerance that teachers are prepared to display with respect to other

\(^5\) It is important to note that there does not seem to be a necessary and linear connection or causal relationship between religiosity and intolerance. The possibility exists, however, as has been shown, that people may be intolerant on religious grounds of other individuals and groups. Empirical research is required to understand the extent of this phenomenon, and to devise a strategy to combat the problem.

\(^6\) Life and world views, life concepts, see the discussion of the “fishbowl” below. These subjective theories represent the individuals’ cognitions about the world and their connected emotions, volitions and motivations. They express, therefore, the individuals’ understandings and interpretations of how the world functions; they express how individuals have constructed their world views, in other words: their realities (Leutwyler et al, 2012: 111-112).
teachers and to children of a different religious orientation, we have to find ways and means to measure their dispositions in dealing with religious heterogeneity.\footnote{The use of Bennett’s model in this study should not be construed that the stadia of cultural diversity, from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism exactly coincide with the degree of religious tolerance or intolerance, as the case may be. The concept “cultural diversity” (at which Bennett’s instrument is aimed) has a broader meaning than “religion”. In a sense, culture can also embrace religion. Use was made of Bennett’s distinctions for the purpose of measuring the attitudes or perceptions regarding others, in the broadest sense of the word.}

Once the degree of religious tolerance\footnote{As mentioned, (in)tolerance need not be necessarily religiously inspired. This monograph is interested, however, in (in)tolerance that is indeed religiously inspired.} respectively intolerance has been measured attention can be paid to the issue of eradicating the scourge of religious intolerance (if indeed it exists, as we suppose it does). This has become necessary because of the much greater diversity in our societies than ever before and because of the religious intolerance under which many individuals and the world in general have been staggering of late. The former “foreign” religions have in recent times become our “neighbour” religions. As the intermingling and contact increases, the potential for conflict also increases (Van der Walt, 2007: 154). The time has indeed come to “dance with diversity and value pluralism” in the form of having empathy with the other, and to enter into dialogue with the other (Schreiner, 2005: 13).

**Steps taken to draft an instrument to measure tolerance**

The end destination of the discussion in this monograph is the construction of a questionnaire regarding religious tolerance / intolerance based on a plausible theoretical foundation. Each item in the questionnaire should be traceable to a particular theoretical insight thereby ensuring construct and content validity for the entire questionnaire (see Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011: 188-189 for a detailed discussion of these forms of validity). As far as could be ascertained, no questionnaire based on theories such as the radical centre of value theory, modus vivendi theory, social imagination theory and several other similar theories exists, which underscores the necessity of not only developing such a questionnaire and also to theoretically justify every item therein.\footnote{The instrument to measure (religious) tolerance flowing from this monograph can be used for various purposes, for instance by someone interested in measuring religious tolerance in a culturally and religiously diverse setting, or by someone interested in measuring tolerance of this nature in a relatively religiously homogeneous setting.}

The construction of the questionnaire on religious tolerance entails a number of distinctive steps.\footnote{Tolerance can also be construed in psychological terms. It will become clear from the rest of this discussion that the instrument to measure tolerance is not of a psychological nature but rather of a religious philosophical nature.} A section of this monograph will be devoted to each of those steps. The discussion of each step will result in the formulation of one or more items that could become part of the final questionnaire. After working through the different steps, and after formulating the envisaged items for the questionnaire, all the items will be brought together in a separate final section (see the following diagram for a visual outline of the steps followed in the rest of this monograph).\footnote{The drafting and editing of an actual questionnaire on (religious) tolerance among school teachers and their students will of course require further processing.}
Life and world view /
Personal fishbowl

Expectancy filters

Radical centre of values (value relativism)

Valley of relative value emptiness ("thin values") (legal, public)

Expectancy filter of value orientation

Value consciousness ("thick values") (personal, private)

Willingness to enter into a social contract?

Degree of tolerance of (religious) differences in others?

Bennett I: Denial of difference
Bennett II: Defence against difference
Bennett III: Minimisation of difference
Bennett IV: Acceptance of difference
Bennett V: Adaptation to difference
Bennett VI: Integration of difference

FLOW CHART TO EXPLAIN THE GIST OF THE ARGUMENT UNFOLDING IN THIS MONOGRAPH
The steps of constructing an instrument for measuring religious tolerance among teachers and students (pupils) worldwide

1. Orientation: the personal “fishbowl”

According to Olthuis (2012: 1/7), the growing realisation that there are no innocent, unbiased ways of looking at the world, that everyone wears “glasses” and looks at the world through a peculiar lens, window or frame, has given common currency to the idea of worldview. His view coincides with that of Hawking and Mlodinow (2010: 23) who came up with the following rather apt description of what has commonly become known as a life view, a worldview or a life and worldview:

A few years ago the city council of Monza, Italy, barred pet owners from keeping goldfish in curved goldfish bowls. The measure’s sponsor explained the measure by saying that it is cruel to keep a fish in a bowl with curved sides because, gazing out, the fish would have a distorted view of reality. But how do we know we have a true, undistorted picture of reality? Might not we ourselves also be inside some big goldfish bowl and have our vision distorted by an enormous lens? The goldfish’s picture of reality is different from ours, but can we be sure it is less real?

It is now generally acknowledged, Olthuis (2012: 1/7, 4/7) claims, that everyone comes outfitted with a wide array of faith-based pre-judgments, that everyone has built-in biases, and that knowledge is perspectival, world-viewish, rooted in a particular historical and cultural setting, and never is universal or absolute. A world view is the pre-conceptual orienting lens or glasses in and through which people reach out to the world even as the world impinges on them. World-viewing or world-visioning, he is convinced, is a complex, developmental (as will be demonstrated below) and two-way looking process (also discussed below) (Olthuis, 2012: 4/7).

Van der Walt’s (1999: 48 ff.) catalogue of the features of a life view casts light on the nature of a life and world view. A life and worldview is a way of looking at reality; it orientates a person and helps him/her to understand the world; it is a unity; it can be both descriptive and prescriptive; it demands full commitment; it is typically human; it is pre-scientific or pre-theoretical; it is a deep-seated source of action; it provides a definite view of reality but nevertheless remains fallible, and it evokes deeply felt emotions in the person. Important in Van der Walt’s (1999: 51-2) description of the structure of the fishbowl / the life and world view is his contention that a life and world view is a connection between a person’s faith and his or her practical everyday life. Each person believes in something; faith plays an important role in the lives of all people in that it gives direction to life. A person’s life view, Van der Walt maintains, gives hands and feet to a person’s faith, renders faith into something relevant for everyday life. In his words: A life view is a vision of faith for life. It also works in the opposite direction: a person forms a vision of life and then changes his or her faith accordingly: a vision of life for faith. Olthuis (2012: 4/7) agrees: as a person grows up, his or her experiences determine how he or she responds and acts to what they see and experience. Put differently, a worldview is not only a vision of the world, but it is at the same time a vision for the world.

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12 This article is in electronic format. The page reference means “page 1 of 7”. 
Hawking and Mlodinow’s metaphor is particularly apt in the case of religious attitude and viewpoint in that it reveals several things to us. Firstly, all people find themselves “swimming” inside their own respective religious and life and worldview “fishbowls”, in some cases for the span of an entire life without ever inquiring about the distortions created by the “glass sides” of the bowl or whether what is seen through the sides is “correct” by generally accepted standards or the standards of other people. Applied to religion, this could mean that a person “swims” within the confines of a fishbowl the size of, and the opaqueness of the sides of which are determined by a particular religion. He or she might have been born within that religion, grown up, been educated in terms of it, and now lives in accordance with its tenets without ever questioning the “correctness” or (the word is used advisedly) the “truth” of what is perceived through the sides of the fishbowl.

Secondly, the metaphor underscores the fact that people might have a skewed picture of the reality outside, and would not know about their distorted view of reality, unless of course the distortions are pointed out to them by people looking in through the sides of their particular fishbowls. This tells us that Socrates was correct in stating that the unexamined life is not worth living (Armstrong, 2001:67). While we will never have any guarantees or warranties that we will gain a “more correct” or “truer” picture of reality by attempting to look at reality through the sides of other people’s fishbowls, we could get a better understanding of reality and of our own place therein by doing so. Put differently, we need to examine our own fishbowl perspective as well as those of others in order to see whether we could come to a better view and understanding of life and of the world. This means that we have to occasionally change our fishbowl perspective. As Peck (2006: 33) observed:

...we are not born with maps; we have to make them, and the making requires effort. The more effort we make to appreciate and perceive reality, the larger and more accurate our maps will be. (...) the biggest problem of map-making is not that we have to start from scratch, but that if our maps are to be accurate we have to continually revise them. The world is constantly changing. (...) the vantage point from which we view the world is (also) constantly and quite rapidly changing. (...) We are daily bombarded with new information as to the nature of reality. If we are to incorporate this information, we must continually revise our maps, and sometimes when enough new information has accumulated, we must make major revisions [to our map]. The process of making revisions, particularly major revisions, is painful...

Each individual has a life-map that changes frequently without that individual’s knowledge or conscious collaboration, or is deliberately changed by the individual him-/herself, depending on his / her experiences with regard to the world around him / her. To return to the original metaphor: a person is occasionally compelled to change his or her fishbowl perspective because of his or her interaction with reality and because of self-reflection. In extreme cases, the change might be radical, analogous to jumping from a round fishbowl into a square tank.

As mentioned, a world view is also a two-way bridge: a person’s perceptions might have an effect on the surrounding reality, and the person’s experiences in and with reality might impact on how he/she sees reality. Like a two-way bridge that carries traffic to and fro, a life view represents a

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13 In view of Peck’s over-all argument, this revision should not be construed to mean that individuals have to engage in some or other empirical verification process in order to arrive at a form of truth that could be shared by all other people, universally, Peck merely draws attention to the fact that each person should revise his or her map to a level where it most adequately provides a grasp of reality or provides a depiction of reality.
process through which a person’s daily experiences help him or her to either confirm, question or correct his or her faith. According to Peck (2006: 179), in endeavouring to create a life view map that conforms to the reality of the cosmos and a person’s role in it, as best as a human being can know that reality, a person must constantly revise and extend his or her understanding to include new knowledge of the larger world. A person must constantly change and adapt his or her frame of reference regarding reality and the larger world. There is, according to Peck (2006: 182), no such thing as a good hand-me-down religion and life and worldview; to be vital, to be the best of which a person is capable, a person’s religion and concomitant life and worldview should be a wholly personal one, forged entirely through the fire of his or her questioning and doubting in the crucible of his or her own experience of reality. It is by our implicit, often inarticulate awareness of our intuition, Olthuis (2012: 4/7) claims, by our bodily attunement, by our learned physical, emotional and moral reflexes, that we make our way in the world. Recognising the role of all our senses in finding our way in the world suggests that we would do well to talk of world orienting or world visioning rather than only world viewing. In saying this, he links up with views expressed by Heidegger and Gadamer: prejudgments are the frames, the pictures – the world views – from which and through which we see the world and make sense of it (Olthuis, 2012: 5/7). In a certain sense, a world view is not very stable because it is constantly changing, and – in the case of some people, even heterodox and eclectic – all features of a world view that postmodernists tend to exploit (Wright, 2010: 121, 123; Olthuis, 2012: 4/7).

As one grows up and forms a religious perspective and / or a life-view, one tends to fill one’s life-view with typical life-view content, among others convictions and assumptions about God / god, the world, the order in the world – including the place and duties of the human being – and about how all these entities cohere with one another. Everyone has an explicit or implicit set of ideas or beliefs as to the essential nature of the world (Peck, 2006: 174). No-one is able to live in a “fishbowl” defined by universal values only since such values are necessarily general and relatively indeterminate. As a person grows up and forms his or her life-map, he or she re-articulates the general or universal values in the language of norms. Norms, as Parekh (2000: 152) observes, relate values to conduct, indicate how the values are to be interpreted in a person’s life, and give them life-view content. Norms in turn can be articulated in either the language of rights or that of duties and obligations. This entire process is at best only “incompletely conscious” (Peck, 2006: 174). As individuals, people decide which values would support their principles and hence to make part of their world view (i.e. internalise as their own).

The values contained in a life and worldview place an imperative on a person to act in a manner consistent with what he or she regards as worth striving and living for, worth protecting, honouring and desiring (Nieuwenhuis, 2007: 9; Lusenga, 2010: 20).

Items for the questionnaire flowing from step #1

1. With which religion do you associate yourself? If you associate yourself with a mainstream religion such as Christianity, the Muslim faith, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism then please write the name of the religion in the space provided. If you do not associate yourself

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14Each of the proposed items can be moulded into a more user friendly form in the questionnaire itself, among others by providing for various responses on a five-point Likert-type scale, and spaces in which to write open-ended responses.
with any mainstream religion, please write a short phrase in which you describe your religious stance, e.g. “I believe in a form of spirituality that is not associated with any mainstream religion”.

**Interpretation of the response:** This item informs the researcher whether the respondent associates him- or herself with a mainstream religion, with a form of spirituality not associated with any mainstream religion or with no formal religion at all – as far as the respondent is concerned (according to the literature, no person is ever actually without religion, however (Gray, 2009: 2; Peck, 2006: 108)). This item reveals the nature of the personal “fishbowl” (life and worldview orientation) of the respondent.

2. Please respond to the statement: “I live very strictly according to the tenets and prescriptions of my religion and worldview” by marking one of the following: 1. Totally agree 2. Agree to some extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a certain extent 5. Totally disagree

**Interpretation of the response:** A 1, 2 or 3 response could be indicative of a maximalist attitude and a possibility of being situated in a religio-centric orientation (based on Bennett’s work). A 4 or 5 response could be construed as minimalist and a possibility of being situated in a religio-relative orientation (cf. Bennett, 1993). Put differently, a 1, 2 or 3 response could refer to the respondent’s attitude of being happy and satisfied to live in his or her own “fishbowl” and seemingly does not feel the need to examine his or her own worldview or to exchange it for another worldview or a broader look on life, including the views of other people.

3. Please respond to the statement “I am always and acutely conscious of my religious convictions and beliefs whenever I do something or have to make a choice in my life” by marking one of the following: 1. Totally agree 2. Agree to some extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a certain extent 5. Totally disagree

**Interpretation of the response:** A 1, 2 or 3 response could be indicative of a maximalist attitude and a possibility of being situated in a religio-centric orientation (cf. Bennett, 1993). A 4 or 5 response could be construed as minimalist and a possibility of being situated in a religio-relative orientation (Bennett, 1993). Put differently, a 1, 2 or 3 response could refer to the respondent’s attitude of being happy and satisfied to live in his or her own “fishbowl” and seemingly does not feel the need to examine his or her own worldview or to exchange it for another worldview or a broader look on life, including the views of other people.

2. **Expectancy filters (theory)**

Olthuis (2012: 4/7) recently developed an interesting theory about how children learn to look at the world around them. According to him, world-viewing or –visioning is a complex, developmental two-way learning process and a world view is the pre-conceptual orienting glass or glasses (referred to above as the “fishbowl” in which a person lives or learns to live) in and through which a person reaches out to the world even as the world impinges on him or her. Under the guidance of their

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15See Section 6 for a detailed discussion of this aspect.
educators and through their educators’ eyes children develop expectancy filters that affect not only how and what they observe and experience but also how they respond and react to what they observe and experience. In other words, Olthuis says, a worldview is not only a vision of the world but also a vision for the world.

