

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Diversity, plurality, multi-culturality, post modernism - there are a growing list of words used to describe the same phenomenon: the radical transformation of societies both local and in general.*

*One of the new world's essential characteristics is the fact and the manner of the interface of hitherto largely different experiences of life.*

*In most sciences the immediate concern is the practical question how to cope with the multiplicity of meanings and options suddenly available. In the subject area of religion it goes deeper. It touches the essence of religion per se.*

*At the University of Hamburg a research team lead by Wolfram Weisse has worked in this field for the past few years. They have focused specifically on the education of religion within this context. The research was done in Hamburg and in South Africa, among others in conjunction with the Centre for Contextual Hermeneutics at Stellenbosch.*

*This edition of Scriptura is devoted entirely to the research findings of the team. Particularly significant is both the emphasis on and the manner in which the concept of dialogue is understood and employed in the development of new curricula for the education of religion.*

*I trust that this edition of Scriptura will contribute to a more sophisticated methodological debate in South Africa.*

*- Johann Kinghorn*