

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I have been thinking a lot about identity, labels and worldviews recently. I am leading a team of teachers from around the country who are trialling a new way of teaching RE in the classroom as part of a research project called the Worldviews Project. What we are seeking to achieve is a type of RE that better prepares children and young people for the reality and complexity of ways of believing, living and thinking in our world. We want them to learn about those history-influencing religions, such as Christianity, that have been so important in shaping our way of seeing the world. We also want them to understand that not everyone affiliates with a religious or non-religious worldview, such as Islam or Humanism, but that everyone has a worldview that is influenced by the context they are in. As well as this, we want to help pupils grapple with the idea that one person's experience of being Jewish or Hindu or Jain may look very different from someone else within the same community.



It seems as though one thing we humans are very good at doing is pigeon-holing people into particular identities. I have been reading press and social media coverage of the ongoing strikes – nurses, train drivers, civil servants, teachers – and have noticed how frequently those striking are described as though they were a homogenous group, often using derogatory language. I know how frustrating it can be when you are treated as though you are simply 'one of them' without the recognition that you are an infinitely complex human being who has unique experiences and context. Revd Jarel Robinson-Brown, author of *Black Gay British Christian Queer*, calls this a "famine of grace"; a failure to recognise that each life matters in its uniqueness and value to God. Professor Pamela Lightsey, writing in the foreword to this book, reminds her readers that for Christians, "[t]he Incarnation, God made flesh among us through the birth of Jesus Christ, is the loving work of God in order to offer an unlimited and undeserved love for humanity." This, she says, is the true meaning of grace.

As I read this, I am sharply aware – largely due to my current work on the Worldviews Project – that this is an interpretation of Christian scripture and faith that is rooted in a particular context, a particular experience of being Christian. Jarel Robinson-Brown's identity as a Christian, Pamela Lightsey's identity as a Christian, may not look identical to someone else's identity as a Christian, even where they may share common connective tissue, such as a belief in the Incarnation and an infinitely loving God.



The philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, who delivered the [2016 Reith Lectures for the BBC](#), talks about this in his book, *The Lies that Bind*. In his view, identities come with labels and ideas about why and to whom they should apply; secondly, they shape your thoughts about how you should behave; thirdly, labels affect the way other people treat you; finally, all dimensions of identity are contestable and up for dispute. You may have been born in the Chinese year of the Rabbit, but it doesn't follow that you have to be confident, strong and determined to reach your goals like every other person born in the Chinese year of the Rabbit...!

As we reach the halfway point of the half term, I wonder what burden of responsibility you feel to honour the unique identities of all those in your care? I wonder how you find opportunities to see the world from other views than your own and how you help those working alongside you to do the same? More than anything, I wonder what grace looks like to you. As Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, he does nothing without the grace of God (2 Corinthians 12.9). Whatever our labels, we can never make things better for those in our care without doing it together. And don't ever forget that we're always here to listen, to help and to be alongside you in all that you do.

from Gillian Georgiou, RE & SIAMS Advisor

Upcoming LDBE Courses—

For more information—click the links below!

25-01-23	13.00-16.00	Developing Knowledge in the Curriculum: RE - Human/Social Sciences (Disciplinary)	Face to face—click here for info
26-01-23	16.00-17.30	The Bible Course: Schools Edition	Online—click here for info
31-01-23	13.30-15.00	RE Cluster Meeting	Online—click here for info
01-02-23	10.00-11.00	Diocesan Headteacher Briefing	Online—click here for info
01-02-23	16.00-17.00	Collective Worship Cluster	Online—click here for info



The Showroom,
Tritton Rd, Lincoln,
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Headteacher, Senior Leader, Chair of
Governor & Clergy Conference

ALL ONE -
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29
March,
2023
10am

OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



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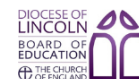
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'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' Galatians 3:28

All One: Radically Inclusive

We are delighted to invite you to our Annual Headteacher, Senior Leaders, Chair of Governors and Clergy Conference – All One: Radically Inclusive.

We can announce our keynote speakers, that will each look at the theme from their own specialism on the day. The **Rt Rev Stephen Conway**, Acting Bishop of Lincoln, having first trained as a teacher as well as previously chairing the Council of the National Society Council which supports the church's work in schools and further and higher education, brings a wealth of experience to our conference. He will be inspiring and challenging us at the start of our day.

Lorraine Prince is the Head of Networks for The Church of England Education Office. She facilitates CPD and networks focusing on EDI, SEND, Trauma and Teaching and Learning. She previously was a teacher for twenty-five years in UK and US; having studied in London and New York. She co-leads the BAMEed Eastern region network, a grassroots network that ensures our diverse communities are represented as a substantive part of the education workforce for teachers and educational leaders

Alan Watkinson former teacher of **Mo Farrah** will also be joining us. Alan taught PE and History for 17 years in secondary schools. During this time, he was also a Head of Year and a Gifted and Talented Coordinator. He became Partnership Development Manager of Isleworth and Syon's School Sport Partnership (I and S SSP) in 2007. I and S SSP evolved into Sport Impact in 2011 and he has led the organisation throughout. You may know Alan as the teacher from the Mo Farrah documentary as he was the teacher that mentored Mo Farah through some very difficult times. If you have not seen the documentary we would highly recommend it. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001977f>

Prof. Trevor Cooling will be joining us for our afternoon session. Trevor is an Emeritus Professor of Canterbury Christ Church University. His role is to lead on research and knowledge exchange in Christian Education. His background is in secondary teaching, where he started his career as a biology teacher and then moved into RE teaching having taken two years out to study for a theology qualification. On the day Trevor will spend time exploring what it means in practice to develop a theologically grounded vision which is both deeply Christian and serves the common good.

Details

Date: Wednesday 29th March 2023

Time: 10:00am – 3:30pm (refreshments from 9:30am)

Venue: The Showroom, Tritton Rd, Lincoln, LN6 7PQ

Cost: Staff £180 (non SLA £285)

Governors £140 (non SLA £220)

Clergy £75

To book please use the following link <https://www.lincolndioCESaneducation.com/calendar/?calid=1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10&pid=9&viewid=1&event=301>



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