According to Olthuis (2012: 4-5/7), much of our relational knowledge is encoded in emotional meaning-patterns which act as expectancy filters or attachment filters that predispose from a certain point on how a person experiences relationships. This occurs automatically, without the person even being aware of it. Olthuis is convinced that a person would be aware of his or her experiences but not of the filter itself through which the person experiences. According to him, psychologists have identified at least four such expectancy or attachment filters. A person using a secure filter is able to trust others and is open to the world; a person with a pre-occupied filter is engrossed in efforts to get his or her own needs met and is inattentive to the needs of others; a person with a dismissing filter expects nothing of others and of the world, and tends to be disconnected from the self or others; a person with a fearful filter may need closeness with others and the world but at the same time is fearful of any closeness. If early formation is good enough, in other words if the attachment filters are ‘secure’, there will tend to be a ‘good enough’, continually recalibrating, mutually interactive fit between the explicit knowledge of a love-oriented, other-affirming world view and the person’s implicit gut knowledge. There will develop a double two-way movement: the implicit and explicit world views will interact dynamically and integrate in a positive growth spiral. The expressed and confessed world views will not only find embodied resonance in the implicit gut knowledge but they will act to encourage, direct and support explicit rituals, routines and rhythms in daily life. In that way world-viewing can play an indispensable role in the coming into being of liturgies of love, both personally and interpersonally in the various relationships that a person might find him- or herself.

If the formed expectancy filters are fearful, dismissive or pre-occupied rather than secure, there will be strong, if implicit, resistance to adopting and living out a love-oriented, other-affirming world view. More than that, Olthuis (2012: 5/7) maintains, there will be deep-seated impulses to thematise world views which justify and thus rationalise a person’s fears and dreads. Unless these resistances are worked through, adherence to the articulated world view will lead to half-hearted lip-service.

These expectancy or attachment filters, Olthuis (2012: 4/7) is convinced, act below a person’s awareness level but nevertheless give shape to how a person feels about him- or herself, and helps a person make sense of his or her life, God / god and others – in other words, it gives shape to a person’s life and world view. These filters, which can also be described as moods or patternings, form in early childhood experience and continue to play an indispensable and inextricable role in a person’s later efforts to explicitly thematise and conceptualise his or her life and world view.

Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #2:

1. (2.1) Which of the following views of the world is typical of how you personally view and approach the world and other people? Mark the response that describes your basic view of the world, and your attitude towards the world and other people most appropriately: 1. I feel safe and secure; I do not see the world and other people as a threat to me or my existence. 2. I concentrate on my own affairs, and have very little to do with other people and their needs; I am concerned about my own welfare in this world. 3. I cannot be
bothered about the world and other people; I expect nothing from life or other people; one has to make your own fortune in life. 4. I would like to be close and friendly to other people, but at the same time I am fearful of them and what they could do to me.

Interpretation of the responses: 1 indicates a balanced and secure world view. This person is not fearful of engaging with the world or with other people; he or she trusts others and the predictability of the world, and is generally open to the world. This person might be tolerant of others and their views. 2 is indicative of a pre-occupied life and world view; this is an inward looking person, who is not concerned about the welfare of others or of the world in general. This person is so concerned about him- or herself that tolerance of others and their views does not come into play. 3 This person is disconnected from the world, expects nothing from others or the world. This disconnection could be indicative of a mentality in which tolerance plays no significant role. 4. This person leads an ambivalent life; he or she is both fearful of the world and of others but also aspires to be close to others. Fear could lead to intolerant behaviour; on the other hand, the wish for closeness could lead to exaggerated tolerance of others and their views.

3. The radical centre of values (theory)
In the culturally, including religiously, diverse and pluralistic societies and communities that can be found all over the post-Second World War world people have a desire, on the one hand, to pursue the interests of their own well-being, and on the other, to provide room for diverse positions and lifestyles. It is difficult, therefore, to find a single successful recipe or formula for ensuring both individual and group well-being and peaceful coexistence in the rich and complex diversity of social and moral phenomena that modern society consists of (Grayling, 2010: 10). Because of this difficulty, many communities depend on politics, the state and government to resolve conflicts of interests without violence and war, and also to unite all the forces in the community (Comte-Sponville, 2005: 15). To reach a consensus of the kind needed to create a peaceful community all those whose interests are at stake tend to engage in a deliberative process of hearing all sides (Hampshire, 2003: 134, 137, 139). Such negotiations and arbitration require not only mechanisms through which all sides can be heard fairly but also institutions that can balance all the competing interests and the moral will among the participants to engage in the deliberations and to work across frontiers and the barriers that create divides among them. The arbitration about values regarding well-being, the common good and peaceful coexistence should be done fairly and justly, in a methodological and rational way, as far as possible under the guidance of recognised institutions and according to generally accepted procedures. Such interactive dialogue could lead to the discovery of common values that could be widely shared and even considered to be valid for the public domain (Van der Walt, 2007: 156).

A basic thesis of the radical centre of values theory that will be outlined in the rest of this Section is that, despite the diversity of interpretations of values that we encounter in the world, there is a core of universal values that all people can associate with and that they will find broadly acceptable (Alford, 2009: 57, 163). Awareness of such universal values requires that each person for a minute step back from themselves and their personal interests (Needleman, 2008: 108) and that they develop an attitude of not excluding others or proving that their way is the only true or acceptable way, but to give witness of how and why they see things as they do. In that way, Olthuis (2012: 3/7)
maintains, a person can invite all others to share their deepest feelings and convictions for mutual learning and benefit. He is convinced that the welfare of humankind (and the rest of reality, creation) depends on such interfaith negotiation.

As far back as 1990, cultural philosopher Frederick Turner (1990: 85, 97) wrote about the need for a “solvent” that could serve as a common medium for all kinds of cultural information. If we transpose his ideas about such a “solvent” to the realm of religious differences, he in effect claims that we can assume that once the bonds that hold the religious ideas and faith commitments of individuals and religious groups locked in a solid configuration are “loosed” by the solvent, in this case a radical centre of values, the elements of religion, being basically human, will have the hooks and valences to permit them to build up new coherent systems not limited to one religion. As the human race recognises itself as a “we” it will paradoxically be more and more surprised by the otherness of what was once considered familiar in the respective own religions. Elsewhere (Turner, 1990b: 745), he expresses the hope that moral values may one day be less arbitrary and thus more negotiable than they are today; that is, that it may be possible to develop some universal moral values from an understanding of human nature.

Needleman’s (2008: 108-109) “ethics of the threshold” is likewise a plea for the adoption of more permanent principles, in the sense of “universally accepted”. We need to find ways and means, he says, to be “outwardly in the street” in our actual lives, while somehow, or to some extent, also remaining inwardly in the theatre of the mind. Put differently, we need to step back from ourselves while wholeheartedly engaging our lives and answering its obligations. In his opinion, a new morality will emerge from this seemingly self-contradictory effort. As in the case of Turner’s “radical centre of values theory”, Needleman’s “ethics of the threshold” attempts to avoid the excesses of both moral absolutism and moral relativism, and is therefore akin to Makrides’s (2012: 264, 266) notion of a bridge between what we are and what we wish to be in the light of the ethical and religious commandments that have formed the basis of every civilisation in the world (Needleman, 2008: 109), namely a trans-confessional theory of religious tolerance or a constructive dialogue about it. Olthuis (2012: 2/7) expresses much the same sentiment by stating that in our pluralistic, multi-faith global village, the honourable and respectful embrace of difference is the greatest challenge facing our postmodern world. We urgently need, he says, to develop a model of non-oppositional difference, an economy in which power-over (with its opposition to the other) is replaced with power-with (mutual recognition, attunement and empowerment). In a sense, Wright (2010: 132) also refers to a radical centre or core of values by saying that a critical spiritual education will take, with equal seriousness, the integrity of our developing experiences, and the authority of the-order-of-things that stands accessible, if always ultimately beyond our understanding.

Talen and Ellis (2002: 36, 37) summarise the theory of the radical centre of values as follows. The theory departs from a belief in self-organising principles, i.e. the idea that the universe is not deterministic but is self-renewing and infinitely creative. On the other hand, it questions the postmodern assumption that does not take the discussion of substantive goods, such as morality, seriously. It therefore departs from the assumption that there are durable, time-tested truths and discoveries that have been, and continue to be, made about various forms of moral behaviour (including the moral behaviour that is referred to as “religious tolerance”).

Items for the questionnaire flowing from step #3:
The following items for a questionnaire among teachers and their pupils regarding the degree of religious tolerance they display could flow from the above discussion of the radical value centre (theory):

1. (3.1) Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “I am willing and prepared to associate myself with a set of values that has universal currency, a set of values, principles and norms that people say is true and valid for all people in the world, for all religions and world views in the world”. Please choose one of the following options: 1. I totally, fully agree with this statement. 2. I agree with it to a fairly large degree 3. I only agree to a certain degree 4. Not so much 5. Not at all

*Interpretation of the response: A 1, 2 or 3 response would indicate that the respondent is not at all or at least not fully committed to some or other exclusive confessional stance far as his or her religious orientation is concerned. He or she is prepared to share a set of values that is supposedly universally applicable to all people. A 4 or 5 response will be indicative of the opposite, namely that the respondent is so committed to some or other confessional religious or life and world view stance and perspective that he or she does not find it possible or viable to share values, principles and norms with others of a different religious and/or life and world view conviction.*

2. (3.2) Please respond to the statement: “I am prepared to live by values that are supposedly valid for all people in the world, irrespective of their personal religion and life and world view but I think I will need to reinterpret them according to my personal religion and world view”. Mark one of the following: 1. Totally agree 2. Agree to some extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a certain extent 5. Totally disagree

*Interpretation of the response: A 1, 2 or 3 response could be indicative of the fact that the respondent seems to be prepared to live by generally accepted and supposedly universally valid values, norms and principles but also feels the need to reinterpret those values and norms in terms of his or her private religious stance and life and world view. A 4 or 5 response could be seen as confirmation of a 1, 2 or 3 response in item 3.1.*

3. (3.3) Please respond to the statement: “A value that does not flow from my own, personal religion and world view is worthless as a guideline for my life”. Please mark one of the following: 1. Totally agree 2. Agree to some extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a certain extent 5. Totally disagree

*Interpretation of the response: A 1, 2 or 3 response could be indicative of (full) commitment to a personal religion and life and worldview. A 4 or 5 response could be seen as confirmation of a 1, 2 or 3 response in item 3.1.*

4. **The expectancy filter of value orientation**

In addition to the four expectancy or achievement filters mentioned by Olthuis (2012), and discussed in Section 2 above, we can distinguish a fifth, namely the expectancy filter of value orientation. Under the influence and guidance of our teachers and other educators, we learn how to orientate ourselves with regard to the values available to us in the life-world with which we slowly but surely
get acquainted as we grow up. Since all values are loaded concepts that mean different things to
different people (Van der Walt, 2007: 172) and therefore seldom come to us in the sanitised form as
described in terms of the radical centre of values, in the form of “mere names or words” without any
life and world view content, they have to be reinterpreted. According to Zecha (2007: 57), the
names of values appearing in the radical centre of values “are all wonderful words which may
certainly designate important attitudes or activities; however, they do not give a useful account of
what the pupil is expected to do when he/she has acquired clarity, communication, loyalty, respect,
etc. ... It is [therefore] ... important to explore with the students what these key-words (value words)
entail”. Gray (2009: 38) agrees with this in saying that values have to be given content, otherwise
they will remain empty. Nieuwenhuis (2010: 2) significantly adds that the basically contentless
values embodied in the radical value centre have to be filled with life-conceptual content. To be able
to do so, says Van de Beek (2010: 41), philosophers and ethicists have been agitating for the use of
“thick value language”, meaning language filled with life and worldview content. According to Van
de Beek, empty values can become more meaningful by filling them with content from the heritage
of one’s religious and life and world view tradition. This, he claims, is what people do in real life;
persons do not live according to the abstract values contained in the radical value centre but rather
according to how those same values have been filled-in and coloured by their respective religions
and world views. Filled-in values do greater justice to real life than the abstract values in the radical
centre. Ramcharan (2008: 13) agrees. Individuals generally tend to create space for themselves;
individual choices abound, also within the holistic order of religions; individuals tend to attach their
own interpretations and connections to the greater ideas that they encounter.

Van de Beek (2010: 41-42) then makes a most important point with regard to the theme of the
tolerance measuring instrument that is to flow from this monograph, namely that the more a person
tends to fill in his or her values with confessional, religious and life and world view content, the more
likely he or she would be to differ in life attitude from others, and the more he or she might come
into conflict with others with a different value orientation, with values filled in with content from
other religious and world view traditions. The more a person’s values get filled in with life view and /
or religious content, the more specific they become and hence increasingly exclusive. This
exclusivity, he avers, could lead to living a very private religious life the values of which cannot be
publicly tested because they pertain, per definition, to a value world that transcends the actual
world in which we live. In saying this, Van de Beek echoes a view expressed by Swartz (2006: 565-6),
namely that the life-conceptual filling-in that people do can be plotted on a continuum ranging from the
“thin-public-minimal-narrow” end, i.e. those values which may be described as “legal”, to the
“thick-private-maximal-broad” end of a continuum, i.e. those values that are considered to be
“personal” and private, left to the conscience of the individual, with a range of positions in-between.

According to Du Preez and Roux (2010: 12-16), an education system cannot operate optimally on the
basis of values filled with life and worldview content because, they claim, such values smack of
culturalism and particularism. Such completely life-conceptually filled-in values, they aver, “[are]
often embedded in one particular narrative (i.e. a specific religious or cultural belief system) – a
specific life-view perspective”. The reason why an education system cannot be based on such a
perspective – according to them - is because of “the relativity of truths, not only between different
religious beliefs, but also the varying interpretations and truths found in one religious
denomination.” They agree with other scholars that “a value system that is based on only one
particular religious or cultural view means that only one narrative is taken into account. That could
jeopardise the realisation of the multicultural ideals of the democratic education system in South Africa. Such “mono” approaches to values in support of education might even take the form of a revival of the highly contested and divided ideology, Christian Nationalist Education, which dominated the apartheid era...”

In their effort to steer away from particularist, i.e. completely life-conceptually filled values, they argue as follows: “We should not be asking whose values should be promoted in education, since this might lead to particularist hostility. It would also be precarious to accept human rights values as univocal and not subjected to diverse interpretation. For this reason we will discuss the position of Bikhu Parekh in terms of this debate, because he produces an alternative way of thinking about this. His position may assist in pursuing values ... that (are) both contextually recognised and justified on a universal level. His main thesis [which Du Preez and Roux support] is that humans could express their moral life in different ways, but that this does not exclude anyone from being judged according to basic universal values. He refers to the latter notion as “minimum universality” which represents an intermediate position between relativism (particularism) and monism (universalism).”

The discussion so far illustrates how the fifth expectancy filter works. Wolhuter, Steyn, De Klerk and Rens to whose particularistic and confessional approach Du Preez and Roux (2010: 14) object, applied an expectancy filter in terms of which they availed themselves of Christian values, i.e. values filled with content from a Christian and Biblical life view perspective, to promote discipline in schools. Du Preez and Roux (2010: 15), on the other hand, seem to have operated with quite a different expectancy filter, namely that values should be filled with contextual content that would not jeopardise the realisation of the multicultural ideals of a democratic country. Whereas Wolhuter et al made use of Christian values in the expectancy of promoting discipline in schools, Du Preez and Roux made use of contextually recognised and universally justified values to promote their expectations in a multicultural school and education setting.

We shall return to this issue of value fullness and emptiness and of thick and thin value language in the discussion of the “Valley of relative value emptiness” (see Section 5 below). We first need to attend to two further issues regarding this, the fifth expectancy filter that educators employ when dealing with children and / or young people. The first is that the expectancy filter of value orientation that a child grows up with can change over time, as we have seen in Section 1. A very small child could be subject to a certain expectancy filter of value orientation, but gradually learn to develop his or her own expectancy filter of value orientation, and could end up with a value system filled with world view content that might be somewhat or even radically different from that of his or her parents and other educators. Such changes are due to influences that impact on the person growing up and because of his or her constant examination of own life and existence.

The expectancy filter of value orientation can also be seen working in one and the same person. Take the following example: a person who is both a parent of a very young child, a church going person, and an educationist charged with the task of planning a national education system might, as parent, employ an expectancy filter in the education of the child which could lead to the instilment of Christian religious and church values in the child while, on the other hand, as an education system planner he or she might apply an expectancy filter inspiring him or her to employ values that are more generally or universally recognised and would promote the ideals of democracy and multiculturalism. Ackerley (2008: 24) thus rightly remarked about a dichotomy between, on the one
hand, church- and temple- and personal, cultural, life-conceptually filled values, and on the other hand the universal aspirations regarding, for instance, human rights. The latter is not substantively meaningful among people of religious communities where, for many, their religious institutions are the context and the structure of their moral value systems.

Naudé (2010: 11) draws our attention to the second issue, namely the importance of distinguishing between relativism which says that we are all different from one another but that we should respect those differences regardless of whether we find the values associated with them acceptable or not. Relativity on the other hand says that we are different but not to such an extent that we cannot live peaceably together and that we should respect and tolerate another’s views and values, come what may. There is sufficient agreement about generally shared values that we can live by them and also weigh our individual, personal convictions and values against them.

Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #4:

1. (4.1) Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “I prefer values that are simple, have nothing to do with any religion or world view, that all people can agree with because they are formulated in very general terms, and will not lead to divisions and conflict among people”. 1 I strongly agree with this statement. 2 I agree with the statement to a certain degree. 3 I find this statement fairly acceptable. 4. I disagree with the statement to some extent. 5. I completely disagree with the statement.

Interpretation of the responses: A 1, 2 or 3 response would be indicative of a respondent preferring to operate with minimalist, general values, values that have been thinly formulated. This person seems to pave the way for getting along with others on the basis of rather generally shared values. A 4 or 5 response would indicate that the respondent prefers values that are maximally, thickly formulated in terms of his or her religious and life and world view convictions. Respondents who opt for a 4 or a 5 seem to be more likely to be more conscious of their own religion and life and worldview rooted value system, and hence also more aware of differences between his or her value system and those of others whose value systems might be rooted in different religions and world views.

5. The “valley of relative value emptiness”

The phrase “valley of relative value emptiness” is not meant as a derogatory term but rather as one that describes a stance in which the discussants attempt to transcend their personal life-conceptually meaning-filled values for the sake of a more general ideal, for example the promotion of multiculturalism, human rights, peaceful coexistence or democracy. It is understandable that some people, in some circumstances, might opt for the application of such relatively life-conceptually empty values. Education system planners, for instance, might find themselves in a position where they have to apply such universally recognised and acceptable values as those contained in the radical value centre discussed in Section 2 because of the demands of democracy, fairness, social justice, peaceful coexistence and the ideals of multiculturalism. One example of this can be found in the three-fold position described by Ackerley (2008: 38):

For those moved by human rights violations, (this) book offers three things. First, I offer them a philosophical justification for the political legitimacy of their moral intuitions. Regardless of the spiritual, religious, and personal resources that motivate them to think about the rights of
all humanity, whether their own moral system is grounded in a transcendental divine power, in the power of good argument, or in the power of human relationships, the concern for human rights has universal authority to guide criticism. Second, I offer those working for the human rights of all of humanity a way to think about human rights that is dictated neither by a cultural nor by a political tradition, but has nevertheless a universal authority to guide criticism. Third, the book offers guidance in thinking about universal human rights so that human rights activism continues in ways that support the human rights of all of humanity by transforming the institutions and practices that condition the lives of all of humanity.

It is clear from this brief exposition that Ackerley wishes to move his discussion of human rights values out of the context of life-conceptual meaning-filling into what has been described above as the “valley of relative value emptiness” where the discussion is characterised by “philosophical justification”, “political legitimacy”, people’s general “moral intuitions”, “universal authority”, not dictated by any “cultural or political tradition”, “the rights of all humanity” and so on.

As mentioned above, because of working in the public domain of human rights theory, Parekh (2000) also went a short step further in the direction of filling values with meaning in his attempt to “contextually fill” certain values that are universally recognised and justified. His description of the process entails four steps, of which the first three pertain to values that are relatively contentless: First, universal values can be understood in a variety of ways ranging from the minimalist to the maximalist. Secondly, since these universal values are necessarily general and relatively indeterminate, they should as far as possible be articulated in the language of norms. Norms relate values to conduct, indicate how the values are to be interpreted, and give them content. Thirdly, we should not confuse values with particular institutional mechanisms; we should not be dogmatic about values, and we should not so identify the institutions that hold particularist values with the values that the values cannot be discussed and defended separately. In the fourth place, Parekh recognises the need for life-conceptual content-filling of values but clearly sees it as a matter for the personal or private sphere: since every society enjoys the moral freedom to interpret and prioritise the agreed body of universal values, we cannot condemn its practices simply because they are different from or offend against ours (Parekh, 2000: 152-153). There is an inevitable dialectical interplay, he admits (Parekh, 2000: 158), between the relatively thin universal values and the thick moral structures that characterise different societies. The universal values regulate the national structures even as the latter pluralise the values.

As observed earlier, others, such as parents of very young children and educators teaching children in the context of a religious institution such as a church, mosque, synagogue or temple might feel themselves compelled to apply a value system that is completely filled in by the life and worldview of that particular religious denomination. Parekh’s (2000: 158) position of regulative or pluralist universalism will not appeal to them.

There might also be others who, for reasons of their own, prefer not to bind themselves to any religious value orientation and opt for a relativist, pragmatic or even a more or less laissez faire value stance. A moderate form of this, as Grayling (2010: 7-8) noted, is moral relativism, i.e. the view that there are no universal truths about what is right and wrong, but rather what counts as such in each different society is determined by that society’s own traditions, beliefs and experience. There is no objective ground for deciding between them. The pragmatist, in turn, holds the attitude of “doing
something” in the morally right or acceptable “direction” as conceptualised by the community, without interfering too much with other legitimate and personally significant commitments and avocations (Grayling, 2010: 18). The laissez faire approach in turn is a “do nothing” approach, says Grayling (2010: 18-190); it holds that unless a person can achieve the utmost in terms of value-driven actions and behaviour, let him or her do nothing, which “is the same thing as letting him be careless and indifferent”.

The current postmodern attitude of value relativism / relativity is also characteristic of the “valley of relative value emptiness”. According to Parkin (2011: 154-155), people have an entire supermarket of values at their disposal, and its impact on the soul, on the inner self of disorganised and vulnerable individuals has become the criterion for choosing a value (De Botton, 2012: 95). According to Bower (2005: 181, 254), it is a tenet of the postmodern perspective that people “invent” and create meaning in regard to their identity, value and purpose. A system of beliefs (i.e. a modernistic grand narrative) that weakens individual responsibility stands in the way of the emergence of an open society and an adult world in which the principle of individual responsibility and the accountability that goes with it, is the basis of all human relationships. McGrath (2005: 218) concurs with Bower’s analysis: reacting to the simplistic overstatements of the Enlightenment, postmodernity has stressed the limits to human knowledge and encouraged a toleration of those who diverge from the “one size fits all” philosophy of modernity. The world in which we live is now seen as a place where nothing is certain, nothing is guaranteed, and nothing is unquestionably given. It has become fashionable, Needleman (2008: 61) contends, to deny the existence of absolutes in the ethical sphere: who is to say what is good or bad, right or wrong? What is good in one place or for one person may be bad in another place or for another person. All morality is seen as relative to time, place, ethnicity, religion, social class, nationality and so on. For many people of this day and age, experiences are immediately translated into simply what “feels good” or what “feels bad”. The postmodern zeitgeist, says Needleman (2008: 108), dispirits people with ethical cynicism and relativism. It reduces every viewpoint, every norm and conviction, however firmly believed by some, to a temporary phenomenon, an event of transient nature. Everything is seen as historically determined and historically relative, in other words, everything is relativised (Van der Walt, 2007: 178).

According to Olthuis (2012: 1/7), worldviews are nowadays frowned upon because they are considered euphemisms for ideologies with their dogmatism. We need, it is said, to move beyond such exclusivism into an era after worldviews (i.e. grand narratives). According to the postmodern stance, life is more than logic; there is a limit to knowledge and knowledge is never disinterested, neutral, a-temporal or a-spatial. There is no such thing as Universal Reason, and reason is never impartial; it is always in the service of wider and broader interests. All grand narratives that claim to explain everything have lost credibility (Olthuis, 2012: 3/7). According to Wright (2010: 122), some postmodernists even claim that ultimately we fail to obtain knowledge of reality because, at the end of the day, there is no such thing as reality, no actual order of things. The notion of reality only exists within our psychological conventions and linguistic contractions.\(^{16}\)

\(^{16}\)Wright (2010: 123) correctly says that these thinkers fall in the epistemic fallacy of confusing reality with knowledge of reality. We have no grounds to deny the existence of reality simply because it is beyond our intellectual powers to fully comprehend it.
No person is completely a-religious or can live without a trace of life-conceptual content filling of his or her values. All people have faith in something. Gray (2009: 13) rightly comes to the conclusion that “secular thinkers imagined that they had left religion behind, when in truth they had only exchanged religion for humanist faith in progress”. For this reason, he regards contemporary humanism as a religion in its own right (Gray, 2009: 15). In view of this, Peck’s (2006: 174) advice to psychologists is to find out their patients’ religions even if they say they do not have any. The same applies for a life and worldview; every person has an explicit or implicit set of ideas and beliefs as to the essential nature of the world. It is nowadays widely acknowledged that all knowledge is perspectival, world view-ish, rooted in a particular historical and cultural setting, rather than universal or absolute (Olthuis, 2012: 1/7).

What all of the above means for a person who wishes to exist in the “valley of relative value emptiness” is that it takes a special effort to leave one’s religious convictions, assumptions and prejudgements behind and to contrive living according to those supposedly empty values that transcend all life-conceptual differences among people.17

**Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #5:**

1. (5.1) Please respond to the following statement by marking with a cross one of the options that follow: “I prefer to deal with other people on the basis of values that are generally acceptable to all people, and not on the basis of my own religious and life view values which tend to make me different.” 1. Totally agree with the statement 2. Agree to a large extent 3. I find this statement acceptable 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree 

Interpretation of the responses: Responses 1, 2 and 3 indicate that the respondent sees him- or herself as preferring values that are relatively devoid of content or that are universal though contextually filled and meaningful. The respondent seems to prefer to operate in the “valley of relative value emptiness” in order to get along with most other people, irrespective of their value stances. Responses 4 and 5 might be indicative of a respondent who prefers not to operate in the “valley of relative value emptiness” but rather with values that are more or less conceptually filled with meaning and content. The value stance of such respondents is likely to be rooted in a pertinent religious, faith or life and worldview commitment.

6. **A tendency towards total tolerance of others, their religious persuasion and their values**

A person preferring to relate with people of different religious and life and worldview persuasion on the basis of the relatively “contentless” values embodied in the radical value centre, with the bare minimum of religious or worldview filling, with values couched in thin value language, with a (postmodern) relativistic value attitude, and with a pragmatic or even a laissez faire attitude with respect to religious and worldview differences, could be assumed to be tolerant of other people and their religious convictions and assumptions. It should be noted, however, that since no person is ever without religion or without religious convictions and a life and worldview, no person is ever

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17As mentioned, a person such as a scholar or a curriculum designer may periodically and temporarily, for purposes of scientific objectivity in a diverse setting, contrive to transcend his or her personal life view convictions et cetera, but such a stance is not viable as a consistent life-view, certainly not for a person of integrity (Nolan, 2009: 13).
likely to be without a value system on the basis of which he or she would, if the occasion arose, be intolerant of the views of people of different persuasion. Nevertheless, theoretical provision has to be made for the possibility of total tolerance, for an attitude of “anything goes”, for complete relativism, for total naivety. Bennett (1993) arguably made similar provision by distinguishing in his developmental model stages V “Adaptation to difference” and VI “Integration of difference”.

It is necessary to stress at this point that absolute tolerance of others and their views is not necessarily “wrong” or “incorrect”. Whether it is to be adjudged as wrong or incorrect will largely depend on the observer’s religious stance, as will now be explained with the help of Bennett’s (1993) developmental model in which he makes certain distinctions in terms of cultura sensitivities (for the purposes of this monograph and of the questionnaire that has to result from it, Bennett’s distinctions in the cultural domain will be transposed to religious sensitivities. The formal distinctions that Bennett made and categorised can be just as valid as categories regarding religious attitude):

I. **Denial of difference**: a person in this category is unable to construe religious difference. His or her attitude could be characterised by benign stereotyping (well-meant but ignorant or naïve observations) and superficial statements of tolerance. This attitude can sometimes be accompanied by attribution of deficiency in intelligence or personality to religiously deviant behaviour. There is a tendency to dehumanise outsiders and to isolate them in homogeneous groups, which deprives the person from either the opportunity or the motivation to construct relevant categories for noticing and interpreting religious difference. The person’s intentional separation from religious difference protects his or her worldview (“fishbowl”) from change by creating conditions of isolation.

II. **Defence against difference**: a person in this category recognises religious difference coupled with a negative evaluation of most religious variations; the greater the difference, the more negative the evaluation. His or her thinking is characterised by dichotomous us-them thinking and is frequently accompanied by overt negative stereotyping. He or she has a tendency towards religious proselytising of “other” religions. The person in this category possesses cognitive categories for construing religious difference as isolated by evaluating them negatively, thus protecting his or her own world view from change. His or her existing world view is protected by exaggerating its positive aspects compared to all other religions. Any neutral or positive statement about another religion may be interpreted as an attack on his or her own religion.

III. **Minimisation of difference**: a person in this category recognises and accepts superficial religious differences such as rituals and eating customs, while holding that all human beings are essentially the same. The emphasis is on the similarity of people and the commonality of basic values. There is a tendency to define the basis of commonality in egocentric terms (since everyone else is essentially like us, just be yourself). There is also an emphasis in terms of similarity (after all, we are all human). The emphasis may be on commonality of human beings as subordinate to a particular supernatural being, religion or social philosophy (we are all children of God whether we know it or not). The own worldview is protected by attempting to subsume difference into what is already familiar (deep down we are all the same).

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18See discussion of inclusivism below.
IV. **Acceptance of difference:** a person in this category recognises and appreciates religious differences in behaviour and values. Acceptance of religious differences is regarded as a viable alternative solution to the organisation of human existence.\(^{19}\) This person operates on the basis of religious relativity, and begins to interpret phenomena within their different cultural or religious contexts. Categories of difference are consciously elaborated. He or she is able to analyse complex interaction in religion-contrast terms. He or she has the ability to see beliefs, values and other general patterns of assigning “goodness” or “badness” to ways of being in the world in their different cultural and religious contexts.

V. **Adaptation to difference:** this person is able to develop communication skills that enable inter-religious communication\(^{20}\), and to make effective use of empathy\(^{21}\), or frame of reference shifting, to understand and be understood across religious boundaries. This person is able to consciously shift perspective into alternative religious world view elements and to act religiously in appropriate ways in those areas. He or she is also able to shift their behaviour completely into different religious frames without much effort. For this person, internalisation of more than one complete worldview is viable. Knowledge and behaviour are linked to conscious intention, and category boundaries (i.e. between religions) become more flexible and permeable.

VI. **Integration of difference:** a person in this category is able to internalise a bi-religious or multi-religious frame of reference. He or she is able to maintain a definition of identity that is “marginal” to any particular religion, and sees the self as “in process”. He or she is able to use multiple religious frames of reference in evaluating phenomena, and is able to accept an identity that is not primarily based in any one religion. He or she is able to facilitate constructive contact between religions for the self and for others, and is willing to participate to some extent in a “marginal reference group”, where other marginals rather than religious compatriots are perceived to be similar\(^{22}\). World view and religious categories are seen as “constructs” maintained by self-reflexive consciousness (religions and individuals are “making themselves up”).

Leutwyler et al (2012: 113) gives a brief summary of the meaning of Bennett’s developmental model, again “translated” by the author of this monograph into religious sensitivities\(^{23}\). Inter-religious sensitivity can be approached in terms of this six-tier model in terms of religious attitude, from a religio-centric on the one hand, to a religio-relative attitude or view on the other.\(^{24}\) The first three levels refer to a religio-centric world view, and the last three to a religio-relative world view. People with the former world view experience their own religion as the only reference to construct their reality while the deeply held beliefs and behaviours from their primary socialisation remain unquestioned. They are seen as “just the way they are”. In contrast, individuals with a religio-relative

\(^{19}\)See the discussion of the social contract below.
\(^{20}\)See discussion of dialogical pluralism below.
\(^{21}\)See discussion of moral imagination, empathy and sympathy below.
\(^{22}\)The “new reformation group” in South Africa could be seen as falling in this category.
\(^{23}\)The formal categories distinguished for cultural attitude by Bennett and now explained by Leutwyler et al are valid – in a formal sense, not in terms of content – for religious attitude categories.
\(^{24}\)We are not so much concerned about the developmental aspects in this monograph. These aspects are by no means unimportant, however; they will have to be reckoned with in efforts to redress any shortcomings among teachers and pupils with respect to religious tolerance.
world view experience their beliefs and behaviours as only one organisation of reality among many other possibilities. This distinction has clear implications for religious tolerance among teachers and students. Teachers and students will have different images of religious differences and similarities and therefore about inter-religious education and dialogue if they are in a religio-centric stage of development or if they have developed a religio-relative perspective. It can be expected that teachers and students in the former stage of development will have a less tolerant view of others of different religious persuasions than those in the latter stage.

The question that confronts us here is whether education systems worldwide are meeting the target for education to encourage “tolerance and respect for the religion of others” also included in official political statements. Religions have not disappeared, as some social scientists predicted; religion now exists in more differentiated and individualised forms. As will be discussed in more detail below, institutionalised religion has lost influence and relevance in society, and religiously plural settings in schools and in the classroom have become more and more common (Schreiner, 2005: no page number). The question is whether Schreiner is correct in surmising that “teachers are getting sensible to the individualised form of religion of their pupils as the context and the content of teaching”. Are they indeed coming to grips with the religious diversity with which they are confronted in school and in class? Are they indeed as religiously tolerant as expected? What about the children whom they are teaching – are they as tolerant as could be expected of religious differences in others (i.e. their teachers, their school mates)? Or do we have the situation described by Leutwyler et al (2012: 116): “It may be assumed that the more or less appropriate policies in this regard are not implemented in daily teaching – precisely because they do not fit the teachers’ individual belief systems”. As far as South Africa is concerned, Du Preez and Roux (2010: 12) indeed found the following: “Early in our research project, it became evident that some teachers believe that discipline can only be maintained through the elevation of cultural values (particularism). One reason for this phenomenon could be that people in many instances see traditional, cultural values as preferable to emancipatory, human rights values. ... An illustration of a particularist stance is illustrated (sic) by Wolhuter and Steyn and De Klerk and Rens who argue that acceptance of certain Christian values could promote discipline in schools.” Could it be that teachers teaching children from a particularist, religio-centric perspective might be more or less intolerant towards others adhering to other particularist or confessional orientations? The purpose of the questionnaire to be developed on the basis of this monograph is to establish whether or not this is indeed the case.

As will be discussed in the following Section, religious tolerance as such is characterised by a number of technical considerations.

**Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #6:**

1. (6.1) Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “I could not care less what other people think and do; I feel comfortable around them when they act according to the dictates of their religion and world view; it does not matter to me what people think and do in terms of their religion; other people, their ideas and actions do not bother me at all”. 1. I totally agree with this statement 2. I agree with this statement to a certain extent 3. I find this statement acceptable 4. I disagree with this statement to a considerable degree 5. I totally disagree with this statement.
Interpretation of the responses: A 1, 2 or 3 response would be indicative of a person who is more or less completely tolerant of the religious views and actions of people of different religious persuasion. He or she may even be suspected of an “anything goes” attitude, and hence might belong in Bennett’s categories IV to VI. A 4 or 5 response would be indicative of a person who is not prepared to be quite as tolerant of the religious views and actions of people of different persuasion, and hence could belong in Bennett’s categories I, II or III.

7. The technicalities of religious and world view tolerance

The first technical point about tolerance that has to be kept in mind is that the well-being of individuals and of their societies depends to a significant extent on the degree of tolerance that is displayed by all concerned (Gray, 2009:21; Strauss, 2009: 509). As stated at the beginning of this monograph, societies are today more diverse and pluralistic than ever, and religious and cultural conflict has become a fact of life. Tolerance therefore can be seen as the key to living together in a society that harbours many different ways of life. Societies and their members have to search for the best ways of living together, and tolerance seems to be one of the attitudes most sorely needed to ensure the well-being of all concerned. Olthuis (2012: 5/7) correctly observes that people have to make sense of the diversity of cultures, religions and world views around them; from their different viewpoints (through the sides of their different “fishbowls”, as it were), they are called to negotiate, to work together for justice with compassion, for mercy with truth.

The second technical point is that tolerance does not mean accepting a belief or a practice that one does not agree with. As two authoritative dictionaries show, tolerance refers to endurance and not necessarily to acceptance of what has to be endured. Tolerance refers to the act of being tolerant, in other words the capacity to endure something such as pain or hardship, to treat with indulgence and forbearance, and to accept that people tend to hold religious and world view opinions that differ from the established religion of a country (Sinclair, 1999) or from one’s own. It could also refer to allowing the existence or occurrence of something that one dislikes or disagrees with without interference (Soames & Stevenson, 2008). What underlies tolerance, Grayling (2002: 9) correctly concludes, is the recognition that there is plenty of room in the world for alternatives to exist, and if one is offended by what other do “it is because one has let it get under one’s skin”. In contrast to the dictionaries mentioned above, Van der Walt (2007: 202-203) mentions acceptance of what has to be tolerated but he immediately qualifies such acceptance. Tolerance, he says, is the degree to which we accept things of which we disapprove; the degree with which we understand differences and learn how to differ from others, and does not preclude appreciation for what is good in other religions (for instance). As far as acceptance is concerned he qualifies his definition with the rider that we are not to tolerate everything with which we do not agree (which explains the use of “the degree to which” in his definition of tolerance above). According to Boersma (2012), tolerance is a

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25 Other factors, such as economics and population pressure, might also lead to forms of intolerance and violence.

26 Boersma (2012) shares a similar sentiment. In his case, the matter is complicated by a linguistic problem. He writes in Dutch: “Kern van tolerantie is dat ik verdraag wat ik niet accepteer maar wel aanvaard”. The Dutch “accepteer” is derived from English “accept”. The Dutch word “aanvaar” also means “to accept”. Taken at face value, Boersma seems to say: “The core idea of tolerance is that I tolerate or forbear that which I do not accept but which I do accept”. However, in view of the rest of his exposition one has to conclude that “accepteer” has a different meaning from “aanvaar”: “accepteer” seems to mean something like “do not agree with”, so what Boersma in fact states is: “The core of tolerance is that I tolerate something that I cannot agree with but which I nevertheless accept”. If this translation is correct, he seems to agree with Van der Walt (2007: 202-203).
concept with inherent tension, in the sense that it causes pain and requires from the person having to tolerate a degree of violation of his or her value system.

The third technical point pertains to the extent to which one (or a society) should tolerate beliefs and actions that they prefer not to adopt. Put differently, to what extent can open societies tolerate the existence and the efforts of fundamentalist enemies of freedom, in other words, those people who tend to live with a value system that is filled with value content from their own personal and private religious and world view approach and commitment to the extent that they openly and contemptuously reject the values contained in the radical value centre referred to above or in the value systems of others whose value systems differ from theirs? To what extent must open societies, i.e. societies that tend to operate on the values contained in the radical value centre; values that are universally recognised but contextually understood, abandon their own habits of tolerance in order to deny the right of its fundamentalist enemies to exist? (Bower, 2005: 43). The answers to both these questions, according to Grayling (2002: 8), should be a resounding “No!”. Tolerance, he says, should protect itself, and can do so by saying that anyone is free to moot a point of view but no one can force another to accept it. The only acceptable coercion in an open and democratic society is that of reason and argument. Members of an open society have only one obligation: the power of honest reasoning, of argument. Grayling is convinced that “the reasonings of an open mind will come out in favour of what is good and true” (ibid.).

The fourth technical point about religious and other forms of tolerance is that it depends on trust (Arielly, 2010; 127-128; Ilbury & Sunter, 2011: 73) and moral imagination. Tolerance depends on trusting the bona fides of all other members of society. If trust is broken for whatever reason, there can be no tolerance of the other’s beliefs or actions. A lack of trust also cramps our moral imagination, in other words our capacity to put ourselves in the shoes of the other person. As will be indicated below, the notion of peaceful coexistence (a healthy modus vivendi) depends to a large extent on the degree of trust and moral imagination that prevail in a society.

The fifth technical point pertains to the reasons why people are either tolerant or intolerant. Morton (1998: 167 et seq.) explains this in some detail. Most people, he says, are torn between tolerance of the values of other people, which may be based on ideas and preferences that they do not understand, and dislike of values that seem wrong, especially those that seem to involve cruelty or hatred. Different people resolve the conflict differently. Some people are extremely tolerant (as demonstrated above with reference to people with a totally relativist or laissez faire attitude) of other people’s values, allowing others to hold and follow those values that seem to them repulsive. Others are extremely intolerant (as also demonstrated above with reference to people with a militant fundamentalist and radically exclusivist attitude), thinking that others should not hold and tolerate a degree of violation of his or her value system.

27According to Boersma (2012), the Christian view of tolerance differs from the liberal view in that the latter holds that one has to tolerate the other out of respect for his or her freedom (as a human right). Christians do not believe that human beings possess such absolute freedom, and rather base their conception of freedom on love, as mentioned by Olthuis (see previous paragraph in this section).
28Boersma (2012) also distinguishes a “milder” form of tolerance, namely “gedogen”, to disapprove of something but to just look the other way. The English equivalent of “gedogen” might indeed be “to look the other way” or to endure.
29Living strictly according to certain dogmas and doctrines or a set of thick (content filled) values does not necessarily amount to being a fundamentalist. Adherence to such dogmas and doctrines also do not necessarily lead to violence and intolerance – as the rest of the discussion in this monograph will illustrate.
follow values that are from their point of view wrong. These different attitudes can be explained as follows. If a person is very or fairly tolerant, it may be (a) because his or her own confidence in his or her own moral beliefs is low, or (b) because he or she thinks that others have a right to follow their beliefs however wrong they are. If a person is very or fairly intolerant, it may be (a) because his or her confidence in own beliefs is high, or because (b) he or she believes in a unified society with a single set of shared values.

The final technical point that has to be kept in mind is that the concept of tolerance has recently undergone a shift, what Van der Walt (2007: 203) refers to as a secular down-scaling, a shift from tolerating the ideas and beliefs of others to tolerating others. This is due, in his opinion, to an ethics of politeness, courtesy and decency. In his opinion, this down-scaling is a result of modern-day (postmodern) relativism which seems to promote an ethic of gentility and studied moderation; a code of social discourse whereby “religious beliefs and political convictions are to be expressed discreetly and tactfully and in most cases, privately. Convictions are to be tempered by good taste and sensibility. It is an ethics that pleads “no offence”. The greatest breach of these norms is belligerence and divisiveness; the greatest atrocity is to be offensive and thus intolerant.

Items for the questionnaire flowing from step #7:

1. (7.1) Please respond to the following statement by marking the option that represents your view the most accurately: “The well-being of society and of the individuals that make up society depends on my being tolerant towards them, their ideas, their religion and their beliefs”. 1. I completely agree 2. I largely agree 3. I agree 4. I do not quite agree 5 I do not agree at all.

Interpretation of the responses: A 1, 2 or 3 response would be indicative of a person who is religiously and otherwise tolerant of others and their ideas. A 4 or 5 response would be indicative of a person who is (fairly) intolerant of others and their ideas.

2. (7.2) Please respond to the following statement by marking the most appropriate response that follows: “I just tolerate things in others that I do not like and will never accept”. 1. I fully agree 2. I agree to a large extent 3. I agree 4. I do not quite agree 5. I completely disagree 6. I have no opinion about this

Interpretation of responses: A 1, 2 or 3 response would be indicative of a fairly tolerant person whereas a 4 or 5 response would be indicative of a fairly intolerant person.

3. (7.3) Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “I can place myself in the shoes of a person who holds a religion and worldview that are completely different from mine and which I shall never accept as my own religion or life view.” 1. I fully agree with this statement 2. I agree to a certain extent 3. I agree 4. I do not agree to a considerable extent 5. I do not agree at all.

Interpretation of responses: A 1, 2 or 3 response is indicative of a person with moral imagination and who might be tolerant of the religious views of others. A 4 or 5 response is indicative of a respondent with very little or no moral imagination and who could be quite intolerant of others and their religious views.
4. (7.4) Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “My natural inclination is to trust other people”. 1. Fully agree 2. Agree 3. Agree to a considerable extent 4. Disagree to a considerable extent 5. Totally disagree.

*Interpretation of responses:* A 1, 2 or 3 response is indicative of the fact that the respondent is a trusting person and therefore probably tolerant of others. A 4 and 5 response is indicative of the fact that the person is not naturally inclined to trust others and therefore might be fairly intolerant.

5. (7.5) Which TWO of the following views of others is most applicable to you as a person? (1) My confidence in my own moral beliefs is low. (2) I think that others have a right to follow their beliefs however wrong they are. (3) My confidence in own moral beliefs is high. (4) I believe in a unified society with a single set of shared values. Mark ANY TWO in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.

*Interpretation of the responses:* These different attitudes can be explained as follows. If a person is very or fairly tolerant, it may be (a) because his or her own confidence is low, or (b) because he or she thinks that others have a right to follow their beliefs however wrong they are. If a person is very or fairly intolerant, it may be (a) because his or her confidence in own beliefs is high, or because (b) he or she believes in a unified society with a single set of shared values.

8. Some further technical distinctions

According to Vermeer and Van der Ven (2004: 39), three formal views are usually distinguished as far as the relationships among religions are concerned, namely exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism (also see Van der Walt, 2007: 195). The weakness of this typology lies in its rather vague understanding of pluralism. Whereas today there seems to be consensus about the models or views of exclusivism, the pluralist view is described in many ways, ranging from a relativistic approach stressing the quality of all religions, to a dialogical approach stressing the need for dialogue in order to find religious truth. Vermeer and Van der Ven therefore decided to differentiate this three-way typology more closely by breaking down the pluralism model into two components, with the result that they began working with a four-way distinction within religious plurality: exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism and dialogical pluralism.

In its most extreme form, the exclusivist claim would be that only one’s own religion is absolutely and uniquely true and that all other religions are therefore false. A more open version of this view is one where the followers of one religious tradition admit that their religion is not the sole possessor of truth in all respects and that they may perhaps learn from other religious traditions. Such a more open version is, according to Vermeer and Van der Ven (2004: 39-40), also exclusivist as long as the adherents to a religion are not prepared to question their own basic beliefs in light of encounters with followers of other religions. People entertaining such a more open view of exclusivism might be prepared to work together with adherents to other religions for the sake of promoting some or other shared interest, but they do not feel the need to enter into a dialogue about matters of
religious truth or salvation because they feel that they are already in possession of the truth. Exclusivism is characterised by an unwillingness to enter into religious dialogue with followers of other religious traditions. Exclusivism is characterised by absolutism, uniqueness, emphasis on difference, particularism and exclusive view of truth (Van der Walt, 2007: 197).

Like exclusivists, inclusivists maintain the truth and superiority of their own religious tradition, but differ from the former in that the other religious traditions are considered as products of divine revelation or as legitimate paths to salvation. This is mainly done by interpreting other faiths in terms of one’s own faith and by claiming that other faiths either originated from one’s own faith or will one day reach fulfilment in one’s own faith. The difference between exclusivism and inclusivism is only one of degree (Vermeer & Van der Ven, 2004: 40). Generally speaking, inclusivism is characterised by relativism, emphasis on similarities, egalitarianism, the equality of all faiths as far as truth claims are concerned, and the view that truth is relative (Van der Walt, 2007: 197).

As far as the third view, pluralism, is concerned, the basic claim is not that all religions are equally valid because they all worship and believe in the same God, but rather from a phenomenological point of view it is argued that the essence of all religions lies in the human experience of the transcendent, and from an epistemological view it is claimed that the articulation of this basic experience in belief systems is always related to a particular cultural environment and therefore cannot claim absolute validity. Religious pluralism can take one of several forms. Parallel pluralism holds that all faiths promote certain parallel dogmas, for instance about evil; puzzle pluralism holds that every religion only possesses a fragment of the full and final truth (about, for instance, salvation); gradual pluralism holds that in some religions the final truth comes to the fore in a stronger way than in others (Van der Walt, 2007: 196).

Pluralism not only claims on a phenomenological basis that all religions are based on one and the same religious experience but also on epistemological grounds that they are always related to specific cultural environments. On the basis of these two arguments, the conclusion is drawn that basically all religions offer an adequate picture of the Divine. Although this does not mean that there are no metaphysical and theological differences between religions, the emphasis in pluralism is on what is shared by the different religious traditions rather than on what separates them from one another (Vermeer & Van der Ven, 2004: 41-42).

The fourth view, brought to the fore by Vermeer and Van der Ven (2004: 42-43), is dialogical pluralism which stresses the need for an inter-religious dialogue for the mutual enrichment of different religious traditions. This view attempts to address two shortcomings of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism, namely the lack of perspective exchange between religions, the ability and willingness to try to understand the other in terms of own religious preconceptions; also the second shortcoming that is of an epistemological nature: exclusivists claim that their religion is the only valid or true one among many, and the inclusivists attempt to reconcile different sets of incompatible beliefs. The possibility exists, Vermeer and Van der Ven (2004: 43-44) claim, that aspects of religious truth also can be found in other religions. Therefore, in order to avoid these difficulties, dialogical pluralists avoid all preconceptions about the truth or falsity of different religions and instead claim that religious truth can only be discovered in a dialogue between religions. At the core of dialogical pluralism is a particular understanding of inter-religious dialogue, namely as a communicative process in which people of several traditions enter into discussions about what is ultimately true and
of value in life. This dialogue consists of three distinctive phases, namely information exchange, perspective exchange and perspective coordination. Van der Walt (2007: 187) supports the notion of conducting a dialogue between the adherents of the different religions. In his opinion, such dialogue is of import for the sake of a just and peaceful society. The only condition for dialogue, he says, is that one should believe that all religions are not all the same, because if they were, dialogue would be without purpose. He also warns that one should not enter such a dialogue with an attitude of superiority and pride as if one held the monopoly on truth. In such a dialogue, the discussion is not about who is right, but what could be seen as the truth. The aim of the dialogue is to lessen the tension between the different religions and to promote a peaceful and just society. This cannot take place without mutual understanding and trust. The alternative, he correctly concludes, is misunderstanding, conflict and violent clashes.

In Van der Walt’s (2007: 207-208) view, pluralism can easily deteriorate into intolerance. His argument runs as follows. Absolute (in the sense of consistent) relativism is impossible. If every religion were relative, then the (mild and radical) relativists would have to acknowledge that their own viewpoint itself is also relative. Since no-one can think consistently relativistically – for then such a person would simply have to keep quiet – the so-called relativists today defend their standpoint in an intolerant way. Their so-called tolerance thus means intolerance towards all who do not share their point of view. The religious tolerance for which their “tolerance” fought is destroyed – ironically – by the same “tolerance”. On close analysis, a “tolerance” which thinks relativistically about truth is by no means an example of “democracy” in the religious field. It creates the impression of being “enlightened” and very modest but in essence relativism is just as arrogant as the other religions which are blamed for being arrogant.

Although Van der Walt (2007: 195) begins his outline of the different views of the relationship between religions with the usual distinction between exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism, he discusses a whole variety of positions with regard to these views. He begins, for instance, by saying that the phenomenological method promotes a view that can be typified as “historicist relativism” since it undermines the rather absolute nature of all religions with its basic assumption that everything is relative. It propagates the modern secularist relativism which teaches that all religions are equally true or false, and that it makes no difference which one chooses to adhere to. In Van der Walt’s (2007: 189) opinion, relativist religious pluralism is, in spite of the fact that it opposes all kinds of religious dogma and absolutism, itself guilty of a hidden dogma, namely that all religions are in principle equal.

Van der Walt (2007: 196) also distinguishes at least three forms of confessional particularism. Magnetic particularism holds that a dogma might work like a magnet that draws all other religions to it; healing particularism teaches that a dogma may work like a vaccine that can cure believers and hence can draw non-believers; imperial particularism teaches that a particular dogma is of the utmost importance and that no salvation is possible without adhering to it (an example of this is the Christian belief that Christ is the only source of salvation and that an intentional confession of belief in Christ is the only hope for salvation).

Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #8:

1. (8.1) Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I believe that my religion is the only true one, and that all others are false. (2) I believe that all
religions contain some truths but that all others should be changed so that they see the truth the way we do in my religion. (3) I believe that all religions lead to one and the same God / god / gods and that they only differ from one another because of local conditions and circumstances. (4) I believe in sincere dialogue with all other religions because I think my own religion and all others will be enriched by the experience. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.

Interpretation of the responses: 1. This response will be indicative of an exclusivist and hence probably intolerant attitude. 2. This response will be indicative of an inclusivist and hence probably intolerant attitude. 3. This response will be indicative of a religious pluralist and hence probably tolerant attitude. 4. This response will be indicative of a dialogical pluralist and hence probably tolerant attitude.

9. Three approaches to tolerance
As indicated in Section 8 above, there seems to be many ways of attempting to be tolerant towards the religious views and dogmas of others, some of which might lead to more success than others in the resolution of conflict, the procurement of mutual trust, human well-being and peaceful human coexistence. Three broad life and world view (“fishbowl”, “life map”) approaches can be distinguished among the plethora of approaches to the plurality currently prevailing in Europe and Southern Africa, the two regions in which the questionnaire to be developed on the basis of this monograph will be administered, namely liberalism, Christianity (indeed post-Christianity in some areas and among some people) and what has become known as secularism, liberal secularism or secular humanism.

From a modern liberal viewpoint, Grayling (2010: 220) advises that society should learn how to manage less acceptable beliefs and behaviour by understanding their ill consequences and to encourage more acceptable behaviour by sweeping up the pieces and “otherwise being stoical”. In brief, says Schreiner (2005: 13), people have to show empathy to the other, enter into dialogue with them and acquire the competence of “dancing with difference” in the increasingly pluralist environments in which they find themselves. Gray (2003: 112) agrees with all of the above, and reiterates that “fugitive empathy” with other living things is the ultimate source of ethics. Moral imagination is required, in other words the ability to put oneself in the shoes not only of relatives and good friends but also in those of rivals and enemies. Moral imagination implies efforts at understanding others from the inside30 (Wright, 2009: 418).

Olthuis (2012: 2/7, 6/7) gives similar advice from a Christian perspective: Firstly, in ethical Postmodernism, difference is not the enemy, a threat, defect or deficit which needs to be controlled, but rather a challenge that has to be connected with, attended to and honoured. The proper relation to the other (different) person is deference rather than domination, condescension, dismissal or persecution. Genuine community is being together in difference and diversity, rather than marginalisation or fusion into sameness. In Biblical terms, freedom does not mean “free from” but rather “free to” love and minister to the other. As God is with us (Emmanuel), so a person should be with others; people are called to suffer with others, not to fusion with others, not to abandonment of others, nor even the rescue or persecution of the other, but being with the other, suffering-with

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30 See the discussion of *modus vivendi* below.
and celebrating-with. Reason, transformed by and in the service of love, will have an eye for difference not in order to close it down or to marginalise it, but in order to approach and connect with it, and let it be. Love, in Olthuis’s understanding, is not an auxiliary to the order of reason; there is only one order, he says, and that is the order of Love, with reason as one of its dimensions. In very practical terms he advises that the members of a society should develop an economy of love not to exclude others or to prove that their own way of life is the only true way, but to give witness of how and why - rooted in their own religious and life view (“fishbowl”) perspective – they see things the way they do, and how they conceive of justice and practise mercy. Along these lines and in this way, they invite others to share their deepest beliefs and convictions for mutual learning, benefit and well-being. Van der Walt (2007: 202) makes the same point by stating that religious and other forms of diversity will not disappear in this dispensation, therefore tolerance towards all other people is the only and right attitude. People need to find ways of living alongside one another without destroying one another and without ignoring or trivialising the differences among them. The task of tolerance, he avers, is not to ignore or to trivialise differences but to “establish the right to differ”. Olthuis (2012) agrees with the position outlined a few years earlier by Van der Walt (2007: 213). Tolerance based on a Biblical view is aimed at establishing the truth, and should always be modest and based on love. Tolerance from a Biblical perspective implies full involvement with the other and a sincere interest in the other; it is eager to know as much about the other as possible. True tolerance is never hesitant or sentimental; to endure things that one does not approve of takes strength and courage.

Secularism, in turn, as Mohler (2008: 29-30) correctly observed, is a lifeview according to which humankind sees itself not only as liberated from the bonds of the church and other religious institutions but from all forms of theistic religion. In view of the fact, as already mentioned, that no human being is ever without religion and religious commitment, secularists mistakenly believe that religion and religious forms will disappear in due course, that history was driving toward the utter removal of belief in God, and that education, technology and affluence would lead to a massive civilisation-wide loss of belief; secularisation would be a global phenomenon, marked by the rejection of both the social functions and the symbolic nature of theistic belief. Although it is unlikely that secularism will dominate life and the world on this massive scale, there are clear signs of it making progress, also in the form of atheism (Mohler, 2008: 15). According to Tripp and Tripp (2008: 15), secularism is a “godless culture”, a majority culture that interprets life “through unregenerate eyes and promotes its conclusions through various means, from advertising to education”. Instead of depending on guidelines flowing from theistic religious books and dogmas, secularists depend on other mediators of values such as entertainment celebrities, the social media and advertisements.

The central message of secularism, according to Tripp and Tripp (2008: 17) is “me!”, and as a result of that it leaves humankind without transcendent values. The only values that remain are those of survival by whatever means that serves the lusts and the needs of the moment. Van der Walt (2007: 213) regards the secular, including the liberal, approach to tolerance as “negative, since it can say nothing more but that one should not be uncivil, discourteous, impolite, tactless, unpleasant or opposing”. Boersma (2012) also finds the secular-liberal-humanist view of tolerance unacceptable. He does not accept the “enlightened” dogma that one should allow the other to enjoy his or her freedom because of freedom being regarded as an absolute value that entails respect for the value of living and let live, all of which is based on the dogma of human autonomy. Liberal tolerance does
not include tolerance of those who deem themselves to be subject to some or other heteronymous force; the purpose of liberal tolerance is indeed the liberation of such persons. To this could be added that it is indeed a question to what extent a me-centred person would be willing to tolerate others in his or her struggle for survival in the new secular age that Mohler refers to.

**Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #9:**

1. (9.1) Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I believe that all that counts in life is a person’s individual freedom, and that he or she should be allowed to believe in whatever makes sense to them. (2) I believe that people cannot follow the whims associated with the idea of individual freedom but that they should adhere to the principles outlined in a holy book such as the Bible. The religious views of others should nevertheless be respected. (3) I believe that a person should live and behave in accordance with values that are not strictly religious, such as to be civil, polite and courteous, tactful, pleasant and not opposing. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.

*Interpretation of the responses:* 1. This response will be indicative of a liberal and hence probably tolerant attitude. 2. This response will be indicative of a stance rooted in some holy book but that the religious views of others should be respected. This is indicative of a tolerant attitude. 3. This response will be indicative of a secular and hence probably tolerant attitude.

10. **Willingness to enter into a social contract**

Peaceful coexistence in a community or a society depends on a social contract among the members of such a community. The contract should provide room for diverse positions in society, and emerge from a joint decision of rational individuals. Antecedent to a social contract there are no principles of justice or agreement about expectations in force. Put differently, the emergence of a social contract among individuals who widely differ from one another in terms of background, religion, culture, customs and habits leads not only to a well-ordered society, to the well-being of all the contracting parties and to social justice for all concerned (Strauss, 2009: 510-511). Following Rousseau, Rawls (2007: 566-571) states that government is based on a social contract among free, equal and rational persons entering into a contract based on the principle of justice as fairness and for the well-being of all concerned. The contract leads to the adoption of certain rights and duties and to the measuring out of benefits for everyone. The basic structure of society should provide for the governing of the assignment of rights and duties and the distribution of social and economic advantages.

Bower’s (2005: 226, 228) assessment of the Constitution of the United States of America gives a good idea of what a proper social contract could provide for all. In his opinion, that Constitution “is nothing if not a repository of human values [which] had a profoundly beneficial effect on the development of civil society, on the emergence of a trustworthy judiciary and on the achievement of freedom…” Part of the social contract is also common law which, in his opinion, governs the affairs and relationships of people. Common law is the law of common practice, the law emanating from the wisdom of peoples who strive to regulate their relationships with one another on the basis of justice and decency. Common law was responsible, among others, for establishing the notion that the relationship between people was governed by agreed standards of probity, rather than the unfettered exercise of power. Nussbaum (2000: 5) adds to this that the governments of all nations should adhere to those principles that a bare minimum of respect for human dignity requires. She
refers to the social contract as “an overlapping consensus among people who otherwise have very different conceptions of the good”. The contract should therefore provide for treating each person as an end and none as a tool of others. According to Robeyns (2005: no page number), the capabilities approach worked out by Nussbaum and Sen forms a broad normative framework for what has been referred to above as a social contract among individuals, in other words for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements, the design of policies, and proposals about social change in society. Sen (2010: 245, 247) concurs with her in saying that it would be hard to understand why and how a person undertakes some of his or her activities without comprehension of his or her societal relations. Individual human beings with their various plural identities, multiple applications and diverse associations are quintessentially social creatures with different types of societal interactions.

Now, after briefly having looked at the nature and purpose of the social contract among individuals, we can return to the core argument of this monograph, namely the issue of religious tolerance. The question is, which of the two groups referred to above, those with a rather “thick” or maximalist value orientation or those with a rather “thin” or minimalist value orientation would be most willing and ready to enter into a social contract with others and hence be more tolerant of others involved in the contract and their views? Of course, to ask this question is more of an academic exercise than of practical significance since all of us, whether we wish to do so or not, are party to a social contract as embodied in the Constitution of our countries and in the Government of the day. By far the majority of us conforms to the rules and stipulations of that contract, on the one hand because of understanding the benefits that might flow from the contract in terms of personal and communal well-being, justice and fairness, rights and duties, and on the other hand, out of fear of punishment in the form of imprisonment, fines and social sanction. There have been incidents, however, caused by pathological dissidents, such as Timothy McVeigh responsible for the Oklahoma Bombing and Anders Behring Breivik, responsible for the Norway massacre, who do not accept the authority vested in the government of the day on the basis of a social contract, who not only wish to opt out from the contract but also to show their dissatisfaction with the status quo.

An academic exercise has the value, however, of revealing something of the dynamics of religious tolerance in our present-day diverse societies. It can be reasonably and arguably expected that those individuals who operate with relatively “thin” or minimalist values, such as those contained in the radical value centre or in the “valley of relative value emptiness”, those with a laissez faire attitude, who are willing to accept that “anything goes”, those with a totally relativistic value system, will more readily enter into a social contract. They readily enter because they do not feel very strongly about their value system; they are prepared to enter into an “overlapping consensus” with others with quite different value orientations because they expect that doing so will not affect their own value orientation in any way. For this group, values are “just wonderful names with very little life and world view content” as Zecha remarked. In terms of Bennett’s (1993) developmental model, the members of this group arguably belong in either category IV - those who accept difference, or in category V - those who adapt to difference, or in category VI - those who integrate difference. In terms of the distinctions in the previous section, a person in this group might be prepared to practise religious pluralism and / or dialogical pluralism, and may also be tolerant of others and their religious views.
The obverse can also be expected. Those who operate with “thick” or maximalist values might be less willing to enter into a social contract because of their awareness of the deep value rifts that exist between them and others of different religious or cultural persuasion. The “thicker” or more maximalist their value system, the less likely they will be prepared to enter into such a contract. There is also the distinct possibility that those operating with a maximalist value system that borders on fundamentalism and fanaticism, those with a “toxic” religious orientation might refuse to enter into a social contract and prefer to resort to terrorist tactics to destabilise the extant social contract because of its being founded on values unacceptable to the dissidents. Such destabilising tactics can be observed both internationally where terrorist groups, inspired by religious fervour, attempt to undermine the extant world order (September 11, 2001 is a case in point), and also nationally, where religious groups attempt to destabilise the national order of their country (Mali and the DRC are currently suffering from such attempts). The members of these groups might also be totally intolerant of the religious views of other groups which they regard as enemies and as heathens. Their efforts will be more directed towards proselytising and missionary work rather than to tolerating others and their religious differences. In terms of Bennett’s (1993) developmental model, such a radical group might belong in category I – total denial of differences among people (in terms of the distinction in the previous section, totally exclusivist (only my religion is true) or totally inclusivist (since only my religion is true, I have to convert all others to it), or category II – I have to defend myself against difference.

The person with a less “thick” or maximalist value orientation might fall in category III – I feel the need to minimize the differences between myself and others. Ideally speaking, such a balanced and worthy member of society should fall in the category of some value “thickness” or maximalisation, not in the extreme categories of fundamentalist intolerance or of radical relativistic tolerance. Put differently, he or she should ideally fall in Bennett’s categories III – minimisation of differences among people (the differences between myself and others are not all that important; we can talk about them and exchange ideas – dialogical pluralism), IV – acceptance of differences among people (people are different, and that is a fact of life, we have to live with it), and V – adaptation to difference (although I have to live with the differences among people, I can be myself and apply my own value system in the context of the social contract to which I am party).

Bennett’s category I – denial of difference (I recognise only my own value system; all others either do not exist or are not valid) is the reserve of the totally intolerant. Category VI – integration of difference (my value system is not so important to me that I cannot associate myself with all other values; all values are equally valid) is also the reserve of the totally tolerant.

**Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #10:**

1. (10.1) Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I feel so strongly about my personal religious convictions, principles and values that I do not feel at home in my community and even in my country; I feel dissatisfied with the government of this country and with all people in charge; I dislike all people who do not see things my way; I wish I could move elsewhere where people approached daily life the way I see it. (2) I feel totally comfortable with whatever other people feel and think. I cannot be bothered whether Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists or New Agers governed this country. I just go with the flow. (3) I feel that one should participate in community life on condition that such
participation does not bring me in conflict with some of my basic religious convictions. I am prepared to vote for a government that does not deviate too much from my religious convictions. Although I do not always feel comfortable in my community and in this country, I do not wish to move elsewhere. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.

Interpretation of the responses: 1. This response will be indicative of a person not wishing to enter or be part of a social contract and hence will probably be tolerant of others. 2. This response will be indicative of a person with a totally laissez faire attitude, totally willing to enter into a social contract, and who could be regarded as totally tolerant of others and their religious views. 3. This response will be indicative of a person with a balanced view, willing to enter into a social contract on certain conditions, and hence will probably be conditionally tolerant towards others and their religious views.

11. Tolerance (and respect) a prerequisite for peaceful coexistence (a healthy modus vivendi)

In his book *The Open Society and its Enemies*, first published in 1945, Karl Popper engaged with the task of defining the best available conditions under which humanity could live as a community, and with a diagnosis of the factors that would undermine the achievement of such conditions (Bower, 2005: 25). Popper’s search, launched nearly seven decades ago, is still an ongoing one in the present day. Even today, different societies and individuals interpret, prioritise and realise values that could be considered to be universal (radical centre values) differently, and this is both inescapable and desirable (Parekh, 2000: 158).

The answer to Popper’s quest is not simple and straightforward. Its formulation will depend in the final analysis on one’s societal relationship theory. For example, a person with a socialist, communal view of society might feel that some people in society should not be allowed to express or even to possess their own values, ideas and beliefs in the interest of creating or ensuring a society with shared values. In this case, it is clear that the possession of private values (et cetera) that may deviate from the norm in a hoped-for unified society will not be tolerated by the majority. More cynical socialists such as Marxists would be wary of social structures that seem to serve the powerful or a particular interest group in society, that manipulate and exploit the sense of fear of ordinary people, structures that (for instance) use religion as a tool of social control or as an “opiate for the masses”.

If, on the other hand, one had a more liberal view of society one would accept and honour people’s right to personal, private and often dissident views, and hence would be more tolerant of such views in the interest of a positive *modus vivendi*. In this context, it would be important to reason with others who think and behave differently (cf. dialogical pluralism, as discussed above), and to be sceptical of others’ ideas and beliefs (Morton, 1998: 171). If one believed in total individualism, however, one could be one of the causes of society falling atomistically apart, with very few shared values on which to base a social contract. If one believed in Mills’ no harm principle, the only reason for preventing someone doing or believing something is the potential harm that it could cause another or society as a whole. No one has the right to tell another how to be or how to act provided that such being and acting does no harm to others (Grayling, 2002: 8). The challenge here is to only allow what should be truly allowed and forbid what should be forbidden. The harm principle should therefore never be used arbitrarily (Morton, 1998: 170-171).
If, in turn, one approached society from a functionalist view one would be interested in what promoted the interests of society as a whole, what would make society “socially good”, or “collectively stronger”, “socially more vital”, “more alive and active”, what would promote social cohesion and productivity, generosity and social harmony (Wright, 2009: 43-44).

What underlies tolerance in a diverse or pluralistic society is the recognition that there should be room for all kinds of alternatives to exist. Learning to tolerate is indeed one of the aims of civilised life (Grayling, 2002: 9). Human community benefits by permitting a variety of lifestyles to flourish because they represent experiments from which much might be learned about how to deal with the human condition (Grayling, 2002: 8).

While we will never discover cast-iron rules of good conduct and the good life in our societies which will answer every question that might arise about how human beings can live peacefully and well together, the lack of absolute agreement on what peaceful coexistence means and requires should not discourage us from investigating and promoting the theoretical notion of a healthy *modus vivendi* (De Botton, 2012: 83). As mentioned, peaceful coexistence depends, in the first place, considerably on the amount of moral imagination that the members of a community are able to display, i.e. the capability of placing themselves in the shoes of another, be it friend or enemy. The process entails scouring one’s mind and memory for shared points of reference, the mutual validation of feelings and ideas, working towards a common goal or perspective, the virtual sharing of experiences, knowing the other from the inside, putting prejudice in abeyance and showing empathy and sympathy. The expansion of moral imagination forces one to see the interior of more and more people for what their interiors are, namely remarkably like one’s own. Like one’s own interior, says Wright (2009: 428), it is deeply coloured by emotions and passions; like one’s own it also colours the world (cf. the “fishbowl” metaphor) with self-serving moral judgment.

Whatever transpires in a society, it should create and promote the conditions of the good life. Something that happens defeats this purpose when it violates human dignity, (self-)respect and tolerance of others, and when it renders its members incapable of leading the good life (Parekh, 2000: 157). Certain agreed-upon values should be respected by all in society, and each society should be free to find the most effective way to popularise and realise the values on which its social contract is founded (Parekh, 2000: 156). This is where tolerance comes in. Since every society and every individual member thereof enjoy the moral freedom to interpret and prioritise their values, their practices cannot and should not be condemned merely because they are different from or offend against one’s own (Parekh, 2000: 153). A healthy *modus vivendi* indeed rests on the assumption that people have so many things in common that they should be able to realise their ideals and goals through mutual support and cooperation, and this requires tolerance of the religious and other characteristics that members of a society might have. Through a healthy *modus vivendi* every member has an equal opportunity to develop his or her potential, or to protect the environment (Ramcharan, 2008: 53).

Because there are so many human possibilities worth exploring, it should neither be expected nor desired that every person or every society should converge on a single mode of life. Whatever one’s obligations to others (also reciprocally), each has the right to his or her own way (Schneller, 2011: 190). What one might expect from others is the moral qualities of honesty, truthfulness, decency, courage and justice coupled with the intellectual qualities of thoughtfulness, strength of mind,
curiosity and the communal qualities of neighbourliness, charity, self-support as well as the political qualities of commitment to the common good, respect for law, responsible participation, helpfulness, cooperativeness and respect for others (Schneller, 2011: 175). Tolerance and respect seem to go hand in hand in the establishment of a healthy *modus vivendi*. Diversity needs respect (Christian Science Monitor, 2005: 8). Any attempt at coercion unglues the respect that holds a diverse society together.

True tolerance, as observed in the previous section of this monograph, does not originate in opportunism which tolerates other religions merely for its own profit or for the sake of a superficial form of coexistence. It rather takes a sincere interest in the other(‘s religion) and is eager to know as much of it as possible (Van der Walt, 2007: 213). Honest and sincere interest and respect for others and their capabilities can indeed lead to happiness, the provision of space for one another and also to social justice as fairness. According to Valenkamp (2011), the philosopher Kant claimed that the actual practising of a healthy *modus vivendi* among diverse people requires a certain “push from behind”. The love commandment, as expressed in the various forms of the Golden Rule (see Comte-Sponville, 2005: 8-10 for a discussion of the various versions of the Rule), is not the true ground for morality, Kant claims, but it provides the necessary flow, the inspiration to provide space for one another; it provides the stimulus to recognise-in-the-other-the–same-needs, to such an extent that the members of a society ought to do what the Golden Rule demands, i.e. to love one’s neighbour as oneself. People need to create societies in which differences can be recognised and conflicts resolved, where their forces can be united, not because all human beings are good and just, but because they are not; not because they are united, but so that they have a realistic chance to become united (Comte-Sponville, 2005: 15).

**Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #11:**

1. (11.1) Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I feel so strongly about my personal religious convictions, principles and values that I do not think that people can ever live peacefully together. The divisions among people in a community are just too great for that. I think people also do not trust one another sufficiently to live peacefully together. (2) I think people should just find ways and means to live peacefully together in a community. People are just people, and there is very little that keeps them apart. People should be more trustful of others. (3) I think that peaceful coexistence among people with different religious convictions in the same community is possible on condition that every member of society respects the differences around him or her, and treats others with the necessary respect and dignity. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.

*Interpretation of the responses:* 1. *This response will be indicative of a religiously intolerant person.* 2. *This response will be indicative of a person who is totally tolerant of others and their religious views.* 3. *This response will be indicative of a person with a balanced view, willing to live peacefully with others on certain conditions, and hence will probably be conditionally tolerant towards others and their religious views.*
12. Grand narratives and the new spirituality

As mentioned in Section 10 above, those with a rather “thick” or maximally life-conceptually filled value system might be reluctant to be tolerant of the religious and cultural views of those of different persuasion than themselves. The thesis there was that the “thicker” or maximalist a value system becomes, the more aware its adherents would be of the depth of the rifts between their own value system and those of others of different religious or cultural persuasion, to the extent that they might reach a point where they feel they have to dissociate them from the social contract with others. It could be argued, however, that this is highly unlikely among rational and sane individuals. Most people understand and welcome the profits that could be made by entering into the social contract and living according to values and principles about which consensus had been reached.

However, there is a possibility\(^31\) that rational and sane individuals socially bonded together in what has been termed “a grand narrative” or “totalising system” (McGrath, 2005: 219) of whatever nature, could be less tolerant of others, their ideas and beliefs than those outside of such a “grand narrative”. Members of a mainstream church, for instance, could feel conscience bound by the dogmas and the confessions of their organisation, and hence not free to be tolerant of deviant views. This is because, apart from the fact that each individual member of such an institution comes with a set of in-built pre-judgments and biases, he or she is a member of an institution with a certain agreed-upon set of dogmas or ideologies which make it difficult for members to be tolerant of other views not consonant with those of the institution. In many cases, the personal “fishbowl” perspective of the members have been affected or coloured by the ideologies or dogmas of the institution as a grand narrative. As Olthuis (2012: 3/7) remarked, grand narratives tend to claim to be able to explain everything. This claim, as we have seen in the discussion of postmodernism above, has today lost much of its credibility.

Although, as Makrides (2012: 250-251) correctly observed, the grand narratives of modernism have not been totally replaced by postmodernism, there is a strong tendency away from the grand narratives and their relative dominance over the thoughts and behaviour of their adherents. People understand nowadays that despite the claims of the grand narratives, people only know partially, not totally. The image of the all-knowing mind is slowly but surely being replaced by the image of the searching mind in and through a complex world, where answers are more likely to be wrong than correct.

In contrast to the search for spirituality within the context of a grand narrative, such as a particular religion, church or other religious institution, there is a resurgence of interest in non-mainstream religion and spirituality, in the realm of the transcendent. There has been a concomitant breakdown in the social and religious cohesion formerly experienced in the context of grand narrative monoliths such as churches and mainstream religions (McGrath, 2005: 219, 263). Spirituality is now widely seen, also in educational context, as something fundamental to the human condition, something that transcends ordinary everyday experience and is concerned with the search for identity and meaning in response to death, suffering, beauty and evil. Spirituality may be encountered in our beliefs, sense of awe, wonder and mystery, feelings of transcendence, search for meaning and purpose, self-knowledge, relationships, creativity, feelings and emotions, and could be rooted in

\(^{31}\)Attention is drawn to the word “possibility”; not all of those attached to some or other grand narrative may feel themselves so conscience bound to the extent that they might be intolerant of others’ views.
curiosity, imagination, insight and intuition (Wright, 2010: 130). According to Julian (2002: 10), the base of spirituality is the notion of serving a higher purpose, but in Welch’s (1997: 84) opinion, spirituality has in practice been reduced to a feeling of the infinite, an inarticulate ecstasy before the wonders of the self or of nature, on an experience of the ineffable. Modern spirituality therefore has no hell, no doctrine, no substance; it is all about feeling.

Kourie’s (2006: 22-23) definition of spirituality is quite different: spirituality refers to the deepest dimension of the human person; it refers to ultimate values that give meaning to one’s life, whether one is religious or not. Spirituality refers to one’s ultimate values and commitments, regardless of content. De Muynck’s (2008: 7) definition is similar to that of Kourie: spirituality is the manner in which one – by orientating oneself to a source – relates his or her beliefs and experience of inspiration and / or transcendence, more or less methodically, to the actual practice of life.

The purpose of this section is neither to give a full depiction of modern-day spirituality (which is very difficult to do because of the nebulousness of the concept) nor to evaluate it in any detail. Suffice it to say that, as Mohler (2008: 89) observed, spirituality has risen as a replacement for identification with organised religion. It is a new non-theistic form of belief that can range from the New Age movement to the various quests for spirituality that mark popular culture and fit personal taste. Instead of, as expected, religiousness disappearing, it has been resurrected in another form, that of spirituality (Van der Walt, 2007: 150).

The implications of the above for religious tolerance are clear. The more one is immersed in the doctrines, dogmas, structures of a mainstream religion that act as a grand narrative that binds the conscience of its members, the less likely one would be to be tolerant of the religious views and beliefs of others of different religious persuasion. The opposite might also be true: the more one is immersed in the nebulous ambience of some or other form of “new” spirituality, the more one is likely to be tolerant of others’ views.

Item for the questionnaire flowing from step #12:

1. (12.1) Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I belong to a religious group with very strong convictions. Everything that we do in my church, synagogue, mosque, temple or religious institution is so defined in terms of dogmas and doctrines that it is difficult for me to deal with people who do not belong to the same religious group or institution. I have to be inward thinking because I cannot understand the religions of other people, and I do not think they can understand my religion. (2) I do not belong to any form of organised or institutionalised religion. I regard myself as non-religious. I just respect what others think without ever judging them. (3) I do not belong to any form of organised or institutional religion, but I see myself as religious since I adhere to a form of spirituality in which I try to connect with a higher force. I think all people are involved in such a spiritual search for a higher force in their lives; some only do it within some or other religion, others find such institutionalised religion an obstacle in their search. (4) I belong to a religious group such as a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or religious institution, and although we worship according to certain dogmas and confessional documents, we feel ourselves free to interact with other people, to discuss religious issues and differences with them.
Although I feel myself religiously different from other people, I treat them with respect and dignity. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.

Interpretation of the responses: 1. This response will be indicative of a religiously intolerant person. 2 and 3. These responses will be indicative of a person who is totally tolerant of others and their religious views. 4. This response will be indicative of a person with a balanced view, willing to live peacefully with others on certain conditions, and hence will probably be conditionally tolerant towards others and their religious views.

13. Preliminary conclusion: (Religious) tolerance a “moving phenomenon”

The discussion so far seems to suggest that (religious and other forms of) tolerance can be regarded as a “moving phenomenon” and hence very difficult to delineate, circumscribe in general terms or define. The discussion also proves that it has many facets and ramifications, and that one and the same aspect might be based in quite different theoretical perspectives. The term “tolerance” has, therefore, to be seen as a phenomenon with various nuances.

(Religious and other forms of) tolerance pertain(s) to a certain moment in time; it seems to be a matter of a specific moment in question. Groups of quite different religious or life and world view persuasion might live peacefully together for many years, even centuries, and may be said to be quite tolerant of the other and its beliefs and convictions. A relatively minor incident, such as the accidental death of a child at the hands of a member of the another (religious) community, may then spark a bout of severe (religious) intolerance - even conflict - that might last for years thereafter. Another incident, for example, a child saved from drowning by a member of the opposing group might terminate the violence, and lead to another prolonged period of (religious) tolerance. This can be practically illustrated with reference to the situation in Kiev, the capital city of the Ukraine in February 2014. The refusal of the president to sign an agreement with the European Union sparked a bout of severe intolerance and violence among the populace. The violence only ended when the president was deposed. Tolerance – in the political realm, in this instance - became the order of day once again.

The degree of (religious and other forms of) tolerance experienced in a community depends on the degree of equilibrium in the system. The various groups of which a society is composed seem to be tolerant of one another if all the checks and balances are in place, when certain tendencies are effectively counterbalanced by others.

Intolerance seems to need a spark or trigger to come to life. The relative peace and quiet and tolerance in a community characterised by potential for conflict can be broken by a single incident which acts as a spark or a trigger (see the examples mentioned above). Even a relatively insignificant incident can act as a trigger that could cause disequilibrium in the system.

The principles or a priori convictions of the various groups that might come into conflict and hence be intolerant of others seem to play an important role. People and groups entertain different sets of principles that flow from their religious persuasion and convictions (their respective “fishbowls”), and they live peacefully according to them on condition that they are not somehow confronted by an incongruous situation, on condition that some or other incident does not cause them alarm about the validity and viability of their personal convictions and principles. Confrontation seems to be the
key to the rise of (religious and other forms of) intolerance. As long as a person or a group is allowed to live peacefully according to their principles and convictions we might expect them to be calm and their system to be in equilibrium. A confrontational incident might disturb this equilibrium and hence result in intolerant behaviour and attitudes. Put differently, the principles might lie latently in the background of an individual or a group, but a certain confrontational incident (a certain casuistic) might bring it to the fore. How a person responds to such a confrontational incident will depend on the “contents” of his or her “fishbowl” (see section 1 above) and expectancy filters (see section 4 above). As mentioned in those two sections, how a person will engage with the world, with confrontation and systemic imbalance, will depend to a large extent to how s/he views the world and other people.

14. © The questionnaire

A few notes about the questionnaire that follows below:

1. The preceding conceptual and theoretical framework lends conceptual and theoretical support and substance to the items which together now form a provisional questionnaire with which to probe the degree of religious tolerance displayed by a respondent, and on the basis of which a religious tolerance profile of a person or a group can be constructed.

2. The items, as they have been phrased in the course of the argument outlined above, are much too difficult and complicated in their current form for application in a questionnaire to be completed by teachers, student teachers and the students or pupils in their care. This became evident when the original questionnaire was given to a number of well educated adults to respond to. Although they were able to respond adequately to each item, they found the formulation thereof too theoretical-academic and hence too complicated. This explains why a further edition of the questionnaire had to be drafted (see Section 14 below). This section contains in essence the thrust of the items of the original questionnaire but pains were taken to make the items more understandable and easier to respond to by the target audience.

3. Readers of this monograph are encouraged to attempt responding to the original questionnaire. This exercise will help them decide whether the questionnaire indeed measures what it is intended to measure, in other words whether it possesses the necessary content and construct validity.

4. The items following each theoretical section above overlap in some cases, even to a considerable extent. This is because different theoretical perspectives lead to similar questionnaire items. This problem has to be addressed in the final formulation of the questionnaire.

4. Please read the remark at the end of the questionnaire, i.e. after the interpretation, and after first having completed the questionnaire.

Here is the more simplified version of the questionnaire:

1. To which religion do you belong? If you belong to a mainstream religion such as Christianity, the Muslim faith, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism then please write the name of the religion in the space provided. If you do not belong to a mainstream religion, please write a short phrase in which you describe your religious stance, e.g. “I believe in a form of spirituality that is not associated with any mainstream religion”.

4. © The questionnaire
2. Please respond to the statement: “I live very strictly according to the tenets and prescriptions of my religion and world view” by marking one of the following: 1. Totally agree 2. Agree to some extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a certain extent 5. Totally disagree

3. Please respond to the statement “I am always and acutely conscious of my religious convictions and beliefs whenever I do something or have to make a choice in my life” by marking one of the following: 1. Totally agree 2. Agree to some extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a certain extent 5. Totally disagree

4. Which of the following views of the world is typical of how you personally view and approach the world and other people? Mark the response that describes your basic view of the world, and your attitude towards the world and other people most appropriately: 1. I feel safe and secure; I do not see the world and other people as a threat to me or my existence. 2. I concentrate on my own affairs, and have very little to do with other people and their needs; I am concerned about my own welfare in this world. 3. I cannot be bothered about the world and other people; I expect nothing from life or other people; one has to make your own fortune in life. 4. I would like to be close and friendly to other people, but at the same time I am fearful of them and what they could do to me.

5. Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “I am willing and prepared to associate myself with a set of values that has universal currency, a set of values, principles and norms that people say is true and valid for all people in the world, for all religions and world views in the world”. Please choose one of the following options: 1. I completely, fully agree 2. To a fairly large degree 3. Only to a limited degree 4. Not so much 5. Not at all

6. Please respond to the statement: “I am prepared to live by values that are supposedly valid for all people in the world, irrespective of their personal religion and life and world view but I think I will need to reinterpret them according to my personal religion and world view”. Mark one of the following: 1. Totally agree 2. Agree to some extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a certain extent 5. Totally disagree

7. Please respond to the statement: “A value that does not flow from my own, personal religion and world view is worthless as a guideline for my life”. Please mark one of the following: 1. Totally agree 2. Agree to some extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a certain extent 5. Totally disagree

8. Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “I prefer values that are simple, have nothing to do with any religion or world view, that all people can agree with because they are formulated in very general terms, and will not lead to divisions and conflict among people”. 1 I strongly agree with this statement 2. I agree with the statement to a certain degree 3. I find this statement fairly acceptable 4. I disagree with the statement to some extent 5. I completely disagree with the statement.
9. Please respond to the following statement by marking with a cross one of the options that follow: “I prefer to deal with other people on the basis of values that are generally acceptable to all people, and not on the basis of my own religious and life view values which tend to make me different.” 1. Totally agree with the statement 2. Agree to a large extent 3. I find this statement acceptable 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree

10. Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “I could not care less what other people think and do; I feel comfortable around them when they act according to the dictates of their religion and world view; it does not matter to me what people think and do in terms of their religion; other people, their ideas and actions do not bother me at all”. 1. I totally agree with this statement 2. I agree with this statement to a certain extent 3. I find this statement acceptable 4. I disagree with this statement to a considerable degree 5. I totally disagree with this statement.

11. Please respond to the following statement by marking the option that represents your view the most accurately: “The well-being of society and of the individuals that make up society depends on my being tolerant towards them, their ideas, their religion and their beliefs”. 1. I completely agree 2. I largely agree 3. I agree 4. I do not quite agree 5. I do not agree at all.

12. Please respond to the following statement by marking the most appropriate response that follows: “I just tolerate things in others that I do not like and will never accept”. 1. I fully agree 2. I agree to a large extent 3. I agree 4. I do not quite agree 5. I completely disagree

13. Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “I can place myself in the shoes of a person who holds a religion and world view that is completely different from mine and which I shall never accept as my own religion or life view.” 1. I fully agree with this statement 2. I agree to a certain extent 3. I agree 4. I do not agree to a considerable extent 5. I do not agree at all.

14. Please respond to the following statement by marking one of the options that follow: “My natural inclination is to trust other people”. 1. Fully agree 2. Agree to a considerable extent 3. Agree 4. Disagree to a considerable extent 5. Totally disagree.

15. Which TWO of the following views of others are most applicable to you as a person? (1) My confidence in my own moral beliefs is low. (2) I think that others have a right to follow their beliefs however wrong they are. (3) My confidence in own beliefs is high. (4) I believe in a unified society with a single set of shared values. Mark ANY TWO in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.

16. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I believe that my religion is the only true one, and that all others are false. (2) I believe that all religions contain some truths but that all others should be changed so that they see the truth the way we do in my religion. (3) I believe that all religions lead to one and the same God / god / gods and that they only differ from one another because of local conditions and circumstances. (4) I believe in sincere dialogue with all other religions because I think my
own religion and all others will be enriched by the experience. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.

17. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I believe that all that counts in life is a person’s individual freedom, and that he or she should be allowed to believe in whatever makes sense to them. (2) I believe that people cannot follow the whims associated with the idea of individual freedom but that they should adhere to the principles outlined in a holy book such as the Bible. The religious views of others should nevertheless be respected. (3) I believe that a person should live and behave in accordance with values that are not strictly religious, such as to be civil, polite and courteous, tactful, pleasant and not opposing. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.

18. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I feel so strongly about my personal religious convictions, principles and values that I do not feel at home in my community and even in my country; I feel dissatisfied with the government of this country and with all people in charge; I dislike all people who do not see things my way; I wish I could move elsewhere where people approached daily life the way I see it. (2) I feel totally comfortable with whatever other people feel and think. I cannot be bothered whether Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists or New Agers governed this country. I just go with the flow. (3) I feel that one should participate in community life on condition that such participation does not bring me in conflict with some of my basic religious convictions. I am prepared to vote for a government that does not deviate too much from my religious convictions. Although I do not always feel comfortable in my community and in this country, I do not wish to move elsewhere. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.

19. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I feel so strongly about my personal religious convictions, principles and values that I do not think that people can ever live peacefully together. The divisions among people are just too great for that. I think people also do not trust one another sufficiently to live peacefully together. (2) I think people should just find ways and means to live peacefully together. People are just people, and there is very little that keeps them apart. People should be more trustful of others. (3) I think that peaceful coexistence among people with different religious convictions is possible on condition that every member of society respects the differences around him or her, and treats others with the necessary respect and dignity. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.

20. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I belong to a religious group with very strong convictions. Everything that we do in my church, synagogue, mosque, temple or religious institution is so defined in terms of dogmas and doctrines that it is difficult for me to deal with people who do not belong to the same religious group or institution. I have to be inward thinking because I cannot understand the religions of other people, and I do not think they can understand my religion. (2) I do not belong to any form of organised or institutionalised religion. I regard myself as non-religious. I just respect what others think without ever judging them. (3) I do not belong to any form of organised or institutional religion, but I see myself as religious since I adhere to
a form of spirituality in which I try to connect with a higher force that could give direction to my life. I think all people are involved in such a spiritual search for a higher force in their lives; some only do it within some or other religion, others find such institutionalised religion an obstacle in their search. (4) I belong to a religious group such as a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or religious institution, and although we worship according to certain dogmas and confessional documents, we feel ourselves free to interact with other people, to discuss religious issues and differences with them. Although I feel myself religiously different from other people, I treat them with respect and dignity. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.

**Interpretation key**

1. This item informs the researcher whether the respondent belongs to a mainstream religion, to a form of spirituality not associated with any mainstream religion or to no religion at all – as far as the respondent is concerned (according to the literature, no person is ever actually without religion (Gray, 2009: 2; Peck, 2006: 108)). This item reveals the nature of the personal “fishbowl” (life and worldview orientation) of the respondent.

2. Interpretation of the response: A 1, 2 or 3 response could be indicative of a maximalist attitude and a possibility of being situated in a religio-centric orientation (based on Bennett’s\(^\text{32}\) work). A 4 or 5 response could be construed as minimalist and a possibility of being situated in a religio-relative orientation (cf. Bennett, 1993). Put differently, a 1, 2 or 3 response could refer to the respondent’s attitude of being happy and satisfied to live in his or her own “fishbowl” and seemingly does not feel the need to examine his or her own worldview or to exchange it for another worldview or a broader look on life, including the views of other people.

3. A 1, 2 or 3 response could be indicative of a maximalist attitude and a possibility of being situated in a religio-centric orientation (cf. Bennett, 1993). A 4 or 5 response could be construed as minimalist and a possibility of being situated in religio-relative orientation (Bennett, 1993). Put differently, a 1, 2 or 3 response could refer to the respondent’s attitude of being happy and satisfied to live in his or her own “fishbowl” and seemingly does not feel the need to examine his or her own worldview or to exchange it for another worldview or a broader look on life, including the views of other people.

4. 1 indicates a balanced and secure world view. This person is not fearful of engaging with the world or with other people; he or she trusts others and the predictability of the world, and is generally open to the world. This person might be tolerant of others and their views. 2 is indicative of a pre-occupied life and world view; this is an inward looking person, who is not concerned about the welfare of others or of the world in general. This person is so concerned about him- or herself that tolerance of others and their views does not come into play. 3 This person is disconnected from the world, expects nothing

\(^{32}\)See Section 6 for a detailed discussion of this aspect.
from others or the world. This disconnection could be indicative of a mentality in which tolerance plays no significant role. 4. This person leads an ambivalent life; he or she is both fearful of the world and of others but also aspires to be close to others. Fear could lead to intolerant behaviour; on the other hand, the wish for closeness could lead to exaggerated tolerance of others and their views.

5. A 1, 2 or 3 response would indicate that the respondent is not at all or at least not fully committed to some or other exclusive confessional stance as far as his or her religious orientation is concerned. He or she is prepared to share a set of values that is supposedly universally applicable to all people. A 4 or 5 response will be indicative of the opposite, namely that the respondent is so committed to some or other confessional religious or life and world view stance and perspective that he or she does not find it possible or viable to share values, principles and norms with others of a different religious and / or life and world view conviction.

6. A 1, 2 or 3 response could be indicative of the fact that the respondent seems to be prepared to live by generally accepted and supposedly universally valid values, norms and principles but also feels the need to reinterpret those values and norms in terms of his or her private religious stance and life and worldview. A 4 or 5 response could be seen as confirmation of a 1, 2 or 3 response in item 3.1.

7. A 1, 2 or 3 response could be indicative of (full) commitment to a personal religion and life and world view. A 4 or 5 response could be seen as confirmation of a 1, 2 or 3 response in item 3.1.

8. A 1, 2 or 3 response would be indicative of a respondent preferring to operate with minimalist, general values, values that have been thinly formulated. This person seems to pave the way for getting along with others on the basis of rather generally shared values. A 4 or 5 response would indicate that the respondent prefers values that are maximally, thickly formulated in terms of his or her religious and life and world view convictions. Respondents who opt for a 4 or a 5 seem to be more likely to be more conscious of their own religion and life and worldview rooted value system, and hence also more aware of differences between his or her value system and those of others whose value systems might be rooted in different religions and world views.

9. Responses 1, 2 and 3 indicate that the respondent sees him- or herself as preferring values that are relatively devoid of content or that are universal though contextually filled and meaningful. The respondent seems to prefer to operate in the “valley of relative value emptiness” in order to get along with most other people, irrespective of their value stances. Responses 4 and 5 might be indicative of a respondent who prefers not to operate in the “valley of relative value emptiness” but rather with values that are more or less conceptually filled with meaning and content. The value stance of such respondents is likely to be rooted in a pertinent religious, faith or life and worldview commitment.
10. A 1, 2 or 3 response would be indicative of a person who is more or less completely tolerant of the religious views and actions of people of different religious persuasion. He or she may even be suspected of an “anything goes” attitude, and hence might belong in Bennett’s categories IV and VI. A 4 or 5 response would be indicative of a person who is not prepared to be quite as tolerant of the religious views and actions of people of different persuasion, and hence could belong in Bennett’s categories I, II or III.

11. A 1, 2 or 3 response would be indicative of a person who is religiously and otherwise tolerant of others and their ideas. A 4 or 5 response would be indicative of a person who is (fairly) intolerant of others and their ideas.

12. A 1, 2 or 3 response would be indicative of a fairly tolerant person whereas a 4 or 5 response would be indicative of a fairly intolerant person.

13. A 1, 2 or 3 response is indicative of a person with moral imagination and who might be tolerant of the religious views of others. A 4 or 5 response is indicative of a respondent with very little or no moral imagination and who could be quite intolerant of others and their religious views.

14. A 1, 2 or 3 response is indicative of the fact that the respondent is a trusting person and therefore probably tolerant of others. A 4 and 5 response is indicative of the fact that the person is not naturally inclined to trust others and therefore might be fairly intolerant.

15. These different attitudes can be explained as follows. If a person is very or fairly tolerant, it may be (a) because his or her own confidence in his or her own moral beliefs is low, or (b) because he or she thinks that others have a right to follow their beliefs however wrong they are. If a person is very or fairly intolerant, it may be (a) because his or her confidence in own beliefs is high, or because (b) he or she believes in a unified society with a single set of shared values.

16. 1. This response will be indicative of an exclusivist and hence probably intolerant attitude. 2. This response will be indicative of an inclusivist and hence probably intolerant attitude. 3. This response will be indicative of a religious pluralist and hence probably tolerant attitude. 4. This response will be indicative of a dialogical pluralist and hence probably tolerant attitude.

17. 1. This response will be indicative of a liberal and hence probably tolerant attitude. 2. This response will be indicative of a stance rooted in some holy book but that the religious views of others should be respected. This is indicative of a tolerant attitude. 3. This response will be indicative of a secular and hence probably tolerant attitude.

18. 1. This response will be indicative of a person not wishing to enter or be part of a social contract and hence will probably be tolerant of others. 2. This response will be indicative of a person with a totally laissez faire attitude and who could be regarded as totally tolerant of others and their religious views. 3. This response will be indicative of a person...
with a balanced view, willing to enter into a social contract on certain conditions, and hence will probably be conditionally tolerant towards others and their religious views.

19. 1. This response will be indicative of a religiously intolerant person. 2. This response will be indicative of a person who is totally tolerant of others and their religious views. 3. This response will be indicative of a person with a balanced view, willing to live peacefully with others on certain conditions, and hence will probably be conditionally tolerant towards others and their religious views.

20. 1. This response will be indicative of a religiously intolerant person. 2 and 3. These responses will be indicative of a person who is totally tolerant of others and their religious views. 4. This response will be indicative of a person with a balanced view, willing to live peacefully with others on certain conditions, and hence will probably be conditionally tolerant towards others and their religious views.

Remark: Initial application of the above questionnaire in a small-scale pilot study revealed two of its characteristics:

1. It is too difficult and complicated in its current format for persons without the necessary conceptual and theoretical background to decide on the appropriate responses. To address this problem a simplified version of the questionnaire was developed for teachers, student teachers and learners, students, pupils in the last two years of school (typically grades 11 and 12 / standards 9 and 10)(Section 14).

2. The initial results show that at least four profiles with respect to religious tolerance could be drafted on the basis of the questionnaire:

2.1 A respondent with a totally intolerant stance is able to mark the items in such a way that his or her total religious intolerance will be clearly demonstrated.

2.2 The same goes for a person with the opposite stance as far as religious tolerance is concerned; items can be marked in such a way that his or her total religious tolerance can be demonstrated.

2.3 According to the pilot study, by far the most respondents seem to mark the items that show his or her adherence to a strong personal value system while at the same time being tolerant of others and their religious views.

2.4 Some respondents mark the items in such a way they show their adherence to a strong personal value system accompanied by a spirit of relative intolerance of other views.

3. These impressions will have to be tested with larger groups of respondents.

4. The following is an example of the responses of one of the persons in the very initial pilot study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Response number</th>
<th>Response in words</th>
<th>Religious tolerance profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td></td>
<td>This person belongs to the Christian faith or religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agree to some extent</td>
<td>Religio-centric person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Totally agree</td>
<td>Religio-centric and values maximally filled with content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fourth column, if read from top to bottom, embodies the *tolerance profile* of this particular person: he is a Christian who is fairly religio-centred in his value stance, whose views are rooted in the Holy Book of Christianity (the Bible), who prefers to apply values that are maximally filled with life and worldview content, who feels balanced and secure in his dealings with other people and their values, who does not entertain an exclusivist view of his religion, is prepared to live by universally recognised values despite being firmly anchored in and committed to his own Christian religion (hence supports the tenet of universally recognised though contextually filled values), is a trusting and tolerant person though without strong moral imagination (he finds it difficult to place himself in the shoes of others), is confident in his own beliefs but also believes in a unified society, is an exponent of dialogical pluralism (prepared to interact and dialogue with adherents to other religions), and is prepared to conditionally enter into a social contract with others and to live peacefully with them.

This is the profile of a single respondent. The tolerance profile of a group of respondents, say a class of Grade 11 students at a certain school, can be determined in the same way.
© Questionnaire for teachers, student teachers and Grade 11 and 12 learners

1. To which religion do you belong? (If you do not belong to any mainstream religion, please describe your religious stance in a few words.)

2. “My religion is very strong, and I am expected to live very strictly according to it.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

3. “I am always strongly conscious of my religion in everything that I do.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

4. Here are four statements. Mark the one that is most applicable to you. 1. I feel safe and secure; other people and what they think are not a threat to me. 2. I am mostly concerned with myself; I cannot be bothered about other people and what they think and do. 3. I expect nothing from other people and also nothing from life; one has to make your own fortune. 4. I would like to be friendly with other people but at the same time I am afraid of them and what they could do to me.

5. “I am willing and prepared to live according to a set of values that all people can share and that is not peculiar to one religion only.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

6. “I am willing and prepared to live according to a set of values that all people can share, but I shall always interpret them according to my own religion.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

7. “A value that does not flow from my own religion and view of life is useless as a guideline for my life.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

8. “I prefer to values that do not have anything to do with any religion. Values should not lead to divisions and conflict among people.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

9. “I prefer not to apply values that will make me different from all other people. That is why I do not like religious values.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

10. “Other people are free to live according to their own religious values; the values of other people do not bother me at all.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

11. “The well-being of society depends on how tolerant we are with one another and with the other person’s religious values and views.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]
12. “I just tolerate things that others say and do but I shall never be able to accept the things they think and do.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

13. “I can place myself in the shoes of person whose religion, world view, values and ideas are completely different from mine.”[Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

14. “I am naturally inclined to trust other people.” [Mark one of the following: 1. I strongly agree with this statement. 2. I agree to a certain extent. 3. I agree. 4. I disagree to a certain extent 5. I totally disagree]

15. Mark any TWO of the following that you think are most applicable to you: (1) My confidence in my own religious beliefs is low. (2) I think that others have a right to follow their beliefs however wrong they are. (3) My confidence in own beliefs is high. (4) I believe the society in which I live should have only a single set of shared values. Mark ANY TWO in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.

16. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I believe that my religion is the only true one; all others are false. (2) I believe that all religions contain some truths but that all others should be changed so that they see the truth the way I do in my religion. (3) I believe that all religions lead to one and the same God / god / gods and that they only differ from one another because of local conditions and circumstances. (4) I believe in dialogue with all other religions because I think my own religion and all others will be enriched by the experience. [Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.]

17. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) All that counts in life is a person’s individual freedom; everyone should believe what he or she wants. (2) The idea of individual freedom is wrong; people should live according to the principles outlined in a holy book such as the Bible. (3) A person should live and behave in accordance with values that are not religious, such as to be civil, polite and courteous, tactful and pleasant. [Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.]

18. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I feel so strongly about my personal religious convictions that I do not feel at home in my own surroundings. (2) I feel totally comfortable with whatever other people feel and think. I just go with the flow. (3) I feel that one should participate in community life on condition that such participation does not bring me in conflict with religion. [Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.]

19. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I do not think that people can ever live peacefully together. The divisions among people are just too great for that. (2) I think people should just find ways and means to live peacefully together. People are just people. (3) I think that peaceful coexistence among people with different religious convictions is possible on condition that every member of society respects the differences around him or her, and treats others with the necessary respect and dignity. [Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3.]

20. Which ONE of the following statements is most applicable to you as a person? (1) I belong to a religious group with very strong convictions; we cannot tolerate others’ way of thinking. (2) I do not belong to any form of organised or institutionalised religion. I am non-religious. I just respect what others think without ever judging them. (3) I try to connect with a higher
force that could give direction to my life. I think all people are searching for such a spiritual search for a higher force in their lives. (4) I belong to a religious group such as a church, but despite this, we feel ourselves free to interact with other people, to discuss religious issues and differences with them. Mark ONE in the spaces provided: 1 2 3 4.

16. Concluding remarks
Each of the items in the questionnaire above can be traced back to one or more of the theoretical viewpoints that preceded it. This enables the administrator of the questionnaire to interpret the responses to each item. By plotting a respondent’s responses to each of the 20 items the investigator will be in a position to see whether a respondent is basically religiously tolerant in his or her dealings and relationships with others of a different religious persuasion. Not only will such graphs show where each individual respondent lies in terms of being religiously tolerant or intolerant but it will also show where an entire group of respondents lies on the basis of their aggregate response in terms of each item and of the questionnaire in its entirety.

Two further steps will have to be taken before the questionnaire can be administered with confidence to samples of respondents: (a) a pilot study with a few selected respondents has to be done to rectify any shortcomings and mistakes; and (b) the questionnaire should be edited to ensure that it actually measures religious tolerance and that each item and the various options therein are understandable to both teachers, prospective teachers and pupils (students, learners).

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